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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines a major transformation in the American experience of the arts through a close look at live theatrical performance in Minneapolis and St. Paul from the late 1940s through the mid-1970s. Focusing on a distinct urban center and a single art form, the dissertation examines the emergence of a new concept of urban civic theater, from a provisional model defined by participation in the creative process to one defined by professionalism, institutionalism, and participation through financial contribution and audience appreciation. This professional turn emerged from a convergence between local urban revitalization and a high level campaign to enlist the arts as a national resource, with the latter movement critical in tilting the scale toward professionalism. Through the move to this more institutional model, understandings of what it might mean for a theater to belong to the community, as well as the very conception of artistic experience itself, were negotiated and re-defined. Importantly, the development of this new civic theater took place during a time marked by political democratization and aesthetic experimentation, when the traditional view of the arts is one of increasing freedom and radicalism. Indeed, the move toward a more professionalized notion of civic theater took place under the auspices of democratization of culture, during a push to decentralize the arts and expand institutions so as to allow for greater exposure to high quality work for Americans of all kinds, while freeing artistic creativity by removing the pressures of commercialism. Yet this decentralization and democratization was pursued through the creation of major professional arts institutions, especially in the newly legitimatizing regional theater, for which Minneapolis's Guthrie Theater was a model.

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation traces the emergence of a new concept of urban civic theater, from a provisional model defined by participation in the creative process to one defined by professionalism, institutionalism, and participation through financial contribution and audience appreciation. Through the move to this more institutional model, understandings of what it might mean for a theater to belong to the community, as well as the very conception of artistic experience itself, were negotiated and re-defined. The new ideal civic theater institution, well established by the mid-1960s, was the result of a confluence of local and national factors which pointed the arts, and theater especially, toward a more credentialized, rationalized organizational structure, one that privileged professionalism above participation in the creative process, and changed the expectations of artists and audiences as to the theater's role in the urban context.

The development of this new civic theater took place during a time marked by political democratization and aesthetic experimentation, when the traditional view of the arts is one of increasing freedom, radicalism, and the breaking down of boundaries, during which "formal barriers between different modes (painting, sculpture, theater etc.) as well as the reputed self-sufficiency of art itself, fell before artwork made in mixed media, the imitation of commercial artifacts and use of industrial materials, and the embrace of political relevance," according to Howard Brick.[1] Indeed, the move toward a more professionalized notion of the civic theater itself took place under the auspices of democratization of culture, during a push to decentralize the arts and expand institutions so as to allow for greater exposure to high quality work for

[1] Howard Brick, *Age of Contradictions* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1998), xv.

Americans of all kinds, while freeing artistic creativity by removing the pressures of commercialism through the nonprofit organizational form.[2]

Yet this decentralization and democratization was pursued through the creation of major professional arts institutions, especially in the newly legitimatizing regional theater, for which Minneapolis's Guthrie Theater was a model.[3] Subsidized professional theaters with a mission to produce drama as high art existed previously, but theaters like the Guthrie presented a new mode of artistic organization, bolstered by powerful foundations, corporations, and eventually government sources, professional in administration and production, adamantly distinguishing themselves from both commercial and amateur operations in both structure and artistry.[4] Early subsidization followed by the development of a loyal and educated subscription audience was meant to enable risk-taking and the production of serious, sometimes unpopular work, impossible for an entity reliant solely on single ticket buyers. And the theater's claims to professionalism suggested that those productions would be meticulously conceived and executed, providing the audience with a worthwhile experience and theater artists with artistic opportunity and economic stability. Subsidized and subscription-based professionalism did make possible ambitious, time and resource-intensive endeavors that could not be attempted elsewhere,

[2] The meaning of the term "culture," of course, ranges from the broad anthropological definition that encompasses all aspects of human behavior and practice to Matthew Arnold's strict definition of culture as "the best which has been thought and said in the world." *Culture and Anarchy: an Essay in Cultural and Social Criticism* (London: Smith, Elder & Co, 1869), viii. I use the term in this dissertation to refer to the products of creative production, and mostly to the formal arts. In the urban revitalization campaigns of the 1950s and '60s city leaders sometimes referred to culture in a broader sense as quality of life, but they also spoke of culture very specifically, in terms of establishing arts institutions.

[3] The acting company was called the Minnesota Theater Company for its first few years, but for clarity I will refer to it as the Guthrie Theater throughout this dissertation.

[4] The regional professional theaters fit the mold of the "high culture model," as defined by Paul DiMaggio, which separated "serious" art from commercial culture through entities subsidized by trustees and exempt from taxation, and was employed by certain theaters in a limited way during the first half of the 20th century. The regional professional theaters that emerged in the 1950s and '60s were a new and much more influential model, however, with much more powerful societal support. Paul DiMaggio, "Cultural Boundaries and Structural Change: the Extension of the High Culture Model to Theater, Opera, and Dance, 1900-1940," in Michele Lamont, *Cultivating Differences: Symbolic Boundaries and the Making of Inequality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 22.

but the demands of nonprofit professionalism also stymied the theater's overall goals, ultimately minimizing risk-taking and depth of artistic production. Furthermore, these institutions diminished popular imaginings of potential creative participation, reinforced preconceptions about the elite nature of the arts, and increased expectations for polished, perfect productions.

This dissertation is concerned not only with the ramifications of the professional turn, but with the conditions that made it possible. It argues that the professional nonprofit institution was adopted as the norm for "high arts" production due to a convergence between local urban revitalization and a high level campaign to enlist the arts as a national resource, and emphasizes the latter movement as critical in tilting the scale toward professionalism.[5] Without a national push to showcase the success of the arts in a democratic country, local institution building would not have had the financial resources or the prestige to shift the balance toward a widely-supported nonprofit professional institution as the preferred organizational structure. With the support of prominent figures like W. McNeil Lowry at the Ford Foundation and politicians from Jacob Javits to Hubert Humphrey, urban leaders could draw from a legitimized national platform in their own campaigns to institute the arts as a method of urban growth.[6] And with such a

[5] Chapter 2 emphasizes the role of private national foundations, especially the Ford Foundation, in supporting the professional arts, but it also relies on a significant literature related to the support of the arts in the postwar era, particularly as a tool of soft power in the Cold War. See Penny von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004); Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: the CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: New Press, 2000); Greg Barnhisel, *Cold War Modernists: Art, Literature, and American Cultural Diplomacy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015); David Caute, *The Dancer Defects: the Struggle for Cultural Supremacy during the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). This dissertation does not speak to the employment of culture abroad, but it does examine how some of the same pressures that motivated these programs lay behind the development of a domestic cultural policy.

[6] In telling this larger story on the domestic side, the dissertation is in conversation with, for instance, David A. Smith, *Money for Art: the Tangled Web of Art and Politics in American Democracy* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2008); Donna M. Binkiewicz, *Federalizing the Muse: United States Arts Policy & the National Endowment for the Arts, 1965-1980* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Michael Brenson, *Visionaries and Outcasts: the NEA, Congress, and the Place of the Visual Artist in America* (New York: The New Press, 2001); National Endowment for the Arts, *National Endowment for the Arts: a History, 1965-2008.* Mark Bauerlein and Ellen Grantham Ed. (Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for the Arts, 2009)

national effort, other, less high profile modes of artistic production had little chance to gain or retain social legitimacy or significance. Minneapolis was an important site for the national cause: a theater of world class excellence located in the frozen northwest would surely prove the United States capable of producing great culture not only in New York, but across its great democratic expanse. Ironically, urban leaders who hoped to distinguish Minneapolis therefore did so by establishing a theater run by a British director, New York producers, and with imported actors and designers. The dissertation thus explores the influence of national imperatives on regional culture, probing whether pressure for arts institutions to represent national aspirations altered the meaning of regionalism in this country.

Debates over theater as a participatory activity or as a learned professional skill, as well as its relationship to the local populace, are not new. One might in fact trace such tensions back to ancient Greece, where, as early as the 5th century BC, choruses made up of everyday citizens began to dwindle as the number of professional actors increased.[7] The debates raged in 1920s Soviet society, where Lynn Mally has described widespread discussion over the role of theater in everyday life: "was [theater] a participatory activity infusing all of life or a skilled profession to be learned," she writes.[8] And Lauren Clay explores themes including the relationship (or lack thereof) of theaters to their localities during the institutionalization of professional theaters in France and its colonies in the pre-revolutionary era.[9] Cultural institution building was also not unique to this era. Scholars usually point to the late19th and early 20th centuries as the period in

[7] Past this point, all of theater history, argues J.R. Green, can be understood as charting the "history of the growing passivity of the audience," especially with the introduction of stage lighting that illuminated the actors while masking the audience with darkness, and the proscenium arch, increasingly used in the 19th century in conjunction with the development of realism. *Theatre in Ancient Greek Society* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 9.
[8] Lynn Mally, *Revolutionary Acts: Amateur Theater and the Soviet State, 1917-1938* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 11.
[9] Lauren Clay, *Stagestruck: The Business of Theater in Eighteenth Century France and Its Colonies* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2013)

which America's major urban cultural institutions were built, in this case by civic elites threatened by changing urban demographics and hoping to cordon off the arts as an arena for high class enjoyment.[10] Indeed this was the critical moment in the sacralization of what we now know as the "high arts," and their separation from popular entertainment, as Lawrence Levine has shown.[11]

This dissertation, however, examines a new, distinct phase in the institutionalization and sacralization of theater, as well as a possible alternative model for participation-based civic theater. Focusing first on this alternative conception, the dissertation describes the way Twin City amateur theaters of the 1940s and 1950s defined civic theater as belonging to the community and embodying democratic practice through active participation in the creative process, an ideal which arose out of the grassroots traditions of the 1930s and in response to the experience of war and the submerged anxieties of the 1950s. The dissertation then analyzes the demise of this conception of amateur theater as a civic resource in the late 1950s and 1960s, as the idealization of *professional* theater as civic resource—theater as a skilled profession to be undertaken by talented artists and appreciated by the public through financial donations and attendance at a finished product—was privileged and promoted in newly vigorous ways. This theater was not promoted in a vacuum; its legitimation depended on the denigration of both the

[10] For accounts of 19th century institutionalization see Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Culture and the City: Cultural Philanthropy in Chicago from the 1880s to 1917* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1976); Steven Conn, *Museums and American Intellectual Life: 1876-1926* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Neil Harris, "Four Stages of Cultural Growth: the American City," *Cultural Excursions: Marketing Appetites and Cultural Tastes in Modern America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); Kathleen McCarthy, *Noblesse Oblige: Charity and Cultural Patronage in Chicago, 1849-1929* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982). For institution-building in Minneapolis and St. Paul see John S. Adams and Barbara J. VanDrasek, *Minneapolis-St. Paul: People, Place, and Public Life* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 144-45.

[11] Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: the Emergence of a Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988).

amateur and commercial forms on the part of opinion leaders, politicians, and cultural emissaries.

This dissertation is not meant to refute scholars like Dorothy Chansky, who place the legitimation of theater in the early 20th century United States, with the little theater movement.[12] On the contrary, by the period I examine many artists, intellectuals, and cultural leaders had discovered the serious theater of Europe and attempted to establish such a tradition in the United States with some limited success. The dissertation also does not argue with scholars who describe the ongoing legitimation of other art forms in earlier eras, nor does it dispute that there was a feverish artistic and intellectual scene in New York City throughout the early 20th century.[13] But it was not until later in that decade that major financial institutions and levers of widespread societal power in the United States—foundations, corporations, the government—began to put true resources behind the development of art, particularly the American theater establishment, and thus to change the fundamental structure of noncommercial cultural production in a lasting way.

On a fundamental level, this dissertation is concerned with what it means for theater to be a civic resource in an urban setting, and uses as a case study the city of Minneapolis, where numerous amateur theater groups describing themselves as civic theaters thrived in the late 1940s and 1950s, and where the Guthrie Theater, which opened in 1963, became a model for

[12] Dorothy Chansky, *Composing Ourselves: the Little Theatre Movement and the American Audience* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004)

[13] The volumes on art and intellect in New York in the early 20th century are copious, mostly centering on the bohemia of Greenwich Village and the Harlem Renaissance. See for instance Christine Stansell, *American Moderns: Bohemian New York and the Creation of a New Century* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2000); George Hutchinson, *The Harlem Renaissance in Black and White* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995); Ross Wetzsteon, *Republic of Dreams; Greenwich Village: the American Bohemia, 1910-1960* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002). By the 1950s, New York had replaced Paris as the arbiter of the modern visual art world according to Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War* Trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983)

theater institutions across the country.[14] The story of theater in Minneapolis could be told with different valences in cities across the country. During the so-called "regional theater movement" of the 1950s and 1960s, professional theaters were founded in numerous cities, usually by one or two ambitious theater professionals who began to see opportunity for financial support from established institutions like local foundations and, increasingly, state arts councils, and who envisioned stable, well-attended theaters where they could take the time to thoroughly rehearse and reflect on dramatic texts, and produce fulfilling work of a high caliber.[15] The earliest regional theater in this mode was founded by Margo Jones in Dallas in 1947. Widely considered the mother of the modern regional theater, Jones's vision was ambitious, and her 1951 book *Theater in the Round* became essentially a manifesto for the movement. She was accompanied by Nina Vance, who founded the Alley Theatre in Houston, and Zelda Fichandler, who developed Arena Stage in Washington, D.C. Both the Alley and Arena Stage were early recipients of Ford Foundation grants, and paved the way for regional theaters to come. Neither,

[14] While necessarily concerned with Minneapolis, St. Paul, and the broader Twin Cities region, the dissertation focuses on Minneapolis as the city that most successfully reinvented itself as a center of culture, and theater in particular, in the national imagination. The boundary between the Minneapolis and St. Paul is fluid, however, and artists and audiences continually travel between them and utilize the resources of both. Thus the dissertation regularly discusses city leaders, artists, and arts organizations that are based in St. Paul.

[15] There is a small, mostly descriptive literature on the establishment of regional theaters in the United States. Joseph Zeigler's *Regional Theatre: the Revolutionary Stage* is among the most well-known. In it he argues that the regional theater arose out of the determination and singular vision of artists, mostly directors, who were eager to "create their own situations where they could try their wings," away from New York and the impossible sink or swim nature of Broadway. Joseph W. Zeigler, *Regional Theatre: the Revolutionary Stage* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1973), 16. Julius Novick's *Beyond Broadway: the Quest for Permanent Theaters,* published in 1968, is an overview of the movement written from within its period and informed by Novick's travels throughout the country. It also focuses on the directors and theater artists at the helm of the new theaters. Novick, *Beyond Broadway: the Quest for Permanent Theaters* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1968). Regional theater pioneers like Zelda Fichlander have also written about the origins of their theaters, and Todd London's recent compilation *An Ideal Theater* (published, significantly, by Theater Communications Group, the major professional organization for the professional regional theater) contains numerous deeply reflective thought pieces on the American theater in the 20th century, suggesting the serious—even sometimes revolutionary—artistic drive behind many regional theaters. Todd London, Ed. *An Ideal Theater: Founding Visions for a New American Art* (New York: Theater Communications Group, 2013). There are also a number of helpful dissertations including Tomoko Aono. "The Foundations of the American Regional Theatre," Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 2010; and Donatella Galella. "Performing (non)profit, race, and American Identity in the Nation's Capital: Arena Stage, 1950-2000," PhD diss., City University of New York, 2015.

however, were founded with the lofty expectations, established support system, and administrative framework of the Guthrie. Thus although the Guthrie wasn't the first regional theater, it was the first "oak tree," in the words of Joseph Zeigler, established from the top down, complete upon its founding with substantial support from a major foundation and the local elite.[16] It was a model for many other theater professionals and city leaders hoping to establish similar institutions, and its opening signaled the beginning of an era in which well-funded, high profile theater institutions would dot the landscapes of metropolitan areas around the country.

Minneapolis is thus not an anomaly in demonstrating the emergence of the major nonprofit theater institution, but the vibrant history of theater in the region magnifies it, and the role of the Guthrie as a model for a new kind of artistic organization—not the first major regional theater but the first of its scale and method of establishment—proves Minneapolis to be central to, and on some levels the impetus for, changes that took place in cities nationwide. Minneapolis is also an ideal setting for such a study in that it is a middle-of-the-country site at the center of aspirations toward decentralization and democratization of culture and the arts on the national level. Now considered a successful "creative city," Minneapolis is also helpful in understanding the roots of the culturally-drive urban centers we see today.[17]

As an early adaptor to the postindustrial knowledge economy, Minneapolis also provides a lens for examining a broader effort of urban redevelopment based on human capital. In the late 1950s and 1960s Minneapolitan leaders undertook a conscious effort to bolster the city's identity

[16] Zeigler, *Regional Theatre: the Revolutionary Stage*, 62.
[17] There were simultaneous developments on the level of culture (not specifically theater) in cities across the country during this period, with distinct trajectories and ramifications in each place. See for instance Neil Harris, *Capital Culture: J. Carter Brown, the National Gallery of Art, and the Reinvention of the Museum Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013); Sarah Schrank, *Art and the City: Civic Imagination and Cultural Authority in Los Angeles* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009); Margaret L. Davis, *The Culture Broker: Franklin D. Murphy and the Transformation of Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

not just through its beautiful natural surroundings, or the history of mining and lumber that developed from them, but on the idea that human ingenuity—creativity in the arts and culture, innovation in business, and investment in education—could be the foundation for an economically successful and widely-respected urban center attractive both to businesses and residents. The choice to embrace education, art, culture, and what becoming known as the knowledge economy—to become a "brain center"—did not constitute a sharp break from past practices. In fact the region's history was filled with art, music, and commitment to education. But such a self-conscious, deliberate adoption of the idea that the city could put itself on the map, make itself relevant in the post-industrial, post-rail center age of the second half of the 20th century, by pouring resources into modes of human capital and expecting a return, was a bold and relatively new project for a mid-sized city in the United States.

While concerned with the uses of human capital, this dissertation utilizes Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, which can be considered a subset of human capital or a related notion of intangible capital. Bourdieu believed Gary Becker's notion of human capital—in short, the worker's education, training, health, and sometimes cultural development— was simplistic, in part because it did not take into account "domestic transmission," the idea that embodied knowledge and comfort with cultural forms were largely passed on at home, through families or other networks, before formal education was pursued.[18] Indeed, the Minnesotans who made up much of the audience for the Guthrie Theater were primed for such an experience by their relatively privileged backgrounds, inherited interests, and the social world in which they lived, and the existence of this type of person in the Twin Cities made the founding of the

[18] Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," J. Richardson (Ed.) *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (New York, Greenwood: 1986), 241-258. Gary Becker, *Human Capital: a Theoretical and Empirical Analysis with Special Reference to Education, Third Edition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993)

Guthrie conceivable. But the Guthrie was also established in part to serve as a conveyer of cultural capital. The Guthrie would provide credentialized, legitimized cultural capital for local residents to develop their knowledge and experience of the arts, to enter the society of others who valued these goods, and to perpetuate the high arts as a realm of sophistication. This cultural capital would ultimately be transformed into economic capital, both for the individuals who attended the theater, who enriched their connections and personal prestige, and for the city as a whole, as a path toward economic growth. The new institutional theater did not come into being solely as a source of cultural capital, nor were Guthrie supporters only interested in social status. But the Guthrie Theater would most likely never have been built—and certainly would never have received the financial resources necessary for its establishment—if it had not been understood by backers as a rich source of cultural capital for the region, capable of attracting wealthy, educated people, and making their metropolitan area a richer, more prestigious place.

Yet city leaders who promoted the overall transformation of Minneapolis into what we would now call (and some called at the time) a "creative city" were also inspired by a more general idea of human capital, in all its forms. In their city, leaders hoped to combine the creative life of art with innovation in business and the professions: opportunities for humanist reflection alongside innovations to drive economic growth. Minneapolis Mayor Arthur Naftalin, a member of the Democratic Farmer Laborer party, former advisor to Hubert Humphrey, and one-time head of social sciences at the University of Minnesota, was a major proponent of this kind of urban growth during the 1960s, insisting that human ingenuity could consciously and deliberately establish a "creative and satisfying environment for all of its citizens" through investment in

education, culture, and human services.[19] He was supported in this vision by a broad cross section of businessmen, professionals, city planners, and influential local writers. Such a collection of elite city leaders could be found in many other American cities at the time, such as in Los Angeles, where Franklin D. Murphy led a campaign to distinguish the city through educational and cultural institutions.[20] But their influence would have particular strength in the smaller context of Twin Cities, where there were fewer competing interests, and where locals understood themselves to already live in a place of culture, creativity, and invention.

Locals were right, in that by the mid-20th century the Twin Cities region boasted a rich history of investment in arts, culture, and education, with the University of Minnesota at its center. A land grant institution founded in 1851, unlike other large Midwestern universities it was established within what would become an urban area, which enabled it to enrich and be enriched by its location in a manner that would profoundly shape the region. The University expanded rapidly in the postwar era as World War II veterans took advantage of the G.I. Bill, and growth continued through the 1960s with new departments and initiatives and a major (and controversial) physical extension of the campus onto the West Bank of the Mississippi River.[21] Beginning in the early 20th century the University also offered a rich education in theater under the leadership of figures like A. Dale Riley in the 1930s and Frank M. Whiting in the 1950s and

[19] Arthur Naftalin in his 4th term inaugural speech, quoted in Minneapolis Housing and Redevelopment Authority, *Three Decades: 1947-1977, Renewal in Minneapolis* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Housing and Redevelopment Authority, 1967)

[20] See Davis, *The Culture Broker: Franklin D. Murphy and the Transformation of Los Angeles.* Along with the more business-minded supporters of urban renewal and other redevelopment, this collection of powerful local elites in the Twin Cities—corporate leaders, professionals, individually wealthy individuals, local heads of foundations—made up an "urban regime," in the words of Clarence Stone: "an informal yet relatively stable group with access to institutional resources." Stone, *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946-1988* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1989), 4.

[21] Much of the University's growth was made possible by federal funds, which supported 71% of research expenditures by 1960. Stanford Lehmberg and Ann M. Pflaum, *The University of Minnesota: 1945-2000* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 4.

'60s, and courses by near-legendary teachers like Arthur Ballet that funneled large numbers of dedicated theater-goers and makers into the Twin Cities region.[22]

Residents of the Twin Cities area also heralded a long history of investment in the arts, particularly music, as local critic John Sherman pointed out in his many writings. In his 1958 book *Music and Theater in Minnesota History*, Sherman lauded the early German and Scandinavian immigrants of the 19th century, who established musical societies and clubs, gave concerts, and formed church choruses.[23] They were followed in the late 19th century by opera companies, more informal participatory music clubs, choirs, chamber music groups, and, in 1903, the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra (now the Minnesota Orchestra). Beginning in the 1920s a vibrant jazz community also emerged in Minneapolis, developed in nightclubs and brought to high art aficionados through outdoor summer concerts at the Walker Art Center.[24] Indeed the Walker, a modern art museum established in 1927, was at the center of more adventurous artistic undertakings in the region, including in the performing arts, which it accommodated through a bold program of invited guest performers such as Merce Cunningham and Alwin Nikolais. The visual arts also flourished through the more traditional Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts, later the Minneapolis Institute of Art, which opened the doors to its imposing neoclassical building in 1915. And as described in Chapter 1, the Twin Cities region was home to a long history of dramatic performance, including early foreign language theater,

[22] See Frank M. Whiting, *Minnesota Theatre: from Old Fort Snelling to the Guthrie* (St. Paul, MN: Pogo Press, 1988), 126-135.
[23] "Melodeons, pianos, and harpsichords were trundled overland in wagon trains and shipped upriver to the port of St. Paul," he wrote. "The violin, cornet, and flute began to be heard in domestic parlors and public meetings places, and in churches the superior voices in singing congregations were soon mobilized into quartets for part-singing of hymns." John K. Sherman, *Music and Theater in Minnesota History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1958), 7-8.
[24] See for instance Jay Goetting, *Joined at the Hip: a History of Jazz in the Twin Cities* (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2011)

"road" shows, stock companies, amateur groups, and serious productions provided by the University of Minnesota. By the post-WWII period, the Twin Cities had a solid, but not extraordinary, theatrical heritage.

The unusual political and economic history of the Twin Cities region also primed it for later development as a center for "brain industries," culture, and development based on human capital. Politically, Minnesota has a reputation for liberal progressivism, particularly in the postwar period, when figures like Hubert Humphrey and Walter Mondale helped define the trajectory of the region. Minnesota, and the Twin Cities, were indeed at the center—perhaps even the forefront—of postwar liberalism, but the state's longer political history is complicated, and rife with ethnic and class tensions. Strong strains of anti-Semitism and anti-Catholicism among the majority Protestant population pervaded Minnesota in the first half of the 20th century, while conservative community groups such as the reactionary Citizens Alliance opposed the formation of unions and other progressive change.[25] Before the creation of the Farmer Labor Party in 1918 continual tensions and sometimes violence broke out between farmers, laborers, and those who held power over the railroads, grain, banks, and mines. With the defeat of the Citizens' League in a violent 1934 truckers' strike and with far left reforms by Governor Floyd Olson, by the 1930s Minneapolis had "the clearest Left-Right alignment of any city in the land," according to *Fortune* magazine.[26]

[25] On the political and religious history of the Twin Cities see for instance, Mary Lethert Wingerd, *Claiming the City: Politics, Faith, and the Power of Place in St. Paul* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001); Wingerd, *North Country: the Making of Minnesota* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010); Elizabeth Faue, *Community of Suffering & Struggle: Women, Men, and the Labor Movement in Minneapolis: 1915-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991)

[26] 1936 *Fortune* article quoted in Joseph Galaskiewicz, *Social Organization of an Urban Grants Economy: a Study of Business Philanthropy and Nonprofit Organizations* (London: Academic Press, 1985), 6.

One might see the beginnings of Minnesota's liberal postwar era in Hubert Humphrey's forging of the Democratic-Farmer-Labor party in 1944, which neutralized some of the more radical tendencies of the Farmer-Laborers, and drew Minnesota into national politics as a powerful force in the evolution of the Democratic Party toward civil rights and a more liberal platform. One of a number of University of Minnesota-based "academic liberals," in the words of Jennifer Delton, as Minneapolis Mayor Humphrey pushed forward a bold civil rights platform for the Democratic Party and established the first municipal Fair Employment Practices Commission in the country in 1947.[27] Many who led Minnesota's liberal efforts, including later mayor Arthur Naftalin, were pragmatists who hoped to use government to balance varying interests, and heralded experts and academics as policy makers. They promoted a civil society in which taxes and services were high, and helped to forge the kind of business-friendly, tolerant, expert-led, professional atmosphere in the Twin Cities that would foster the growth of the human capital-based city.[28]

Yet Minneapolis' economic history may have been more important than its political past for its eventual development as a "creative city." European immigrants were initially attracted to the region due to the water power available through St. Anthony Falls along the Mississippi River, but the region's modern economy was built on the timber industry, made possible by the state's great forests of high quality white pine lumber. Lumber in turn required the development

[27] Jennifer A. Delton, *Making Minnesota Liberal: Civil Rights and the Transformation of the Democratic Party* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 20; Hubert Humphrey, *The Education of a Public Man: My Life and Politics,* Ed. Norman Sherman (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 353.

[28] There was also a long tradition of philanthropy among businessmen in the Twin Cities. The cities were among the first to establish a "Five Percent Club" in which corporations gave the full 5% of their allowable pre-tax dollars to charities. "According to a study done in 1978 by the *New York Times*, there were 37 corporations in the United States giving the full five percent to charity. Of those 37 companies, an overwhelming 33 of them are headquartered in Minnesota." Don W. Larson, *Land of the Giants: a History of Minnesota Business* (Minneapolis: Dorn Books, 1979), 3. On the area's philanthropic tradition see also Galaskiewicz, *Social Organization of an Urban Grants Economy,* and Galaskiewicz, "An Urban Grants Economy Revisited: Corporate Charitable Contributions in the Twin Cities, 1979-81, 1987-89," *Administrative Science Quarterly,* Vol. 42, No. 3 (Sep., 1997), pp. 445-471.

of a major transportation system, which, once trees were felled, created land to grow wheat, which fed the area's famous milling industry.[29] Railroads, milling, lumber, agriculture, and the iron ore from the Northeastern part of the state created the central economic strength upon which the diversified economy of the Twin Cities grew. The area developed rapidly in the late 19th century, with young, adventurous businessmen from the east coast arriving in great numbers to take advantage of cheap land, natural resources, and myriad business opportunities.[30]

The wealth acquired through flour milling and lumber soon spread to other industries, so that even after the Twin Cities' main industries began to decline—lumber from exhaustion of resources and flour milling due to changing modes of transportation and the suitability of other locations—the region was flush with banks, food processors and distributors, and fledgling technology innovators such as Honeywell, originally making thermostats, and 3M, manufacturing abrasives, adhesives and later office supplies. In the meantime, firms were diversifying and expanding their research and development. At Minnesota's biggest corporations "a separation of ownership and control was taking place in the business corporation" after World War II, with business-oriented leadership spawning a new layer of clerical workers, middle managers, and professionals.[31] Advertising at such places as General Mills was beginning to take off, and printing and later graphic arts were developing as central nodes of the economy. High technology companies emerged in increasing numbers after the war, with Control Data

[29] Larson, *Land of the Giants*, 32-33.
[30] For a general economic history of the region see for instance Clifford E. Clark, Jr., Ed. *Minnesota in a Century of Change: The State and Its People Since 1900* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1989); William E. Lass, *Minnesota: a History* (New York: Norton, 1998)
[31] Kirk Jeffrey, "The Major Manufacturers: From Food and Forest Products to High Technology," in Clifford E. Clark, Jr., Ed. *Minnesota in a Century of Change: The State and Its People Since 1900* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1989), 237.

Corporation at the forefront. The Twin Cities region, in fact, would become a major center for computer development in the second half of the 20th century.

By the early 1960s the Twin Cities region was an emerging knowledge center, greatly changed from the beginning of the century, when "the ten leading industries" employed only 3,614 "salaried officials, clerks, etc."[32] The fact that Minneapolis and St. Paul deindustrialized earlier than many other places, and that they made a smooth transition away from their original primary industries, meant that they "avoided becoming saddled with heavy industry and the economic problems that befell manufacturing centers and were instead able to build a modern, diversified industrial base," according to local historian Randy Stoecker. "Minneapolis has become a corporate and professional capital."[33] By the mid-20th century the region had rather smoothly become a center of professionals, managers, scientists, and other white collar workers. In 1961 the Cities also boasted a brand new international airport terminal, and the Minnesota Vikings and the Minnesota Twins first played in town (replacing the Lakers, who moved to Los Angeles in 1960). Thus while Minneapolis experienced problems similar to those in cities around the country in the 1950s and 1960s—problems that inspired renewal and reinvigoration of the central city—the larger metropolitan area was in relatively excellent economic shape.[34]

Changes in Minneapolis were of course part of a higher level macroeconomic change to a postindustrial economy, characterized by the growth of major national and international corporations, advanced technology, and highly skilled and educated workers. In post-WWII

[32] Jeffrey, "The Major Manufacturers," 231.
[33] Randy Stoecker, *Defending Community: the Struggle for Alternative Redevelopment in Cedar Riverside* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 29.
[34] On the economic and political history of the Twin Cities see for instance John S. Adams, John R. Borchert, and Ronald Abler, *The Twin Cities of Saint Paul and Minneapolis* (Cambridge, Mass: Ballinger, 1976); John S. Adams and Barbara J. VanDrasek, *Minneapolis-St. Paul: People, Place, and Public Life* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993); Judith A. Martin, *Past Choices/Present Landscapes: the Impact of Urban Renewal on the Twin Cities* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, 1989)

United States, fundamental human needs had largely been satiated, and "the apparatus of persuasion and exhortation that is associated with the sale of goods" was becoming an increasingly large sector of the economy, as were leisure pursuits.[35] The economy's dependence on consumption took cultural forms, as Lizabeth Cohen shows us in *A Consumers' Republic*, and "increased managerial sophistication," the "possibilities opened by newer communication technologies," and the "higher levels of rationalization in production methods,"—in other words, the nearly all-encompassing embrace of rationality and efficiency and the high technology that made skilled management and administration necessary—echoed through the cultural sphere.[36] Some scholars have seen these echoes in the narrowing significance of the public sphere, with the Habermasian ideal of exchange and civic participation overtaken by the "technocratic and administrative rationalization of political life."[37] As Kevin Robins and Frank Webster write, "the most important cultural change with regard to the public sphere is the historical shift from a principle of political and public rationality, to one of 'scientific' and administrative rationalization."[38] Indeed, the changes that this dissertation examines in the relationship between the theater and the community—and the varied ideas of participation that differing notions of civic theater promote—are intricately linked with the larger transformation in the public sphere that these writers understand to be part and parcel of such major economic and social shifts.[39]

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[35] John K. Galbraith, *The New Industrial State,* Sean Wilentz, Ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 5.
[36] Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: the Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003); Thierry J. Noyelle and Thomas M. Stanback, Jr. *The Economic Transformation of American Cities* (New Jersey: Rowman & Allanheld, 1983), 23.
[37] Kevin Robins and Frank Webster, "The Long History of the Information Revolution," *The Information Society Reader,* Ed. Frank Webster (New York: Routledge, 2004), 73.
[38] Robins and Webster, *The Information Society Reader,* 73.
[39] On changes to ideas of civic community see for instance Theda Skocpol, *Diminished Democracy: from Membership to Management in American Civic Life* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003); Robert Putman, *Bowling Alone: the Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000)

My work also analyzes what seems to be a disjuncture—but really is not—between the values of the arts and the values of the capitalist economy. In *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, Daniel Bell writes:

> One can discern the structural sources of tension in the society: between a social structure (primarily techno-economic) which is bureaucratic and hierarchical, and a polity which believes, formally, in equality and participation; between a social structure that is organized fundamentally in terms of roles and specialization, and a culture which is concerned with the enhancement and fulfillment of the self and the 'whole' person.[40]

Along these lines, this dissertation recognizes an inherent tension between people's ideals of the meaning of culture—their perception that it is, or should be, about the "enhancement and fulfilment of the self"—and its utilization for local and national ends, as well as between the ideals of fulfillment and the realities of professional specialization. The dissertation, in a sense, also utilizes Daniel Bell's categories in that it traces a transition from conceiving of cultural participation as an aspect of the sphere of *polity*, in which ideals of representation and participation reigned in the making of theatrical productions, to conceiving of it as part of the sphere of the *techno-economic*, in which efficiency, rationality, and economizing are key.

As part of these larger economic currents, the development of a new Minneapolis based on human capital was made possible, and hurried along, by a new population that was arising as part of the economy of the postwar era. This dissertation, therefore, is also a story of the influence of a new kind of metropolitan resident, a new kind of audience member, and a new kind of citizen: the white collar professional. As a generalized type, the new professional, many who were "knowledge workers," a term first coined by Peter Drucker, was a specialized, highly-

[40] Daniel Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, Twentieth Anniversary Edition (1976; New York: Basic Books, 1996), 14

trained and educated worker with expert knowledge in one field.[41] He or she—usually he—prized competence, rationality and efficiency, and expected it in all areas of life, including in the arts. This dissertation sometimes conflates professionals with businessmen and managers, and sometimes, when discussing the white collar population, with clerical and technical workers, as those who shared many of the same values when it came to ideas of rationality, expertise, specialization, and efficiency. Such a grouping made up 52.4% of the Guthrie's audience in 1963; the rest were housewives (likely married to white collar workers), and students, with a very small number of retired and a tiny sliver of blue collar audience members attending.[42] Rather than participate actively in an area in which they did not have competence, such audience members in general preferred to admire the skill of others who had mastered *their own* area of expertise: in acting, or singing, or directing. Expertise and excellence without trace of human failing—or suggestion of incomplete competence in one's chosen area—was thus increasingly expected in the arts as in other areas of life. In the tradition of strange bedfellows, such a respect and expectation for competence, training, and credentials in the work of artists aligned felicitously with much older bohemian ideals of the suffering artistic genius, the lone talent who lived only to share his unique gift. Thus rhetoric based on the myth of the artistic genius and utilitarian goals of professional theater institutionalization mutually reinforced one another in the transformation to the new form of civic theater and the new creative city.

Richard Butsch has argued that changes in ideas of appropriate audience demeanor have historically been connected to broader shifts in conceptions of citizenship. In *The Citizen Audience,* he proposes that as the ideal citizen transformed from the public, communally active

[41] Peter Drucker, *Landmarks of Tomorrow* (New York: Harper, 1959)
[42] Bradley G. Morison and Kay Fliehr, *In Search of an Audience: How an Audience Was Found for the Tyrone Guthrie Theater* (New York: Pitman Publishing Corporation, 1968), 38.

man to the private, restrained one, conceptions of the ideal audience followed suit, moving from boisterous to silently respectful.[43] This dissertation traces a related development, over a shorter period of time, but it sees the institutionalization of theater and the development of a professional audience base as mutually constitutive. The turn toward a professional, white collar citizenry in a city like Minneapolis paved the way for the successful development of a theater institution like the Guthrie, but the Guthrie itself advocated for and helped to shape a certain kind of audience—one that was made up mostly of professionals, who would learn to appreciate serious theater.

The professionals who attended the Guthrie were not empty vessels passively absorbing the material on stage, nor were they so caught up in the social aspects of theater-going and the external uses of cultural capital that they had no interest in art. Rather, the societal pressure that encouraged theater-going among the professional class, along with the financial security that allowed for attendance, opened up the possibility of broader intellectual engagement with the artistic product. While the professional citizen did not actively participate in artistic creation (although some did, of course), this did not mean that attendance at the theater was passive. Rather it could provide mental stimulation, enrichment, broadened understanding, and even in some cases limited interaction with the performers. One might extrapolate from this theory of the new type of theater-goer that the professional citizen—as a type—was not necessarily so myopically focused on his own work that he derived nothing from other arenas of life. Rather in supporting the pursuit of high standards by others, and in observing the fulfillment of their capabilities, the professional citizen may have grown to appreciate and perhaps more deeply comprehend aspects of life outside of his immediate purview. Through the collection of

[43] Richard Butsch, *The Citizen Audience: Crowds, Publics, and Individuals* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2008), 4.

knowledge rather than the development of skills or abilities, the professional citizen could be immersed in the process of self-improvement. This picture of the professional, enlightened audience provides one window into the new role of the civic theater—this time as a center for enlightenment and appreciation of the products of others—that contrasts to the more tangibly participatory, but less developed and practiced, amateur civic theaters of the earlier period.

In exploring the development and ramifications of the professional arts institution in Minneapolis, this dissertation is centrally concerned with the rather elusive *meaning* of professionalism as it applies to the arts, and theater in particular. Even those most forcefully advocating for artistic professionalism in the 1960s sometimes acknowledged the term's ambiguity. According to representatives of Actors Equity in a paper prepared for the Rockefeller Brother Fund's 1965 panel on the performing arts (precursor to *The Performing Arts: Problems and Prospects*, a blueprint for regional professionalization in the 1960s), "the concept of the professional as a performer who is paid, as opposed to the amateur who is not paid, is generally put forward as the primary basis for a definition. But definitions, like facts, are colored by the observer's own predispositions, and quite early in our research we found that such descriptions are meaningless repetitions of a dogma that offers almost no insight into what is meant by those who use the terms 'amateur' and 'professional' in the theatre."[44] Clearly, when cultural advocates and policy makers discussed work as "professional," they did not solely mean "paid," but rather a host of qualities, ideals, and ideologies about the making and reception of art.

Scholars who grapple with the concepts of professionalism and amateurism often focus on sport or academia as realms that have become professionalized since the late 19th century or

[44] "The Amateur and the Professional in the American Theatre," by Dick Moore and Jack Golodner, prepared for the Special Studies Project, RG3, Box 573, Rockefeller Brothers Fund Unprocessed Material, Rockefeller Archive Center (Hereafter RAC).

early 20th century.[45] Once a term of praise, amateurism originally connoted engagement in an activity out of unselfish love or interest, whereas professionalism represented the opposite: greed, careerism, or unhealthy ambition. As amateurism was associated with aristocracy in Europe, however, it was first looked upon as elitist, indulgent, and wasteful in the United States. By the late 19th century, however, with the spread of notions of gentility, as described by John F. Kassen and others, amateurism—in the form of activities like parlor theatricals and piano playing—became more generally accepted, even lauded in certain social circles, before again falling under the taint of frivolousness and waste with the rise of values of professionalism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.[46] Yet professionalism would not have gained traction without amateurism as a foil; in tracing the transformation of the gentleman scholar into the professional academic, Majorie Garber argues that amateurism and professionalism exist symbiotically. They "produce each other and they define each other by mutual affinities and exclusions."[47] Indeed the professional theater that emerged in the mid-20th century in many ways defined itself against amateurism, as focusing on quality rather than participation, devoted seriousness and consistency instead of impassioned and erratic pursuit. And yet, as Garber would expect, professional artists embraced, or tried to embrace, certain elements of amateurism: passionate devotion, connection to the community, and a hoped-for accessibility.

The nonprofit professionalism that emerged in the arts, however, was different than professionalism in sports, medicine, law, or other areas, in its essential dependence on outside

[45] See for instance Lincoln Allison, *Amateurism in Sport: An Analysis and a Defense* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass Publishers, 2001)*;* Marjorie Garber, *Academic Instincts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Burton J. Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: the Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America* (Toronto: Norton & Company, 1976); Robert A. Stebbins, *Amateurs, Professionals, and Serious Leisure* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992)

[46] John F. Kassen, *Rudeness and Civility: Manners in 19th Century Urban America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1990)

[47] Garber, *Academic Instincts*, 5.

funding, in its rejection of commercialism of any sort, and in its reliance on low pay. It did, however, share characteristics with other fields, such as in the concepts of abstraction and jurisdiction that Andrew Abbott points to as central to defining a profession: the capacity to apply abstract knowledge to specific cases, and to claim ownership over the expertise applied to a specific area.[48] In the 1960s programs in arts administration began to churn out specially trained administrators who could apply their newly learned techniques to the operation of professional arts organizations, directors brought their learned conceptualizations of the creative process to varying theater groups, increasingly skilled designers claimed expertise in sound, setting, lights, and costumes, and actors trained in conservatories or budding university programs shared common approaches to tackling plays. Through these techniques, arts administrators and artists claimed to be akin to other professionals, as possessors of expertise and specialized knowledge, able to produce something that the average, untrained person could not, and administrators in particular tied their practice to widely accepted values of business management. "Culturally," Abbott writes, "professions legitimate their control by attaching their expertise to values with general cultural legitimacy, increasingly the values of rationality, efficiency, and science."[49] In establishing the nonprofit theater as the highest realm of professionalism and consolidating jurisdiction over "serious" theater, supporters and professional artists proclaimed their work superior to that produced by other methods, especially through the avenues of commercialism or amateurism.

An examination of more concrete aspects of professionalism is also central to this

[48] "Only a knowledge system governed by abstractions can redefine its problems and tasks, defend them from interlopers, and seize new problems… Abstraction enables survival in the competitive system of professions." Andrew Abbott, *The System of Professions: an Essay on the Division of Expert Labor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 9. Jurisdiction further claims "exclusive rights" from society, legally and/or in public opinion, to an area of knowledge or practice. Abbott, *The System of Professions,* 59.
[49] Abbott, *The System of Professions,* 16.

dissertation, for understanding how the Guthrie Theater, as an example of nonprofit professionalism, would be run. For one, professionalism implied a high level of control over organizational operation and artistic product: the theater would be directed by administrative and artistic experts, its productions peopled by trained, skilled performers, designers, and stagehands. Administrative staff would qualify for their positions through experience or education (newly available in emerging arts administration programs); actors would have developed control over their physical and emotional person, as well as the proper behavioral discipline to work in a professional setting, dutifully following the director's conception.[50] Such a process would ensure the carefully managed development of a polished and conceptually unified production, as well as reinforce the gap between artists, who were actively immersed in the work, and audience members, watching from a distance.[51] On an organizational level, professionalism indicated the development of long-standing institutions which would ultimately adopt their own continuance as a central mission. The new regional theaters would create the conditions for organizational longevity through careful financial management and, ideally, broad support in the community and beyond.[52] Here the work of Paul DiMaggio is especially important in understanding the

[50] Or as Theodore Hoffman dryly put it: "don't criticize anyone, be a pollyana, and treat the producer as an invaluable avuncular sage." Theodore Hoffman, "Report on the Training of Actors," Submitted to the University of Minnesota for the Conference on the Education and Training of Actors, May, 1965. Administrative Files, 1965, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA3), Performing Arts Archive, University of Minnesota Libraries, (hereafter PAA). Nicholas Salvato has discussed the ways in which professionalism connotes mastery over one's body and emotions, whereas excessive effusion is associated with both amateurism and effeminacy, themselves inextricable in his definition. Salvato, "Out of Hand: Youtube Amateurs and Professionals," *TDR*, 53, no. 3.

[51] Raymond Williams points out the connection between the rise of managerial power in the labor market and the ascent of the director in the theater: "The 'producer', 'director' or 'manager' emerged when wholly coordinated production not only of the acting but of new staging techniques, including new kinds of design and lighting, was seen as necessary and desirable… The new role rapidly increased in importance until by the mid-twentieth century the director could see himself, and was often seen by others, as the central productive figure." Williams, *The Sociology of Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1981), 114. By the late 1960s, however, the role of the director was also widely challenged, as collaboratively-produced theater grew in popularity.

[52] Weber's contention that bureaucracy essentially means "without regard for persons," in that offices are not contingent on the people that inhabit them, may have particularly important implications for the arts, where the expressive acts of performance would have little to do with the administrative structures that control them. *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 215.

shape of nonprofit professionalism in the theater, particularly in comprehending the changing culture of the institutionalized organization.[53]

It may be surprising to see such professionalism embraced in Minnesota, where clichés of Midwestern culture grate against such an interest. The traditional pastoral image of the Midwest suggests Minnesota as less of a mecca for single-minded professional pursuits and more of a place of self-reliant, democratic participation in grassroots culture. The rural image of the region was the product of its agricultural roots and its expanses of undeveloped, rolling pastures and hills, its existence as a frontier displaced by the West, still relatively unsettled but dotted by small towns and farms. By the 1910s, according to James Shortridge, the Middle West was associated with "morality, independence, and egalitarianism," and came to be known as the "Heartland" and the "Vital Core" of the country.[54] Such images of the Midwest as bucolic and virtuous were beginning to lose their grasp on reality by the 20th century, as the region underwent industrialization and urbanization, but romantic notions remained. And the region's populist political parties, its sense of self-sufficiency and earthbound practicality, were still rooted in many areas, although they suggested a homogeneous culture that had never really existed. Still, whereas one might expect an intense move toward elite professionalism in the cultural capital of New York City, the fact that the path toward the nonprofit professional institution as civic resource was led by a city of the Upper Midwest is a testament to the strength of the national campaign for decentralization and democratization of cultural access.

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[53] See for instance DiMaggio, *Nonprofit Enterprise in the Arts: Studies in Mission and Constraint.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); Walter W. Powell and Paul J. DiMaggio, Ed. *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991)

[54] James R. Shortridge, *The Middle West: its Meaning in American Culture* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1989), 8.

This dissertation therefore finds Minneapolitans at a moment of negotiation over the meaning of locality and the lure of national trends, as white collar professionals became increasingly integrated into a national, even international, network of relationships, innovations, and standards, while simultaneously emphasizing the distinctiveness of their Northwestern city. In its evocation of struggle between feelings of localness and the attractions of national trends, the dissertation explores themes similar to those Robert L. Dorman describes in an earlier period in *Revolt of the Provinces: the Regionalist Movement in America, 1920-1945,* which concerns the Midwest's role in the "centuries-long transformation of this country from a rural, frontier, decentralized, producerist farm and village society—the older America—into the modern commercialized, consumerist, and mechanized mass society of the metropolis."[55] While Dorman concentrates on interwar regionalists writers, artists, and other intellectuals, and sees the negotiation of myths and reality, pastoralism and industry, negotiated through this movement, my dissertation understands tensions endemic to identity to be brought into question through the process of urban redevelopment and cultural growth. While Dorman's earlier regionalists worked to produce locality and resist nationalizing trends and standardization through art and writing, the figures I discuss tried to retain a sense of locality through local moral and financial support *despite* the standardized content of the art in question.

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On its most fundamental level, this dissertation examines the meaning of the professional turn for the possibilities of democratic culture in the United States, and by extension the role of professionalism and expertise in a democratic state more broadly. While the subtleties and

[55] Robert L. Dorman, *Revolt of the Provinces: The Regionalist Movement in America, 1920-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), xi-xii.

nuances of democracy's possible interpretations are beyond the scope of this project, this dissertation takes as its starting point John Dewey's conceptualization of representative democracy as requiring an active participating public formed of associations and other communal groups, which provide an outlet for discussion and the formation of ideas and opinions, and through which the individual is able to fulfill his or her potential by engaging in social interactions, developing skills, and pursuing interests to the best of his or her ability. For Dewey freedom is "that secure release and fulfilment of personal potentialities which take place only in rich and manifold association with others."[56] Politically, this understanding of democracy would produce an informed public made up of various associations, able to choose suitable representatives with the more specialized understanding to carry out policy. Such an enlightened citizenry would hedge against excessive control by experts.[57]

Yet as Dewey wrote, "the idea of democracy is a wider and fuller idea than can be exemplified in the state even at its best. To be realized it must affect all modes of human association, the family, the school, industry, religion."[58] Cultural democracy is taken in this dissertation to mean the extension of democratic practices through other activities, specifically the arts, in the sense of participation in discussion and creation, though not necessarily equal and entirely unmediated participation.[59] Scholarly work that touches on issues of cultural democracy

[56] John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems* (1927, Athens: Ohio University Press, 1954), 150.
[57] Here Habermas's conception of the public sphere is also helpful. See Craig Calhoun, *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: MIT, 1992)
[58] Dewey, *Public and its Problems,* 143.
[59] Cultural democracy, when used with the anthropological sense of culture, can refer to inclusivity of diverse peoples and their ethnic or national or religious traditions in society, but it is considered more narrowly in this dissertation in relation to artistic experience. According to James Bau Graves, Rachel Davis DuBois was the originator of the term cultural democracy in the sense of multiplicity of heritage, beliefs, practices, etc. Graves, *Cultural Democracy: The Arts, Community, and the Public Purpose* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 10. See also Delores P. Aldridge, "On Race and Culture: Beyond Afrocentrism, Eurocentrism, to Cultural Democracy," *Sociological Focus,* Vol. 33, No. 1, February 2000; Don Adams and Arlene Goldbard, Eds., *Community, Culture, and Globalization* (New York: Rockefeller Foundation, 2002)

along these lines often concentrates on "public art," especially sculptures and monuments, analyzing the role of art in public space, processes of curation, and public response.[60] Others discuss the inclusivity of underrepresented groups within arts institutions, which is related to this dissertation's argument but not a focus.[61] Richard Cándida Smith discusses the "dilemmas of cultural professionalism" in relation to democracy, primarily in terms of setting aesthetic and content-based standards under which "to develop original work with concerns and problematics distinct from those affirmed in the center was to enter a zone of frustration and failure."[62] My dissertation is related to these inquiries, especially questions of the curation of art, but is more tightly focused on the idea of cultural democracy and professionalism as a problem of participation and production. In this sense the dissertation is somewhat aligned with James Bau Graves' definition of cultural democracy as concerned with "culture as it is lived closer to the ground, local culture, neighborhood culture… cultural activities that actually engage Americans, things people do… the choices that individuals make about how to shape the fabric of their lives," and "the mechanisms that make those choices available."[63]

The dissertation assumes that democratic practices, though not directly related to the political practice of democracy, may be exercised through the creation of theater. Once developed, theater can be a forum for communication and even debate, and can challenge or

[60] See for instance, Casey Nelson Blake, "Between Civics and Politics: the Modernist Moment in Federal Public Art" in Casey Nelson Blake, Ed. *The Arts of Democracy: Art, Public Culture, and the State* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); Michele H. Bogart, *Public Sculpture and the Civic Ideal in New York City, 1890-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); W.J.T. Mitchell, *Art and the Public Sphere* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992)

[61] See Jennifer Condo and Shamus Kahn "The Cultural Democracy Myth," *Contexts*, 10, No. 1, capturing community (Winter, 2011), 65-66.

[62] Richard Cándida Smith, *The Modern Moves West: California Artists and Democratic Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 2.

[63] Graves, *Cultural Democracy,* 3. Graves focuses, however, on a much wider array of cultural activities, is very concerned with heritage, and is contemptuous of consumption, while this dissertation concentrates on arts participation and theater in particular, and is less dismissive of consumption as a way to appreciate the arts.

reaffirm structures of power, not necessarily through direct address of political issues but rather by introducing perspectives, plying ideas, and changing perceptions. In fact the potential for live performance to express unpopular ideas or disparities of power may go a long way in explaining why theater was one of the last art forms to become formally institutionalized, following far behind art museums and orchestras.[64] More to the point for this dissertation, however, the practice of theater can be understood as a method of self-enrichment within a democratic society—a society that purports to support the "pursuit of happiness," or the potential for its citizens to pursue meaningful, enlightened lives. It is, along with other arts and cultural pursuits, a venue through which individuals can exercise creativity or fulfill their need for an emotional or imaginative outlet. Its practice can also provide a venue for subcultural groups to reaffirm or rehearse beliefs and principles, airing "alternative viewpoints and practices stifled or dismissed in the broader reaches of contemporary American culture," as certain groups discussed in the dissertation, especially in Chapter 5, did.[65]

While appreciation of theater is not necessarily passive, and can be understood as a kind of participation itself (as described in relation to the concept of the professional citizen, above), this dissertation argues that active creative participation is a distinctly valuable good. Tocqueville observed what he considered the benefits of non-expert participation to democratic

[64] Susan Harris Smith attributes the lack of accreditation given theater to a convergence of related factors, including "a fear of populist, leftist, and experimental art…a disdain of alternative, oppositional, and vulgar performances." Susan Harris Smith, *American Drama: the Bastard Art*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 3.
[65] David Román, *Performance in America Contemporary U.S. Culture and the Performing Arts* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 39. Many have contended that the articulation of ideas through performance—and struggles over the control of that arena—cannot be separated from the negotiation of power. Augusto Boal's manifesto *Theater of the Oppressed* begins with the claim that theater, though fought for by the ruling classes to "utilization as a tool for domination… can also be a weapon for liberation." Augusto Boal, *Theater of the Oppressed*, Trans. Charles A. and Maria-Odilia Leal McBride (New York: Urizen Books, 1974), ix.

society in his travels through the country. The early American was essentially a generalist, he claimed, and thus "the reach of his mind is wider":

> In America, it sometimes happens that the same man works his field, builds his house, produces his tools, makes his shoes, and weaves with his own hands the crude cloth that will cover him. This hinders the improvement of industry but serves powerfully to develop the mind of the worker... In a country like America, where specialists are so rare, one cannot demand a long apprenticeship of those who take up a profession. The Americans therefore find it very easy to change their state, and they take advantage of this, depending on the needs of the moment. One comes across those that have been successfully lawyers, farmers, merchants, evangelical ministers, and doctors. If the American is less skillful than the European in each profession, there are almost none that are entirely foreign to him. His ability is more general, the reach of his mind is wider. The inhabitant of the United States is thus never handicapped by any professional axiom; he is free of all professional prejudices; he is not more attached to one system of operation than another….[66]

Whereas the postwar professional stance held that the mind of the worker was better developed through deep immersion in one task, Tocqueville saw such single-mindedness as potentially narrowing one's vision and understanding. The amateur civic theaters of the 1940s and 1950s, described in Chapter 1, held onto some of the ideals of generalization and immersion in different fields in which one was not an expert, with the expected result that participants in the amateur arts would become better community members and citizens. But the possibilities of those theaters as widely recognized, socially legitimate civic entities faded with the increasing adulation of professionalism in the next decade.

The question then becomes whether the professional turn has, on the whole, expanded or contracted the possibilities for democratic culture. On the one hand professionalism can be understood as providing opportunity for those with interest and talent to realize their capabilities

[66] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, abridged, with Intro. by Sanford Kessler, Trans. Stephen D. Grant (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2000), 167.

and fulfill their potential, thus enhancing the possibilities for actualization among potential artists. Professionalism can also be construed as grounded within the American capitalist ethos and derived from the protestant work ethic, as according to Max Weber, "the idea that one's duty consists in pursuing one's calling, and that the individual should have a commitment to his 'professional' activity, whatever it may consist of… this idea is a characteristic feature of the 'social ethic' of capitalist culture."[67] And the development of professional institutions expanded access for more Americans to participate in theater and the other arts as audience members or viewers, potentially broadening or deepening their perceptions or understandings.

On the other hand professionalism erected barriers to the general pursuit of direct artistic involvement, through an emphasis on credentials, training (which requires resources and time), standards, and prescribed routes of organization and funding. Professional art as practiced through institutions is subject to rationalization and bureaucratization, and the work of the organization becomes, in Weber's theorization, alienated from, or indifferent to, the person inhabiting an office, communication breaks down, and the continuance of the organization becomes paramount. As the dissertation shows, in the 1960s widespread and high level emphasis on professionalism stigmatized amateur involvement and spread the message that participation is not worthy unless it is excellent, or at least in pursuit of a standardized idea of excellence. Owen Kelly, although referring to Britain, puts it thus: "The real problem is not that 'ordinary people' do not have, or feel they do not have, access to the output of the culture industries… Rather it is that, in a society professing to be democratic, culture is not produced democratically."[68]

[67] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Trans. Peter Baehr and Gordon C. Wells, (New York: Penguin, 2002), 13.
[68] Owen Kelly, "Polite Oppression: Problems of Cultural Democracy," *Circa Arts Magazine*, No. 27 (Mar. - Apr., 1986), 14.

Ultimately, the dissertation recognizes the expansive capacities of professionalism as an avenue for professional and professional-pursuant Americans, and as a mechanism through which the pleasures of artistic appreciation became more available for people across the country. It also recognizes, as recounted in Chapters 4 and 5, the increased possibilities for aesthetic experimentation that nonprofit professionalism in some cases allowed, and demonstrates that professionalism in the arts had unintended consequences—as all developments do—in spurring creative rebellion. However such professionalism simultaneously narrowed pathways for participation in the arts, and created expectations and cultural attitudes that discouraged entry into the processes of creative production. Likewise, while the widespread embrace of professionalism in areas beyond the arts has provided pathways and opportunities for Americans to realize potential at a high level, it has also built walls and methods of exclusion for less formal participation. The pathway of professionalism is necessarily a constrained and delimited one; this dissertation aims to track the particular route of professionalism in the theater, explore some of its constraints and opportunities, and weigh what may have been lost in its wake.

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The dissertation is organized in five chapters. Although the professional turn was essentially complete by the mid-1960s, the final chapter extends the timeline to 1976 and serves as a coda and conclusion to the work, recognizing the developments that followed as stemming from and developing within the new framework of artistic production.

Chapter 1 situates the reader in the postwar 1940s and 1950s, as the amateur arts flourished across the country. Amateur theater was particularly strong in the Twin Cities region, with groups touting a wide variety of aims and providing opportunities for local residents to participate actively. This chapter argues that these groups celebrated a notion of civic theater

based on nonutilitarian, amateur creative participation, a vision of a socially significant community theater that would stand in contrast to the professional institution to come. However, this model of theater as a civic resource encountered problems defining and pleasing its community, and struggled to retain significance in the face of increasing emphasis on professionalism in the arts within the Twin Cities region and nationally.

The second chapter traces the early movement toward what I consider an informal national cultural policy, in which figures like W. McNeil Lowry of the Ford Foundation figured prominently in turning the attention of powerful American entities toward the decentralization and financial support of professional arts institutions. The chapter explores how the early influence of private foundations—and the personal interests of Lowry—exacerbated tensions endemic to the creation of cultural policy: the imperfect relationship between ideals of individual creative fulfillment and the function of the professional arts, the problem of defining a uniquely American culture in relation to European culture, and the push and pull between local and national standards and commitments.

Chapter 3 narrows in on Minneapolis, where civic leaders believed that arts institutions like the Guthrie Theater could add a humanizing element to urban renewal efforts of the late 1950s and 1960s and help build the city on the basis of investments in human capital: to develop a "creative city" for the new white collar, college-educated class of knowledge workers through brain industries and cultural organizations. Leaders' emphasis on major professional institutions, however, and the application of business principles to their organization, to some degree counteracted their aims, cramping the aesthetic and social development of the arts, the potential for creative participation on the part of the average local citizen, and the development of locally distinctive grassroots culture.

The fourth chapter focuses on the establishment of the Guthrie Theater in 1963, its problematic self-definition as a civic theater, and the impact of its emphasis on professionalism both internally, on the artists who worked at the Guthrie and the audiences who attended, and on outside theater groups and artists. As the nonprofit professional formula became for many artists in the 1960s the ideal institutional structure, the organizational, social, and aesthetic effects of professionalism altered even the work of amateur theaters, as well as groups dedicated to experimental, anti-establishment theater, as they faced new pressures to appeal to funders as well as meet the expectation of audience members increasingly conditioned to expect professional "excellence."

The final chapter functions as a coda and a conclusion to the dissertation. It analyzes the changed cultural environment of the very late 1960s through the mid-1970s, exploring the challenges the Guthrie faced with the departure of Tyrone Guthrie and subsequent struggles to build a lasting bond with the community, increasing challenges to the professional institutional model that arose through alternative performance groups and improvisational comedy, and the establishment of niche theater groups in the 1970s, which were both inspired by and reacted against the work and the institutional makeup of the Guthrie.

CHAPTER 1

AMATEUR THEATER AS CIVIC THEATER IN THE POSTWAR TWIN CITIES

In the late 1940s, the North Star Drama Guild proclaimed itself "Minneapolis's First Great Civic Theater," intended for "all of Minneapolis."[1] An amateur collective founded by veterans in 1946 to provide an outlet for anyone in the local population with a theatrical bent, the group was bold in ambition and clear in its intention to be a theater *by* and *for* the community, providing opportunity not only for reception, but for active creative expression by amateur actors, designers, and administrators. A study of the theater's principles—and those of its contemporaries and successors—reveals a particular vision of the meaning of civic theater at this time, one that saw the arts as fostering certain definitive but nonutilitarian ends: an entity that would offer opportunity for active engagement in performance, backstage, or as audience members, with purpose, seriousness, and effort to create a worthwhile production, and with the goal of improving the community by offering such opportunity, but without expectation or desire for professional status.

Founded by two WWII servicemen, Bob Gaus and Tom Scott, the North Star Drama Guild was built upon their observation of the central role theater could play in fulfilling, uplifting, and entertaining troops and military personnel, who were otherwise engaged in demoralizing, tedious, or horrifying work. Gaus and Scott returned home with a deep sense of the pleasure, meaning, and motivation that the act of theater making and reception provided for them during wartime, determined to offer such gratification to their fellow veterans and civilians now that they were in the home for which they had fought. As one of North Star's publicity

[1] North Star Drama Guild Program for *Jane Eyre*, 1947. North Star Drama Guild papers (PA 23), Performing Arts Archives, University of Minnesota Libraries, Minneapolis (hereafter PAA)

posters proclaimed: "We have witnessed the results of high morale in our fighting forces, now what does Minneapolis have to offer returning veterans with dramatic ability?"[2] Thus the North Star Guild, devoted both to fun and to a desire to find meaning in lives torn apart by war, produced a wide range of plays, lighthearted and serious, new and old, comedies, tragedies, and dramas. Opening with Arthur Laurents' newest play *Home of the Brave*, about the experience of soldiers on the Pacific front, which the theater believed would appeal to "thinking citizens and discriminating theater-goers," North Star established itself as a community theater that produced serious work.[3] The group went on to offer such works as *Deep are the Roots,* banned in cities across the country for its examination of the experiences of an African American WWII soldier who returned from war to experience deep racism in the South, and Arthur Miller's *All My Sons*, about the costs of corporate deception in war production.

While establishing itself as a theater of social import, the North Star Drama Guild was not at all shy about its amateur status. In fact it reveled in it, proudly proclaiming "nonprofessional premieres" and encouraging locals—even those shy about theater—to get involved. "Your Civic Theatre needs your instant participation and support if it is to continue to grow and thrive," began one program note. "Be generous with your assistance, won't you? There's nothing to lose, and a host of pleasant experiences to be gained. Rehearsals are not strenuous and are arranged at your convenience. Really, there's nothing hard about this acting business at all!"[4] Not only did this advertisement for participants reflect positive feelings about communal participation in an amateur group, it emphasized that training was not required and that participation in the group's productions was meant to be pleasurable, rather than arduous. In

[2] North Star Drama Guild Poster. North Star Drama Guild papers (PA 23), PAA
[3] Program from *Home of the Brave*, 1946. North Star Drama Guild papers (PA 23), PAA
[4] Program for *Jane Eyre*, 1947. North Star Drama Guild papers (PA 23), PAA

the eyes of its directors, North Star's identification as Minneapolis's Civic Theater was bolstered by such a proclamation of amateurism: for what was a civic asset, if not something in which all citizens could be actively involved? Such a vision of civic participation—in the tradition of older ideas of civic republicanism—propelled the visions of the North Star Guild.

The values embraced by the North Star Drama Guild were ones shared to a greater and lesser extent by the amateur theater groups that flourished across Minnesota, and particularly the Twin Cities region, in the late 1940s and 1950s. Douglas P. Hatfield, in his dissertation on amateur theater in the Twin Cities, titled the period from 1953-1963 "the fertile years."[5] While traveling professional shows and the region's own commercial Old Log Theater maintained a small professional presence in the region's theatrical orbit, amateur groups ruled the day, particularly in the expanding reach of the Twin Cities metropolitan area: "community theaters are springing up like weeds in the suburbs," wrote John K. Sherman in 1957.[6] Most of these theaters were aimed toward the community: they were intended, though they did not always successfully manage, to provide an outlet for creative expression through which communal bonds would develop, in new postwar neighborhood formulations. They understood the core of artistic experience to be communal engagement and communication of common experience as well as individual creative fulfillment, and the open door policy of amateur theaters was central to these goals: theatrical practice was something all members of the community should have the opportunity to enjoy. And in opposition to the increasingly segmented world of work, the amateur theater was a site of non-specialization, where people could take on all kinds of roles on

[5] Douglas P. Hatfield "A History of Amateur Theatre in St. Paul, Minneapolis, and their Suburbs: 1929-1963" MA Thesis, University of Minnesota, June 1969

[6] "Community theaters are springing up like weeds in the suburbs" is from John K. Sherman, "Richfield Players Find Stage Full of Mutiny," *Minneapolis Star,* March, 1957. The next year George Grim also claimed in the *Minneapolis Tribune* that "the number of amateur theater groups hereabouts is growing," and noted that the quality of productions was also improving. Grim, "I Like it Here," *Minneapolis Tribune*, March, 1958

stage or behind, in the audience or in administration, be broadly and widely defined, or not defined at all, within a quickly rationalizing postwar world of classification and segmentation. From the perspective of the amateur theaters of the 1950s, the ideal American was not an appreciative audience member, but out on the stage or behind the scenes, actively taking part in creating something new. The amateur theater, in this conception, had the potential to be a socially significant institution, a civic theater for the use of all interested citizens, devoted to the betterment of the lives of community members, and thus the betterment of the community itself.

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The flourishing of amateur theaters in the Twin Cities region converged with a period of unprecedented suburban expansion, which escalated in the 1940s as rural residents with diminished ties to farming migrated to metropolitan areas, and manufacturing work drew them to the Twin Cities region—particularly outside of the center cities, where by 1945 $1.4 billion from the Federal Government aided production of war-related materials.[7] Just as rural Minnesotans moved *to* the metropolis in this period, however, urban denizens also moved *out* of the center cities. In part they were following manufacturers, who were looking for larger and cheaper lots of land outside of downtown: General Mills moved from Minneapolis to the suburb of Golden Valley in 1958, for instance, bringing urban workers with it and attracting new migrants from rural areas; the Northern Pump Company, which made rotary gear pumps as well as gun turrets and barrels for the U.S. Navy, moved from downtown Minneapolis to Fridley during WWII. In the meantime, a significant portion of (mostly white) Twin Citians living downtown fled the center cities with the hope of escaping what they saw as deteriorating urban cores, while WWII

[7] Robert Wuthnow, *Remaking the Heartland: Middle America Since the 1950s* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 234-5.

veterans participating in the baby boom and intending to settle down with families in single family homes found a dearth of housing, took up temporary residence in Quonset huts, and eventually began populating what would become known as the "inner ring" of suburbs, where "the familiar features of suburban life, such as larger homes, an automobile culture, and shopping malls" began to define the culture.[8]

These were also, however, where many of postwar amateur theaters began to pop up in the 1940s and 50s. Swiftly growing suburbs included St. Louis Park, where the St. Louis Park Community Theatre was founded in 1959, and which expanded in population from 7,700 to 43,000 between the 1940s and 1960s, and Bloomington, where the Bloomington Civic Theatre would become a stalwart of the amateur groups in the region, where the first drive-in movie theater in the Twin Cities area opened in 1947, and which rose in population from 9,900 in 1950 to 50,498 in 1960, becoming its own city in 1958.[9] The Lakeshore Players set up shop in White Bear Lake, a former resort town that also exploded in population in the 1950s. There two "housewives" converted a church building into a theater and, to raise money, presented a fourteen-hour play festival which involved sixty-seven local actors and seven directors.[10] The kinds of suburbs in which these activities took place, sprouting up across the country in the 1950s, have been known as bastions for the postwar consumer culture. The Southdale Center, for instance, was established in 1956 in the suburb of Edina, and as the first entirely indoor mall in the country, it is representative of the boom in suburban shopping characteristic of the period.

[8] Wuthnow, *Remaking the Heartland*, 236.
[9] St. Louis Park population figures from Wuthnow, *Remaking the Heartland*, 234. Bloomington Population figures are cited in Hatfield, "A History of Amateur Theatre," 127.
[10] Hatfield, "A History of Amateur Theater," 138.

Yet these new communities also provided opportunities for noncommercial leisure, as the establishment of amateur theaters shows.

In part an attempt at developing community relationships in what could be an atomizing suburban landscape, and with the increase of potentially isolating technology like television, these groups aspired to serve what Larry Gross has called the "central communicative functions of socialization and integration."[11] The Bloomington Civic Theater, for instance, was established in a suburb that was "young… had no old people, no established tradition, no culture or wealth," according to its director Chris Ringham.[12] Its economy was growing rapidly, with Control Data Corporation, Donaldson Inc., and Archer Daniels Midland Company moving to Bloomington in 1961, but it was not yet a developed community; in fact it had the youngest population of any city nationwide in 1962, according to *Time* magazine.[13] The group was determined to make theater locally, however, not by importing actors from the city, but by nurturing interest and talent from the suburb, and performing for the young population that lived there. "I am of the opinion that there is a place for everyone in the community in our theater," Ringham declared. "The salesmen can sell ads, the women can sew costumes, the electricians can do the lighting, the carpenters can build sets. I am here to scour the community for these people… My job is to select and stage plays the community wants, using people from the community."[14] No theater would or could include the entire population, and there were economic and most likely social barriers to participating in a time-consuming, nonpaying activity. Nevertheless, the Bloomington

[11] Larry Gross, Ed. *On the Margins of Art Worlds* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1995), 3.
[12] "Ringham Directs, and Each in City Can Play His Part," *Bloomington Suburbanite,* September 5, 1963
[13] Quoted in Wuthnow, *Remaking the Heartland,* 237.
[14] "Ringham Directs," *Bloomington Suburbanite,* Sept. 3, 1963

Civic Theater strove actively for what they called in their constitution, "consciousness of community betterment."[15]

But what constituted community for these groups? Robert Gard and Gertrude Burley, in their 1959 study, wrote that "the uniqueness of Community Theatre lies in its dependence upon the particular community in which it has its roots, and in which it conducts theater activity by involving as much of the community as possible."[16] In this conceptualization, the amateur theatrical endeavor is a development of the combined energies of disparate individuals into the larger expression of local culture.[17] Yet this idea leaves unexplored questions of who is included in community and who is left out, and what binds people together beyond simply living in close proximity. The concept of an "organic" community itself is problematic, in fact, as it implies shared values or circumstances that do not necessarily cross lines of class, race, or gender, and it ignores questions of how community is built. A community, one argument goes, is created and conditioned by education, and cannot be understood apart from the cultural norms and more formal educative elements of a population. According to John Dewey, "the young have to be brought within the traditions, outlook and interests which characterize a community by means of education."[18] For the amateur theater makers who insisted they catered to and were representative of the community, did they see themselves shaping that community from above or simply responding to something that was already formed? Was community permanent, for them,

[15] Box 1, Folder 1. Bloomington Civic Theatre Records (PA33), PAA
[16] Robert E. Gard and Gertrude S. Burley, *Community Theatre: Idea and Achievement*, 6. See also Robert Leonard and Ann Kilkelly, *Performing Communities: Grassroots Ensemble Theaters Deeply Rooted in Eight U.S. Communities* (Oakland: New Village Press, 2006); Eugene van Erven, *Community Theatre: Global Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2001); Jan Cohen-Cruz, *Local Acts: Community-Based Performance in the United States* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005)
[17] Howard Becker would argue that artistic expression derives from cooperation among those involved in *any* manner—whether acting, printing programs, delivering information, maintaining a building—in developing what that group itself accepts as art. Becker, *Art Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982)
[18] Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems,* 154.

or changing, an immediate group of people coming together for a common cause, or a long-lasting attribute of anyone living in a particular place? Did they see community, as Benedict Anderson would have it, as largely "imagined," created by bonds of thought? Was it fundamentally a creation of dominant power structures, or a formation through which power structures could be challenged? "The ambivalence of community," wrote Gerard Delanty, "is that it can either be the expression of the communicative action of the life-world or it can be a retreat from communication in a purely moral stance that leaves the structure of domination untouched."[19]

For many amateur theaters of the 1940s and 1950s community was a malleable, if largely unexamined term. Developing their entities out of the populace as it was, without intent to change it profoundly (although with the hope to enhance some of its qualities, as described in more detail below), the theaters reflected the larger power structures through which the suburbs and the changing city demographics were developing at this time. Across the country, the booming suburbs of the 1950s took shape in part through restrictive covenants, by which white residents excluded potential black neighbors, or through less formal means, as in Edina, where Jews and other minorities were turned away by real estate agents, creating suburbs which were socioeconomically as well as racially homogenous.[20] Amateur theaters, as associations that facilitated friendships and connections, may have perpetuated the inequalities that were built into the development of postwar suburbs. And those groups that formed in the 1940s and 1950s in the cities, or to represent the larger Twin Cities region, were often skewed toward the middle or

[19] George Delanty, "Critiques of Community: Habermas, Touraine, and Bauman," from *The Community Performance Reader*, Ed. Petra Kuppers and Gwen Robertson (New York: Routledge, 2007), 30.
[20] Deborah Morse-Kahn, *Edina: Chapters in the City History* (Edina: City of Edina, 1998). On the creation of homogenous suburbs in the 1950s see for instance Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005)

upper-middle class—although most did include blue collar participants. Yet these theaters were created by individuals coming together without external pressure, to take part in a common activity with a common aim (or a "combined action"), and for the most part appeared genuinely open to the participation of those who lived within the bounds of their suburb or region.[21] In an effort to represent the larger communities of their suburbs or of the Twin Cities area, they formed their own micro-communities, in the sense, as Dewey puts it, that "wherever there is conjoint activity whose consequences are appreciated as good by all singular persons who take part in it… there is in so far a community."[22] Whereas in the institutionalized professional theater model of later years community would essentially be created and intentionally shaped by educating the population, the amateur theaters of this earlier period endeavored to create themselves out of society as it was. Furthermore, though grounded in the active participation of self-selected members from the community, many theaters of the time hoped to conjure a larger imagined community for non-participating locals who knew the theater to be *their* local cultural institution, taking vicarious pride in it no matter whether they ever stepped foot inside.

These theaters may have also played a role in assuaging some of the anxiety of what was an unsettled period, as well as serving as an outlet for what some—especially women—experienced as a confining age. The perception of the late 1940s and 1950s as a time of consensus has been largely refuted by historians, who now see it as a much more complex era of abundant material growth alongside strong currents of anxiety and tension in the social and cultural realm. This was, after all, not just the era of Schlesinger's vital political center during which Americans basked in material abundance, but that of the "lavender scare," McCarythism

[21] "Combined action" is from Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems,* 153.
[22] Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems,* 149.

(particularly threatening to the arts world), nuclear fear, and contemplation of the abject horrors and personal losses of WWII.[23] Amateur arts groups, including theater but also visual arts and music, may have been popular in the immediate postwar years in part because they served as an antidote to these feelings of anxiety or alienation.[24] Scholars have examined responses to these anxieties materializing in forms of commercial culture such as advertisements, and others point to the Beats and other generators of alternative artistic production as channeling these impulses. Yet though scholars have challenged dominant perceptions of the 1950s as homogenous, for the most part they have continued to emphasize consumerism—albeit alternative or subversive consumerism—as an inescapable characteristic of the era.[25] Direct participation in creative artistic activity on the amateur level, however, has been over-looked as a channel through which Americans negotiated the confusions of this period. While consumption-based leisure itself can of course offer meaning beyond materialism—providing 19th century working women with autonomy and release from the stresses of work life, creating opportunity for the mixing of different kinds of people, or carving out space to reject the strictures of efficient capitalist

[23] David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: the Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); See also Daniel Belgrad, *The Culture of Spontaneity: Improvisation and the Arts in Postwar America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Ellen Schrecker, *Many are the Crimes: McCarythism in America* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1998)

[24] The "culture of abundance" was a development, according to historians like T. J. Jackson Lears, Lary May, and Warren Susman, of an increased emphasis on material consumption and a new "highly organized social order." Lary May, Introduction to *Recasting America: Culture and Politics in the Age of the Cold War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 13; Warren Susman "'Personality' and Twentieth-Century Culture," from *Culture as History: the Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984); T.J. Jackson Lears, "A Matter of Taste: Corporate Cultural Hegemony in a Mass-Consumption Society," *Recasting America;* Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: Norton, 1991). Historians who have focused primarily on consumerism, materialism, homogeneity and containment include Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1998)*;* Tom Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Nation* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007); Richard Wightman Fox and T. J. Jackson Lears, *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983).

[25] See Daniel Belgrad, *The Culture of Spontaneity: Improvisation and the Arts in Postwar America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Joel Foreman, *The Other Fifties: Interrogating Mid-Century American Icons* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997)*;* May, *Recasting America.* See also Morris Dickstein, *Leopards in the Temple: the Transformation of American Fiction, 1945-1970* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).

product, as scholars have shown—widespread involvement in amateur arts challenges the idea that consumption as leisure, as the way Americans learned to seek fulfillment in Lizabeth Cohen's "consumers' republic," was for everyone in this era the primary—or most important—form of leisure-time activity.[26]

Participation in amateur art in fact departed fundamentally from many of the values that undergirded the consumption and production-based culture of postwar American society. Artistic involvement was not only an "antithesis to the standardization of contemporary life" and "an antidote to conformity," as Alvin Toffler claimed, but a way for Americans to communicate with one another and engage in self-reflection in a non-commercialized, socially interactive way during the postwar era. [27] Participation in amateur art was at root nonutilitarian and nonproductive, even counterproductive, in that it did not exist for the purpose of making a product or a profit. In an age of consumerist expansion amateur theater involved creative acts of production that had no monetary value and that did not always offer immediate gratification or pleasure.

The amateur arts, though "useless" in the sense of capitalist production, were not however without function. As Terry Eagleton has written of the aesthetic, "for a notion which is supposed to signify a kind of functionlessness, few ideas can have served so many disparate functions."[28] Stretching back to Aristotle, philosophers have hailed the arts as the ideal

[26] Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986); Lewis Erenberg, *Swingin' the Dream: Big Band Jazz and the Rebirth of American Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); William Leach, *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture.* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993); Lizabeth Cohen *A Consumers' Republic: the Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003).
[27] Alvin Toffler, *The Culture Consumers a Study of Art and Affluence in America* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1964), 51.
[28] Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1990), 3.

communicator of universal truths, the revelation of beauty in the world, and the creator of a unified totality of experience, among the loftier interpretations. Once separated from craft or other utilitarian ends, the arts have generally been understood to possess either tangible ends beyond their impact on the participant or observer—consolidating social class, moral uplift, urban regeneration—and/or intangible ends that have to do with catharsis, enlightenment, or fulfillment of the individual, to "contributing directly and liberally to an expanding and enriched life," according to John Dewey.[29] In a basic Marxist frame, the arts serve the material needs of the class to which they are connected, and aesthetic experience, which is inherently valuable to the individual and ideally integrated into a unified, wholly complete life, is in the capitalist framework separated from the experience of labor and everyday existence and sold separately for gain.[30] Thus their intangible function is exploited. The productions of mid-century amateur theater—the plays chosen and the method of production—were certainly a product of the socioeconomic structure at large, and reflected the middle and upper-middle class values of most of the participants. However, they cannot be entirely encompassed by this interpretation: they provided pleasurable experience in a separate sphere from that of work and labor but were not easily exploitable by the capitalist marketplace.

Amateur theater may have played a particularly important function in freeing women from some of the expectations of their age. As Elaine Tyler May has shown, the philosophy of domestic containment—paralleling the Cold War tactic of containment on a global scale—contributed to inscribed gender roles and a "reaffirmation of domesticity that rested on distinct roles for women and men."[31] In an era of great uncertainty and fear regarding international

[29] Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Milton, Balch & Company, 1934), 27.
[30] As described in Herbert Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension: Toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978)
[31] May, *Homeward Bound,* 6.

events, traditional family life was seen as a "bastion of safety."[32] Retreat to family and home life was particularly pervasive in the growing suburbs of the 1950s, where many of the new amateur theater companies of the 1950s were established. Thus active engagement in theater groups may have provided a particularly meaningful and freeing outlet for women. Such freedom may have come with risks; as historian Faye Dudden has written, theater offers "two divergent possibilities for women: transformation and objectification."[33] In an art form that demands their bodily presence, women have historically become objects of sexual interest and/or moral judgment. However through dramatic enactment women are also able to play with the fixity of identity and challenge the roles that society has doled out for them. Women like Myrna Rettegi, who played Marian the Librarian in Bloomington Civic Theater's *The Music Man*, and whose life, according to the *Minneapolis Tribune*, "so far mostly has centered on her artist husband, Peter, and their four young sons," confessed the satisfaction she felt in inhabiting a different role and then returning to her real life: "There really is something to this method acting business," she said. "I really do get to feeling like an old-maid librarian up there, and the boys remind me that I'm not."[34] In the Twin Cities region, women were among the most active in amateur theater groups, both onstage and backstage, in planning and in production.

If the aesthetic experience has some inherent value in providing pleasure, satisfying the senses, or instigating intellectual activity, many participants in the amateur arts saw its base purpose as the fulfillment of these needs. Percy MacKaye, who wrote about the little theaters of the early 20th century, understood participatory art as the "recreative labor of leisure": while labor had been stripped of pleasure and meaning in capitalist American society, participants

[32] May, *Homeward Bound*, 9.
[33] Faye Dudden, *Women in the American Theatre: Actresses and Audiences, 1790-1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 2.
[34] Dan Sullivan, "Lucky Query Lands Right Music Man," *Minneapolis Tribune* March 8, 1964.

could find joy in the nonproductive (or non-goods or profit-producing) labor of artistic creativity. "We are not concerned with what is to be 'effective' and what is to pay," he wrote of what he called "constructive leisure." "We are concerned with the heart of this thing, and loving and understanding it."[35] Theater in this sense is nonproductive in that it does not produce goods or directly further the ends of the dominant class (though one might argue that it operates as a steam valve and thus *does* further those ends), but is productive in providing pleasure and fulfillment in an otherwise empty and weary world.

However for many of the amateur theaters of the late 1940s and 1950s, the function of the arts went beyond personal fulfillment and rested in part on the enacting and sustaining of civic culture and community. In an effort to assert their significance and belonging, and help build their community, many of the amateur theater groups that were established in the late 1940s and 1950s called themselves "*civic theaters*." In doing so they defined themselves as a resource for the active participation of the community in a public platform, through which participants would contribute to a communal, public activity while fulfilling individual needs for creative expression and belonging. They would, in the process, become more enlightened democratic citizens, following Dewey's idea that "a good citizen finds his conduct as a member of a political group enriching and enriched by his participation in family life, industry, scientific and artistic associations."[36]

These new civic theaters called on ideas of civic republicanism that harkened back to ancient notions of the role of theater in Greek public life, as well as to traditional American

[35] Percy MacKaye, *The Civic Theatre in Relation to the Redemption of Leisure* (New York: M. Kennerly, 1912), 28.
[36] Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems,* 148.

political ideals.[37] In a sense these theaters were *ideal* civic entities in that they rejected the individualizing marketplace which could be construed as working against collective action for the public good, and produced an art form that was inherently collaborative and public in nature, but not productive of monetary gain.[38] If the citizen is one who takes an active part in public life, as theorists from John Dewey to Habermas have argued, and participating in these amateur groups was a way of being actively involved in the public life of one's community, then amateur theater participants were acting as citizens, with a voice in public community debate, even if they did not have overt political aims. MacKaye called the earlier little theaters of the early 20th century "civic theaters," because for him they represented "the conscious awakening of a people to self-government in the activities of its leisure."[39] Citizens who wanted to experience creative expression through theater could take charge of their lives and form their own theatrical groups. The civic theaters of the late 1940s and 1950s had a similar urge, but were open and outward-looking in a new way: unlike the little theaters, they were less invested in aesthetic progress, and more in a communal experience of creation. Furthermore they saw themselves providing not necessarily an educational experience in high art to their neighbors, but a fulfilling and enjoyable—not necessarily uplifting—experience. The civic theater artists of the postwar Twin Cities were in general less interested in shaping a community of art appreciators, and more interested in widening participation in something worthwhile, meaningful, and usually fun. Self-

[37] On civic republicanism in the American Revolution see Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), and Gordon Wood *The Creation of the American Republic: 1776-1787* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969). On the idea of the public, particularly debates over whether publics are constituted by communication, discourse, rationality, or action, the public notion of relation to the state or politics (as opposed to private or domestic spheres), see among many other works, Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989); Jeff Weintraub and Kristen Kumar, *Public and Private in Thought and Practice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997)

[38] The idea that individualistic market forces in capitalist, democratic society are opposed to, or are moderated by, civic republicanism is very well summarized in John D. Fairfield, *The Public and Its Possibilities: Triumphs and Tragedies in the American City* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010).

[39] MacKaye, *The Civic Theatre*, 15.

government of leisure, however, and active participation in one's own fate within the public sphere, were goals in both eras.

This relationship between theater as leisure activity and the civic realm—especially the development of qualities of ideal citizenship through development of knowledge, political opinions, tolerance or intolerance—has long been considered fundamental to the power of the art form. Theater practitioners have long seen their art as a platform for enacting, reflecting on, and challenging the norms of society and politics. In fact the association of theater with democratic citizenship and participation stretches back to the Greeks, arguably the origin of the Western theater tradition. Evolving, according to most theories, from the public recitation of epic poetry, or dithyramb, as Aristotle writes, the Greek theater was a popular activity in multiple senses, involving enormous community festivals in massive arenas, with thousands of citizens in attendance, and with a chorus, at least in earlier years, made up of ordinary Athenian citizens—amateurs chosen to represent the voice of the people and to establish the "ethical or social framework" of the piece.[40] Ticket prices were kept low, and when they were raised, a public fund was created to allow access to those who could not afford them. Audiences, if not at that time part of the chorus, asserted themselves during productions through loud responses to the action on stage, and many plays were blatant commentaries—often critical—on contemporary political matters. The theater in Greece was an active, dramatic public forum for the democratic community, imperfect as it was. It was a kind of story-telling, according to J.R. Green, with "the effect of binding… societies or communities together."[41]

[40] Oscar Brockett, *History of the Theatre: Sixth Edition* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1968, 1991), 26.
[41] J.R. Green, *Theatre in Ancient Greek Society* (London: Routledge, 1994), 5.

Americans came around slowly to recognizing a relationship between theatrical performance and democratic life, however. The Puritans believed theater to be a realm of chaos and sin, and some early American towns banned it outright; for instance the General Court of Massachusetts in 1750 declared an "Act to Prevent Stage Plays and Other Theatricals."[42] By the mid-19th century, however, the arts were gaining general acceptance as useful or pleasurable activities in communities across the country. Growing acceptance paralleled the urbanizing, industrializing country, where anxiety around social boundaries, identity, class, and gender led to new emphasis on civility and manners.[43] As such, engagement in performative activities on an amateur level, while once considered a frivolous European luxury, came in the 19th century to be admired as engagement in an activity for pleasure or pure interest rather than for ulterior, ostensibly inferior, motives like money or prestige—both arising, many thought, from base greed. Such ideas harkened back to 17th century Europe, where the amateur was often considered a virtuoso: "not only a gentleman of leisure but also a learned person: a scholar, an antiquary, and a scientist… [his] interest lay in the sheer pleasure of learning and the cultivation of reputation… not in what Francis Bacon would call 'benefit and use.'"[44] In the Twin Cities, "parlor theatricals" took place in the homes of the region's elite; involving in one instance the presentation of a short comedy, a soliloquy, a poetry reading, dance, and a supper.[45] In this context, amateurism hailed the nonutilitarian, counterproductive nature of artistic production as one of its prime attributes, but often with a very different underlying rationale from building

[42] John Houchin, *Censorship of the American Theatre in the 20th Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 10.
[43] John F. Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility: Manners in Nineteenth Century Urban America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1990)
[44] Garder, *Academic Instincts*, 12.
[45] *St. Paul Pioneer Press* article of November 21, 1875. Quoted in Frank M. Whiting, *Minnesota Theater: from Old Fort Snelling to the Guthrie* (Pogo Press, 1988), 105.

community or rejecting commercialized society: as an activity of the upper class, distinguishing those with ample leisure time from those without.[46]

Not all 19th century amateur art was simply a way of distinguishing the moneyed upper class, however. In *The Torchbearers: Women and their Amateur Arts Associations in America*, Karen J. Blair traces the involvement of women in amateur arts groups back to the desire, in the mid-late 19th century, for "the American non-waging earning wife to be familiar with art but not sufficiently accomplished to be a professional," in other words, to "amuse and entertain," but she also shows that women found deep meaning in their experience in amateur arts societies, blazing paths of cultural freedom for themselves.[47] In the Twin Cities, German and then Scandinavian language dramatic groups were very active in territorial St. Paul through the 1880s. Neither overtly alluded to political ideals of citizenship, but provided a sense of belonging and vocal participation in community life for participants, important for recent immigrants. Such early formations were followed by more formal amateur dramatic social clubs in the growing cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. According to John Sherman, in this era "'church groups and debating societies [also] occasionally tore a passion to tatters on improvised stages."[48]

Pageants, large outdoor performative civic celebrations often involving hundreds of community members, were also popular in the late 19th century. The pageant was both a successor to the Greek democratic stage (to which it sometimes explicitly alluded) and a precursor to the amateur civic groups of the 1950s that this chapter discusses, in that the form

[46] See Nina Auerbach. *Private Theatricals: The Lives of the Victorians* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990); Garber, *Academic Instincts*
[47] Karen J. Blair, *The Torchbearers: Women and their Amateur Arts Associations in America: 1890-1930* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 3.
[48] Sherman, *Music and Theater in Minnesota History*, 58. On early theater in the region see also Hermann E. Rothfuss, "The Early German Theater in Minnesota," *Minnesota History*, 32, No. 2 (June, 1951)

encouraged wide-spread participation and aimed to fill a civic function, educating citizens about their region and providing them with entertainment, creative release, and a tangible connection to others in their community. In the Twin Cities region pageants often reenacted the region's history and celebrated the power of St. Anthony Falls, which gave birth to St. Paul and Minneapolis.[49] Pageants such as these did not, however, erase societal inequalities of the time. They often presented immigrants as objects, not subjects, arguing that they must be molded into the right kind of citizens.[50] "Pageants are problematic in their unequal power dynamic and the overly simplified message they often projected concerning 'who is 'us''?" Jan Cohen-Cruz has written of the form.[51] Pageants defined community and celebrated belonging, but often in specific, exclusionary ways.

Beyond pageants and informal parlor theatricals, there was by the late 19th century a robust commercial theater presence in cities across the country, with traveling shows presenting stars from New York in Broadway hits playing in ornate theaters that would later become movie halls. In the late 19th century such theaters held a glamour and excitement that attracted significant crowds looking for an entertaining evening. Although the main source of exposure to theater for most Americans, they were critically derided for presenting nonserious plays—light comedies, musicals, or melodramas—with mediocre actors that disappointed figures like Theodore Dreiser who, during his days as a drama critic in St. Louis, wrote that "America just

[49] See Carole S. Zellie and Amy M. Lucas, "The Minneapolis Waterfront as Birth Place *and* First Place," Landscape Research LLC (Minnesota: Minnesota Historical Society, 2008)
[50] As Richard Butsch points out, pageants were utilized for a variety of ends. Butsch, *The Citizen Audience,* 76-77. On the uses and nuances of pageantry, see also David Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry: the Uses of Tradition in the Early Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: the University of North Carolina Press, 1990)
[51] Jan Cohen-Cruz, *Local Acts: Community-Based Performance in the United States* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 18.

then, apparently, was entering upon its grandest period of stage sentiment or mush."[52] More serious work, however, was not always welcomed by American audiences who preferred light opera or comedy, and for whom theater was most important as a social event. While famed actors and actresses were widely celebrated and attracted great notice in the press and from enthusiastic audiences, there was little push at this time in the American commercial theater to establish theater as a high art form, or to compete with Europe for artistic legitimacy in this realm. According to University of Minnesota Professor (and later Guthrie supporter) Frank Whiting, "the works of the great 'modern' playwrights of Europe seem to have had slight exposure in the Twin Cities prior to 1933. No commercial productions whatsoever by New York road companies have been found of any plays be August Strindberg, Ferenc Molnar, Arthur Schnitzler."[53]

Minneapolis and St. Paul, like many other cities, also had their share of stock companies in the late 19th century. Like the touring shows, stock companies specialized mostly in light, popular fair, hoping to provide easy entertainment and make money. The Ferris Stock Company, for instance, produced mostly melodramas and made a sizeable profit, at least in its first years. But the Twin Cities stock companies also included the democratic-minded People's Stock Company, which, according to Frank Whiting "provided a steady supply of quality entertainment at popular prices," gave opportunities for local actors to work alongside those imported from New York and elsewhere, employed "at least one local playwright," and produced two original plays.[54] The theater closed, however, in 1889, after only one year, presumably due to financial

[52] Theodore Dreiser, *Newspaper Days: an Autobiography*, Ed. T.D. Nostwich (Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 2000), 219.
[53] Whiting, *Minnesota Theater*, 92.
[54] Whiting, *Minnesota Theatre*, 71.

stress, and perhaps lack of interest.[55] It was followed two decades later by the Bainbridge Players, established in 1911, which outlasted all other local stock companies, became a stalwart of the Minneapolis cultural scene, and may be the only theater company from the early 20th century that is still remembered in the region today. Producing modern classics alongside popular light comedies, the theater served as a platform for theatrical luminaries such as Victor Jory, and tackled ambitious work by Eugene O'Neill and Henrik Ibsen. As a testament to the company's central position in the city, A.G. (Buzz) Bainbridge himself became Mayor in 1933, the year the company closed. The Bainbridge Players integrated itself into the community not simply as a venue of entertainment but as a civic resource, and can be seen in this way as a precursor, perhaps an inspiration, to future groups aspiring to be civic theaters.

By this period in the early 20th century, amateur theaters—including the women's dramatic clubs that Blair examines—converged into the burgeoning little theater movement, led at first by women but largely taken over by men as it grew in perceived legitimacy. Initiated by idealistic theater artists and intellectuals, the little theaters aimed to produce high dramatic art in the European tradition, build an American audience to appreciate this work, and provide what they considered to be a healthy alternative to rapidly spreading commercial amusement, which they found "mindless, bloated, and detrimental to psychic well-being."[56] Like much of the progressive reform activity of the time, the theaters considered themselves to have a civic purpose, to improve the lives of those in their mostly urban communities. Dorothy Chansky has described the development of little theaters as a major national movement in which the significance of theater as a legitimate art form and a venue for uplift was affirmed. Unlike the

[55] Whiting suggests that the cause of the collapse is unknown, but that new management had recently taken over and preferred to book traveling groups. *Minnesota Theatre,* 72.
[56] Chansky, *Composing Ourselves,* 5.

professionalized theater that would arise in the early 1960s as part of the corporate and governmental societal apparatus, however, the little theaters were forged primarily by amateur artists who saw their work as an antidote to an increasingly corporatized society. Despite common goals, the theaters were not without internal controversy, split between those who were committed to plays that critiqued the realities of society, and reformers who hoped to use theater to reaffirm cultural norms and Americanize immigrants. According to Chanksy, the movement "included forward-looking activism and modernist aesthetics as well as skepticism, nativism, elitism, and nostalgia… Coalitions and alliances shifted."[57] In the Twin Cities, where the commercially viable Bainbridge Players as well as the University of Minnesota already provided relatively serious theater, the little theater movement was not particularly strong. There existed a few minor little theaters, with serious intentions to produce high quality work, but nothing like the Duluth Playhouse, which took up "a high-minded crusade" to produce serious theater of high artistic merit, perhaps in response to the greater lack of commercial and educational theater there.[58]

In the 1930s, the line between professionalized, legitimate theater and more informal performative forms grew murkier. What, for instance, were picket line performances? How "artful" were the productions of the Federal Theater Project? The period has been understood as one in which voices usually out of the mainstream found expression—particularly through the Popular Front and to some degree the WPA—through writing, painting, music or drama. Michael Denning, for instance, sees a new cultural milieu arising from the ranks of second-generation immigrants, European émigrés, and middle-class intellectuals, and links the

[57] Chansky, *Composing Ourselves*, 3.
[58] Whiting, *Minnesota Theatre*, 107.

emergence of new voices to the reinvigorated labor movement and the CIO, which other scholars including Lizabeth Cohen and Thomas Gobel have identified as encouraging the expression of social and political identities through cultural and artistic arenas.[59] Through these developments, arenas of amateur involvement emerged in the early 1930s, including John Reed Clubs, proletarian magazines, and workers' theaters.[60] Scholars like Joan Saab have also interpreted the New Deal arts projects as furthering the democratic potential of culture in the 1930s, arguing that project leaders hoped to stimulate artistic work that would emerge unmediated from the people.[61]

Amateurism was particularly valued—perhaps even fetishized—in the 1930s, as a font for creativity, and a path through which unmediated artistic expression could flow. In the Popular Front environment of the period, this embrace may partially have stemmed from emulation of the Russian theaters of the 1920s and 30s, where amateurism carried a mystique appealing to early ideas of socialist culture. These amateur groups were, according to Lynn Mally, "a path for participants to claim a public role" in early post-revolutionary Russia, although almost all served the interest of the new state.[62] Even in professional groups like the Moscow Art Theatre, which toured the United States in 1923, theater was considered "an art form that could unify actor and

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[59] Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: the Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Verso, 1997); Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Thomas Gobel, "Becoming American: Ethnic Workers and the Rise of the CIO," *Labor History*, 29, No. 2, 1988.

[60] On John Reed Clubs and proletarian magazines see Denning, *The Cultural Front;* Daniel Aaron, *Writers on the Left: Episodes in American Literary Communism* (New York; Harcourt, Brace & World, 1961)*;* Paula Rabinowitz, *Labor and Desire: Women's Revolutionary Fiction in Depression America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991). On workers' theater see Colette Hyman, *Staging Strikes: Workers' Theatre and the American Labor Movement* (Philadelphia: Temple University, 1997); Malcolm Goldstein, *The Political Stage: American Drama and Theater of the Great Depression* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974); Morgan Y. Himelstein, *Drama Was a Weapon: the Left-Wing Theatre in New York, 1929-1941* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1976, 1963)*;* Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front*, Chapter 8.

[61] Joan Saab calls the WPA projects' approach a "production-based definition of art, as something that all Americans could create." Joan Saab, *For the Millions: American Art and Culture Between the Wars* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 11. See also Jane deHart Mathews, *The Federal Theatre, 1935-1939* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967)*;* Victoria Grieve, *The Federal Art Project and the Creation of Middlebrow Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007).

[62] Mally *Revolutionary Acts*, 3-4.

audience," and "believed to have special abilities to create shared community values."[63] Such ideals about the power of theater, especially in its amateur form, to express public ideas and communal principles appealed to many Americans in the leftist 1930s, particularly those involved in the workers theaters that sprang up across the country at this time.

In Minneapolis and St. Paul, amateur theaters with serious purpose emerged in this period. The Minneapolis Theatre Union, made up of amateur artists and political activists, provided highly politicized workers theater productions to the local population. Established with an overt political mission, the group was an arm of the local Popular Front, with prominent local labor leaders and intellectuals (including Meridel Le Sueur) on its advisory committees, and it was subsumed under the local Farmer-Labor Association. Yet like many workers theaters of the time, and as a community theater that privileged participation, the Minneapolis Theatre Union was peopled on the one hand by those who simply wanted to take part in theatrical activities, and on the other by those committed first and foremost to political activism. The group performed often at the Unitarian Society, which provided free space in exchange for a taming down of overt political messages, and at other times for political or union gatherings, where the group's inclinations could be much more blatant.[64]

Other amateur theaters of the period were less overtly political. The Y Players of St. Paul produced works including the ambitious commentary on modernism, *R.U.R.,* and lighter work like Philip Barry's family drama *The Joyous Season.* Their aim was to produce well-rehearsed, deeply thoughtful and skillfully acted productions but with nonprofessional members of the community. "This group gives as good and entertaining an evening at the theatre as the majority

[63] Mally, *Revolutionary Acts,* 8.
[64] See Colette A. Hyman, "Culture as Strategy: Popular Front Politics and the Minneapolis Theatre Union," *Minnesota History,* 52, No. 8 (Winter, 1991), 294-306.

[of] touring companies that come through, at one fifth of the price," proclaimed *Centre Aisle,* the "the newspaper of the non-professional theatre," in 1936.[65] Other broadly ambitious amateur groups in this period included the Penthouse Players, originally a University-based entity headed by Merle Loppnow, later business manager of the University Theater, which performed such works as Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* as well as popular comedies like the Broadway hit *Boy Meets Girl*. Small-scale and extremely low budget, the Penthouse Players were committed in principle to nonprofessional local theater, instituting an award each year for "outstanding contributor to the non-professional theater in the Twin Cities," and welcoming interested locals to audition for their shows ("and I do mean you…" one advertisement insisted).[66] The Players firmly believed that the nonprofessional theater could contribute to the development of theater as an art form: in 1938 they established a "Laboratory Stage" to produce new works by local authors. According to one reviewer, although "they do not believe in being austerely intellectual," they were "offering something in the way of a liberal education in the dramatic arts."[67] Their insistence that amateurism be taken seriously as an avenue toward producing important theatrical work—though not a stance shared by the majority of amateur groups in the 1950s—would become an increasingly difficult idea to support in the professionalizing 1960s.

In the 1930s, amateur theaters of this type joined together in festivals, conferences, and competitions like the Iowa Play Production Festival, and in an experimental guild for the Little Theatre movement, established in 1935 with representatives from groups across the state. Their aims included "reviving the popularity of stage plays; critical study of the trend in modern

[65] "Y Players," *Centre Aisle,* March 1936, Minnesota Historical Society (hereafter MNHS)
[66] "Penthouse Players Honor Contributor," unattributed 1938 newspaper clipping in Penthouse Players Papers, MNHS, and "'Boy Meets Girl' at Playhouse in Early March," *Centre Aisle*, February, 1938, MNHS
[67] "Penthouse Players Offer 'Slight Case of Murder,'" by James Gray, unattributed 1939 newspaper clipping in Penthouse Players Papers, MNHS

drama; drama study groups and scenic art."[68] The new magazine *Centre Aisle*, which concentrated on issues related to the nonprofessional theater, was committed to the re-establishment of the Minnesota Dramatic Guild, which, it claimed "started in 1929 to combine all amateur producing groups for their mutual advancement."[69] These overarching organizations were in a sense the progenitors of later professional organizations like Theatre Communications Group, (discussed in Chapter 2), but were uninterested in professionalizing. Participants did not believe professionalism was necessary to contribute meaningfully to the American theater: figures like Peter Jean Vest, a former Minnesotan who became successful in New York theater, encouraged readers of *Centre Aisle* "to stay at home and build up their own amateur theaters," claiming that "they'll be in better plays and contribute more to the future of the American theater than they ever can on Broadway."[70]

Despite bold theater that reflected the leftist politics of the Popular Front in the 1930s, a conservative strain in the Twin Cities community held sway over groups with potentially wider or more mainstream audiences. Minneapolis proved itself more liberal than St. Paul in allowing a 1935 production of *Tobacco Road* while St. Paul banned it, but citizens of both cities sometimes resisted controversial work. Indeed, rather than deriving from the state, many of the more conservative strains, sometimes leading to censorship, seem to have surfaced from the Twin Cities community itself. In performing at the Unitarian Society, for instance, the Minneapolis Theatre Union faced resistance to the political nature of their work, and the entire Federal

[68] "Parent Group in State Little Theater Movement Formed by Local Guild," unattributed1935 newspaper article in Penthouse Players Papers, MNHS
[69] *Centre Aisle*, March, 1936, MNHS
[70] Quoted in "Ambitions?" unattributed newspaper clipping in Penthouse Players Papers, MNHS. In its April, 1936 volume, *Centre Aisle* asserted: "Behind the birth of the Minnesota Players, organized in St. Paul March 5, was an idea long cherished by the founder that the Little Theater was the proving ground for many ambitious tyros who, subject to average economic conditions, were unable to warrant devotion of their full time to the pursuit of a career in the theatrical arts." *Centre Aisle,* April, 1936, 13, MNHS.

Theatre Project was discontinued in Minnesota after appalled residents read in the *Minneapolis Journal* that the state's incipient project was to employ a "fan dancer" who had been arrested for nudity at a nightclub.[71] An emphasis on *propriety* in this case underscored one aspect of what would come to be expected of professional performance: that it demonstrate good taste and remain generally inoffensive to its audience. Such standards were at times applied to amateur theater as well by the very communities they sought to represent.

American theater in the early to mid-1940s, particularly during wartime, was, compared to the 1930s, deliberately tame. Theater scholars tend to skip over the 1940s, as there is seemingly little to say. Margo Jones, who would become a central figure in the early regional theater movement, wrote of the period that "the war intensified in my mind the need for a professional theatre. But wartime was not the logical moment for beginning action on such a theatre," and instead she took a position at the University of Texas Drama Department.[72] Many theater artists went into a kind of hibernation. The Twin Cities region offers something of an exception to this rule, however. In 1941, a small stock company established the previous year in the town of Excelsior hired a young Northwestern theater graduate, Don Stolz, as its new director. With a short leave for wartime service, Stolz would stay with the theater until 2013, producing lighthearted plays mixed with more challenging work by authors like Ionesco. Although a commercial theater—paying its bills through ticket receipts and money-making endeavors such as private shows for corporate events—the Old Log was understood to be a community staple. It continued throughout its existence to use local actors, and remained loyal to its mission that "the Old Log does belong to the audience."[73] It was a suburban theater, and only

[71] Susan Quinn, *Furious Improvisation: How the WPA and a Cast of Thousands Made High Art Out of Desperate Times*, (New York: MacMillan, 2008)
[72] Margo Jones, *Theatre-in-the-Round* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1951), 50-51.
[73] Don Stolz, *The Old Log Theater & Me* (Edina, MN: Beaver's Pond Press, Inc., 2009), 33.

audiences with some means could travel to it from the Twin Cities themselves, but it was, and has remained, a central base from which local theater artists could count on paid opportunities; thus contributing to what would become a livable urban area for artists.

The theaters in the 1940s and 1950s enjoyed a certain freedom in that they did not have to produce exceptionally serious or experimental work because that task was largely undertaken by educational stages, especially the University of Minnesota Theatre, which presented for public audiences well-rehearsed productions of serious—often avant-garde—plays and musicals. The University Theatre had been a major presence in the Twin Cities cultural scene since the early 1930s, when new director A. Dale Riley reorganized the University's theater program—still academically under the wing of the Department of Speech—to present a legitimate season of plays for the general public as well as a University audience. Immediately, the University Theatre indicated that it would undertake a wide range of sophisticated, sometimes unusual plays not often seen in the Midwest. In the 1930s, the University Theatre produced such works as *Turendot, the Wild Duck, Julius Caesar,* and *Carmen.* Their productions were reviewed in local newspapers and by respected critics such as Merle Potter in the *Minneapolis Journal* and James Gray in the *St. Paul Dispatch.*

Frank Whiting, who would become a central figure in wooing Tyrone Guthrie, took the helm of the University Theatre during the 1940s, a period in which English Professors Eric Bentley and Robert Penn Warren leant prestige to the department, and it premiered Warren's *All the King's Men*. Considered by 1952 "one of the foremost producing theaters in the Twin Cities," the University Theatre continued in its role of public theater, with its increasing prominence noted in the academic Department's change of name to the Department of Speech

and Theatre Arts in 1951.[74] In 1955 an associate editor at *Theatre Arts* magazine called its production of *King Lear* "more impressive than the recent Orson Welles production on Broadway," and the next season the University Theatre became only the second theater in the United States to take on Brecht's *Mother Courage.*[75] In 1954 it produced *Amahl and the Night Visitors* in collaboration with the Minneapolis Symphony, and in 1957 the theater toured its production of *Midsummer Night's Dream* to France and Germany under the auspices of the Department of Defense, and to Brazil under the State Department. Over the course of the decade the University Theatre presented the gamut of serious classics: *Henry IV, Richard III, Uncle Vanya, Hedda Gabler*, and *Saint Joan*, as well as lighter entertainment and occasional new work. The theater also scooped up plays that had difficult runs on Broadway or in other places, but which could speak to an audience expecting less immediately exciting experiences: for instance the "morality play" *Billy Budd,* an adaptation of Melville's novel co-written by Louis Cox, which was kept alive in New York thanks to extraordinarily invested artists taking pay cuts and pleading for audiences, but was successful both critically and at the box office when produced by the University.[76] As one reviewer, not privy to the University Theatre's actual budget requirements, put it: "we should be thankful that the University Theater does not have to be bound by commercial considerations. Otherwise we should not be likely to have a chance to see so fine and thoughtful a play as *Billy Bud.*"[77] Their work was consistently reviewed by John Sherman in the *Minneapolis Tribune,* along with other local critics, considered alongside the

[74] Joe Lobaito, "U Theater Contributes 71 Years of Culture," *The Catholic Student*, June 17, 1952
[75] University of Minnesota Department of Theatre Arts & Dance website, "Department of Theatre & Dance History: the 1950s," https://theatre.umn.edu/about/history/1950s
[76] Herbert C. Morton, "'Billy Bud,' Play Showing at U, Escaped Oblivion by a 'Miracle,'" *St. Paul Dispatch*, January 18, 1952
[77] John H. Harvey, "Billy Bud – a Fine, Thoughtful Play," undated and unattributed article in Frank M. Whiting Papers, University of Minnesota Archives.

other "civic theaters" a legitimate place to take in theater, with reviewers making few excuses in their reviews for the productions' educational origins.

As a semi-public presence, the theater made efforts to reach out to its audiences, soliciting play recommendations from them and insisting "it is our desire to do all we can to make this *your* University Theatre."[78] In some ways it operated like any other theater group: selling tickets, advertising its productions and trying to please its loyal audience members. It carried out campaigns to raise funds for the building of a new theater, pledging that donors would have their names recorded on bronze plaques in the lobby. But it also clearly embraced its role as an educator. Programs included long notes on the playwright, origin, and meaning of the plays, the theater deliberately took on material that would challenge both student artists and public audience, and it produced work in collaboration with the foreign language, English, and music departments. While box office played a small role in play selection, and the theater did have to keep an eye on its budget, it could take many more risks in selection and execution than an entity with no University subsidization could, and ticket prices were low to encourage large audiences. The University Theatre also saw its role as spreading interest and engagement in theater throughout the state. To this end, it toured numerous productions to small communities outside the Twin Cities, hoping to inspire locals to begin their own theaters.

The University Theatre also played a broader role in developing investment in theater in the Twin Cities through the extremely popular "Introduction to the Theatre" class taught by Arthur Ballet, who joined the faculty in 1953 and became a key figure in the Twin Cities theater scene—he later established the Office for Advanced Drama Research, which married plays to

[78] Letter to Patron from University Theatre Staff, June 6, 1951. Frank Whiting Papers, University of Minnesota Archives.

theater companies, amateur, professional, educational, and commercial. The 1950s were a period of unprecedented growth in college enrollment in the Middle West, with student population doubling between 1952 and 1962, and the influence of the liberal arts—and the study of theater in particular—was felt among the general population in unprecedented ways.[79] Some of those who took Ballet's class became amateur or professional theater practitioners, while others became financial supporters or simply audience members. Until the early 1960s, there was a sense that the University Theatre and its academic department provided a service to the larger community in providing theatrical productions and laying the groundwork for a general appreciation of theater among the college-educated population. After the establishment of the Guthrie Theater, however, the theater department shifted its focus to training future professionals rather than producing its own plays for public consumption. Participating in educational theater was no longer an acceptable end in itself; rather students of theater were preparing for something better: professional careers as actors, administrators, or backstage. In the meantime, the University Theatre laid fertile ground for the development of a lively amateur theater community in the Twin Cities.

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Amateur theater after WWII thus developed within a region that was relatively well-supplied in terms of theater. The fact that so many amateur groups identified themselves at this time as "civic theaters" demonstrates the special role these entities saw themselves as filling in their smaller communities or in the region at large, and a common understanding that an amateur theater could function as a central civic resource. Yet each theater approached its role as a civic

[79] Wuthnow, *Remaking the Heartland,* 115.

entity in a slightly different way, and encountered different obstacles to fulfilling such an identity.

The North Star Drama Guild, discussed above, was the first postwar group to fashion itself a civic theater, and aimed to fill that role for the entire Twin Cities area, particularly Minneapolis. North Star largely understood its identity as a civic theater to indicate openness and accessibility to the community, which it very broadly defined as everyone who lived in the Twin Cities area, without exclusion. A wide variety of amateurs from across the region, representing a diversity of socioeconomic backgrounds, took part in the theater's work: housewives and high school students, grocers and lab technicians, veterans and social workers. "Since October, 1946," a program note bragged, "over two hundred persons have acted on the Playhouse stage. This figure does not include return engagements… The number of Minneapolis people who have volunteered their services behind the scenes—in the office, in the shops, and backstage—is far greater naturally. Close to eight hundred individuals have assisted in this capacity."[80] The theater hoped to provide a home for any and all Twin Citians who wanted to act or paint sets or hang lights. Furthermore, it offered a space for those who wished to escape the increasingly prevalent forces of specialization and narrow expertise of the postwar working world: "Patricia Markey is a 19-year-old lab technician who is using civic theatre correctly," one program note read, "by participation in all phases of the North Star Drama Guild program. Starting as a Guild office worker, she soon lent her assistance on the paint crew, later hammered nails and built scenery."[81] In this way, the civic theater was an oasis of nonspecialization in an increasingly rationalized and segmented world.

[80] Program for *Papa Is All,* May, 1947, North Star Drama Guild papers (PA 23), PAA
[81] Program for *The Late George Apley¸* October-November, 1946, North Star Drama Guild Papers (PA 23), PAA

North Star's ambitions were based on a democratic, perhaps somewhat naïve, notion of cultural participation in which all were welcome. In practice only those with time and some financial flexibility could take part, and North Star's participants, while they did vary in their economic background, were hardly a reflection of the true diversity of the Twin Cities population. The numbers of local people involved were large for an amateur theater, which received "hundreds of letters and phone calls" heralding a particular opening night performance. According to a program note, "men and women around the city have showered us with kindness ever since plans for a Civic Theatre were inaugurated last year. Money, advice, equipment, assistance—all were readily forthcoming from civic-minded friends."[82] The group boasted strong ties with local organizations, using a local advertising firm's printing press for their programs, borrowing furniture from local stores, and receiving donated flowers. Its actual work may have only reached a small segment of the population, but the North Star Theater Guild did seem to be establishing itself as a notable civic asset. As the Guthrie would later do to rally supporters, North Star also played on the local pride of Minneapolitans to try to attract participants. An early poster proclaimed: "Of 30 leading cities in the US Minneapolis alone is the only one which does not support a civic theatre or any other form of community playhouse… Minneapolis leads the nation in many ways, but we trail it theatrically."[83] The North Star founders intended their theater, in all its amateur glory, not only to be a major civic resource for the metropolitan region and to contribute to the quality of life of local residents, but to project the success of Minneapolis as a city and bolster its national reputation: an ambitious and ultimately unreachable goal.

[82] "Ladies and Gentlemen," and "Words and Music," note from program for *Personal Appearance*, October, 1946, North Star Drama Guild Papers (PA 23), PAA
[83] Poster, undated but probably from 1946, in the North Star Drama Guild Papers (PA 23), PAA

The North Star also saw itself as reflecting a particularly liberal and tolerant Twin Cities. Its production of *Deep Are the Roots,* a play that dealt with racism toward returning veterans in the South, and was banned in cities across the country, met no resistance in Minneapolis. "In fact," a note in a North Star program boasted, "the Civic Theatre staff has been met more than half-way by all the individuals and organizations whose help has been solicited, and by many more who volunteered their services."[84] Lest the theater congratulate itself too much, however, *Deep Are the Roots* appeared to be its only play with non-white actors, and even in this production the North Star Drama Guild engaged this community from the top down, incorporating black actors into a production directed and interpreted by whites. In fact, the theater did not even draw all its actors for this production from the local community: James Edwards, who had played the lead role of Brett in the Broadway production of *Deep Are the Roots*, was shipped in from New York to play the role in Minneapolis.

Tensions with certain members of the local population also grated on the theater. The group folded after only two years of production, citing financial difficulties in part posed by the demands of the Stagehands Union for the theater to pay them union wages. Tensions between unionized theater workers and amateur theaters with big ambitions but small budgets (and a commitment to amateurism that foreclosed the possibility of paying artists) would pose continual problems for the region's community theaters. The North Star Drama Guild fashioned itself as a "civic, non-profit, non-commercial, non-professional, volunteer project,"[85] that did not intend to pay its artists, and believed it should be exempt from hiring union stagehands, which it did not

[84] "About the Play," Program for *Deep Are the Roots,* November, 1947, North Star Drama Guild Papers (PA 23), PAA

[85] Program for *Personal Appearance*, October 1946, North Star Drama Guild Papers (PA 23), PAA. The Drama Guild went on to say that it was a supporter of unions in general, but that it should be possible to have a nonprofit volunteer organization too.

need and was unable to pay. Its very identity as a civic, community-friendly entity was threatened by the prospect of hiring paid stagehands, which would require raising admission prices "a change in the methods of selecting casts" and "several changes in the staff setup"; in other words, the beginnings of professional development.[86] This was all antithetical to the principals and purposes of the group. Indeed, according to the group's leaders, such a forced accommodation to the wishes of the Stagehands Union was antithetical to the entire spirit of American democratic freedom: "to those of us who were but comparatively recently fighting at Peleliu, Marseilles, Tarawa, Iwo, Saipan, Lunga Beach," the Guild's program note continued, "for such lofty 'ideals' as 'democracy,' 'United Nations,' and 'the Four Freedoms,' the recent action of Local 13 makes it increasingly plain that the real winners of World War II are still overseas… lying where they fell."[87] To the Guild's founders, American freedom was exemplified in the open, accessible, participatory cultural entity, and not in the exclusionary, higher cost road to professionalism. The Stagehands Union, however, saw the situation differently: here was a theater company purporting to provide entertainment for the entire community, which could offer a source of employment, but which instead looked to use free labor. The line between leisure and labor, the fairness of using amateur, unpaid artists to entertain a broad section of the community, and the public function and responsibility of amateur groups would be contested throughout the period.

Following in the footsteps of the North Star Drama Guild, the Twin Cities Playhouse faced a public reckoning of a slightly different sort. Christening itself the "Civic Playhouse," it also declared its intention to be a resource for the entire Twin Cities community and opened in

[86] Program for *Personal Appearance*, October 1946, North Star Drama Guild Papers (PA 23), PAA
[87] Program for *Personal Appearance*, October 1946, North Star Drama Guild Papers (PA 23), PAA

early 1953 with a slate of plays including Lorca's *The House of Bernarda Alba,* Strindberg's *There are Crimes and Crimes,* and Shaw's *Saint Joan.* The theater claimed it would "produce the great drama of the world," and aimed to train its participants as serious theater artists, bringing in local amateur theater leader Frederick Hilgendorf to teach actors the Stanislavski technique, which had pervaded American theatrical training in the 1930s.[88] Like the North Star Drama Guild, however, the theater's ambitions (mixed with internal disagreements) outstripped its finances, and it folded just a year later, when it could not raise enough money to install a fire exit in its building. With success—and particularly with ambition to be a "civic theater" for such a large metropolitan region—came scrutiny from the arbiters of safety and justice in the local community; for the North Star it was the Stagehands Union and for the Twin Cities Playhouse it was the Fire Marshall.

To operate as civic theaters, bringing populations together to take charge of their own leisure, participate in public life, socialize, and explore common issues, certain amateur theaters of the period, anticipating conventional tastes from the communities they hoped to represent and cater to, pursued moderation and judiciousness in play selection. This was true of the Edyth Bush Theatre, for instance, which was founded by the wife of 3M founder Archibald Bush, and focused on accessible, agreeable "morally and politically inoffensive" plays. When works contained foul language or unsettling endings, Edyth Bush herself (to the dismay of some of the artists involved) changed the script.[89] While occasionally venturing into mildly challenging material like Thorton Wilder's *Skin of Our Teeth,* the theater usually stuck to easily digested comedies and romances such as *John Loves Mary* and *A Murder Has Been Arranged*. The Edyth

[88] Quoted in Hatfield, *Amateur Theatre,* 132
[89] Whiting, *Minnesota Theatre*, 112

Bush Theatre attempted to serve as a community resource in this way by offering wholesome entertainment that actors and audiences could enjoy together in what was hoped would be nonproblematic, agreeable events.

But the idea that most Twin City theaters followed such a wholly inoffensive agenda, or that audiences wanted only light entertainment, was belied by the numerous amateur theaters which *did* produce "problem plays," or at least works that in some way or another challenged the status quo or engaged with contemporary debates, and which still attracted audiences, suggesting that amateur theaters of the time were not as aesthetically constrained as one might surmise. Some of these theaters were founded in the 1920s or 1930s, and their commitment to socially engaged work was based in those eras; for instance St. Paul's Group Theatre, which emerged out of the city's Jewish Center as the Grotto Players in the late 1920s, produced works of social commentary like Clifford Odets' *Awake and Sing* and *Golden Boy*. But others, founded in the 1940s and 1950s, also took up challenging material: the Lakeshore Players, founded in 1953, produced Eugene O'Neill's dark *Desire Under the Elms,* and the Bloomington Civic Theatre Lillian Hellman's *The Little Foxes* and Lorraine Hansberry's *Raisin In the Sun*. The Horseshoe Players Arena Theatre, founded in 1956 by future local theater stalwarts Kenneth Boettche and Bain Boehlke, produced such works as Moliere's *The Miser* and *The Diary of Anne Frank.* According to a publication of the University of Minnesota's Loan Play Library, an initiative begun in 1927 to distribute scripts to local theaters, and which treated local amateur groups as serious undertakings, "the right play for your [amateur] group will be understood and accepted by your audience." Yet this did not mean playing down to the lowest common denominator of intelligence. "You should not be bound by prudish objections to the presentation of necessary reality and by reactionary opposition to the consideration of stimulating or controversial

themes," the manual advised. "Your play can be the center of interest, and even of healthy argument, as well as of entertainment for the community."[90] In the postwar milieu, such an ostensibly balanced, thoughtful approach seemed to parallel the liberal political consensus of the time and yet, like the liberal consensus, this studied moderation was not as all-encompassing as it first appeared.

Perhaps the most well-known community theater in the Twin Cities, and one that found a successful balance between popular, light, entertaining plays and more intellectually and theatrically challenging work, was Theatre In the Round Players (TRP), established in 1951 out of the somewhat scrappier Circle Theatre, and still active today. Founded by a drug salesman, a housewife, an insurance salesman, and a real estate secretary, TRP was directed in its early years by Frederick Hilgendorf, who joined the community after a successful amateur career in Sheboygen, Wisconsin, a town "recognized as one of the outstanding cities in the matter of amateur productions."[91] Hilgendorf brought with him a commitment to amateur ideals of participation and enjoyment of serious work, as well as interest in maintaining a wider national community of amateur dramatics. Along with his fellow TRP founders, and encouraged by his experience in Sheboygen, Hilgendorf believed that an amateur theater could be *the* central, civic theater for its community. It could, in the words of its original mission statement, not only provide an arena for participation in play production, but go beyond that immediate goal to "encourage a cultural environment in the community."[92] As "The Minneapolis Civic Theater," it

[90] "Loan Play Library: Plays and Entertainments for Schools, Clubs, Churches, and other Community Groups," *The Bulletin of the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.* Vol L, No 11, April 10, 1947
[91] "A Great Director," *The Sheboygan Press,* June 28, 1943
[92] Theater in the Round Players Publicity Pamphlet, Theatre in the Round Players Papers, Special Collections, Hennepin County Library, Minneapolis, MN (hereafter HCLib)

aspired to involve Twin Citians actively in the arts, and become known as a central institution in the community.[93]

TRP set its artistic agenda early on through a roster of modern classics or soon-to-be classics by Tennessee Williams, Eugene O'Neill, Chekhov, and George Bernard Shaw. The theater's founders were uninterested in explicitly political plays, and did not take major risks on new work that had not been tested on Broadway or off-Broadway, but they believed that theater could and should explore difficult issues and spark conversation. TRP's early seasons were, indeed, judicious—balanced with comedies and darker dramas. The 1958-9 season, for instance, featured Tennessee Williams' *Rose Tatoo,* Terence Ratigan's *Separate Tables,* and Noel Coward's *Nude with Violin.* With an arena theater setup, unusual at the time especially for amateur theaters, TRP was in a position to produce experimental and unconventional theatrical work. Despite taking on challenging literary material, however, the theater for the most part hewed to traditional staging. One season announcement described their approach this way: "the actors do not need to wear heavy makeup, shout, or make exaggerated movements. They must look their part and be in the corresponding age bracket of the character… the key word in arena theater: realism."[94] This approach was in part a reaction against the heavily made up, exaggerated performances that were ridiculed as a part of amateur theater, but it was also safe, in fact safer than the forays into absurdism and the avant garde that the professional theater, appropriating high artistic trends, would soon undertake.

[93] The phrase "The Minneapolis Civic Theater" appears in numerous promotional materials, for instance on the 1961-62 Season Brochure, Publications, 1953/54 to date, Theatre in the Round Papers (PA 27) PAA. In 1954 it called itself "an incorporated civic theater organization." Program for *John Loves Mary,* May, 1954. Publications, 1953/54 to date, TRP Papers (PA 27) PAA

[94] Season Brochure, 1961-62. Publications, 1953/54 to date, TRP Papers (PA 27) PAA

Such a modest approach was most likely part of a larger effort to attract a broad base of participants and audiences. The theater reached out to a wide swath of the Twin Cities community, sending advertisements and letters to church leaders, higher education administrators, labor unions, school groups, the *Minneapolis Star and Tribune* Women's Club, churches, hoteliers (to engage tourists), and so on. The theater established a "Special Presentation Unit" which toured small scale productions to venues and institutions for various private event and outreach initiatives. TRP was not without connections to powerful Minneapolitans, either; for instance the theater received the donation of a new carpet from Northwestern National Bank.[95] The theater put forth significant effort to cross class lines and social sectors with its work, and tried to involve a cross section of the population as active participants as well as audience members. It did so through publicity efforts and direct letters, and through its publication, the ***Roundelet***, which delivered news about productions, audition announcements, backstage antics, and community activities to members, and to anyone else they could reach with the newsletter. But, of course, the notion that anyone could participate in a TRP show was unrealistic, just as it was for the North Star Guild to make such claims. Actors auditioned to be in plays, for one, and the theater often cast the same local "stars" repeatedly, sometimes sparking worries about creating a kind of "in club" feel. Furthermore, there were expenses associated with involvement—such as childcare, or transportation to and from rehearsal—that made participation in the organization impossible for those without the means. As one TRP member wrote in a letter denying an individual's request for reimbursement for childcare and transportation, "as in any civic, non-profit group, participation in its activities calls

[95] Letter from Charles A. Russell to John A Moorhead, President, Northwest National Bank of Minneapolis. January 27, 1965. Correspondence, 1957-1978; TRP Papers, (PA 27), PAA

for sacrifice of time and certain personal expenses and its rewards consist solely of satisfaction of having a part in a job well done."[96]

Though unified in desire to be a major force in the local community, an examination of the internal dynamics of TRP also reveals tensions among amateur artists that would later lead to greater rifts. In one sense, TRP was firmly committed to the core value of wide participation no matter what, even as the tide of professionalism rose. In 1954, the theater offered itself to "any who are interested in acting, or enjoy working in the theater 'behind the scenes'," and advertised its monthly meetings as both "business and social."[97] The recreational aspects of the theater were understood to be a core part of its being. Nearly 10 years later, in 1962, a brochure advertisement asked: "Have you… always had a secret desire to act… to be part of a theatrical production? TRP offers you… the members of your family and your friend an opportunity to act… build scenery… light a show… hear the applause! Everyone is welcome to participate and feel the great creative satisfaction of opening night when the audience responds."[98] This same brochure also emphasized the wider ramifications of such commitment, linking participation in TRP to a greater civic obligation to improve the community: "Are you," it asked, "concerned about the cultural climate of Minneapolis?"[99] If so, what better opportunity was there to address this issue but to participate in the major community theater of the region? Here was an opportunity to be part of something exciting: a true community endeavor, in which one could work seriously toward distinguishing Minneapolis as a cultured city while at the same time improving one's individual quality of life.

[96] Letter from Joel I. Redlin to Claire Ryan, undated. Correspondence, 1957 to 1978, TRP Papers, (PA 27), PAA
[97] Program for *John Loves Mary*, May, 1954. Publications, 1953/54 to date, TRP Papers (PA27), PAA
[98] Brochure for TRP's 1963-1964 season, TRP Papers, HCLib
[99] Ibid.

On the other hand, founding members like Naomi Strange Hatfield articulated a more socially limiting but artistically ambitious mission for the theater. According to an article about her career, focusing on her transition into professional acting relatively late in life, Hatfield "always sensed that amateur theater can be a trap, a cheap ego-builder for the would-bes of the world. A stage for neuroses and village seduction. A ham factory. 'I've never been in it for fun or for fame,' she says. 'From the time TRP started, I treated it like a repertory company."[100] TRP did ultimately strive—especially toward the end of the 1950s and early 1960s—toward a very high level of production, and increasingly as the 1960s went on, group members employed the term "professional" to describe such quality. In a note to the reverend of a Lutheran Church to whom TRP hoped to present a private performance, staff member Kay Tuve wrote: "I can assure you that if your church group should decide to take a private performance, they will be getting professional performances of a top-notch play at the cost of a movie. If you read Sherman's reviews of last season in the *Minneapolis Star*, you will have noticed that he considered the work of our group to be in the professional class."[101] Indeed there was some slippage in wording here; in another 1960 letter Tuve wrote of TRP's "professional performances" with no qualifiers.[102] These were obviously *not* professional performances in the sense of payment to participants, but they were, in the eyes of the artists involved anyway, professional in quality of production and artistry. By the mid-1960s, reviewer Don Morrison could write "Theatre in the Round Players are a group of dedicated theatre-lovers who pursue their love as an avocation but who cannot be called amateur. The past 10 years has demonstrated that community theatre can offer

[100] "Naomi Hatfield: New Equity Actress a Pro in Many Fields," by Carole Nelson, *St. Paul Pioneer Press,* April 2, 1980
[101] Letter from Kay Tuve to Reverand Einar Oberg, January 7, 1960. Correspondence, 1959-1977/79. Season-Direction-Employment; TRP Papers (PA 27), PAA
[102] Letter from Kay Tuve to Howard Rather, January 13, 1960. Correspondence, 1959-1977/79. Season-Direction-Employment; TRP Papers (PA 27), PAA

professional quality drama."[103] The question of professional aesthetic aspirations among amateur theater practitioners will be examined further in Chapter 4.

Still, in the 1950s, Theater in the Round Players and the other amateur groups discussed in this chapter defined themselves as civic theaters in a way that celebrated the possibilities of amateur participation, and they were, to a significant extent, legitimated by the larger community in this endeavor. Amateur theater was largely understood to be a positive resource as an outlet for individual creative fulfillment, as a community-building recreational activity, and as a way to cohere, improve, and distinguish the community. Given the decline of road shows, "local audiences will see many plays *only* because local groups are producing them," according to Kirkpatrick.[104] In the absence of professional theaters, amateurs had a true public role to fill, and no one considered that they could not fill it simply because they were amateurs. In fact, their public role was amplified *because* they were amateurs: "There is a great danger these kids may want to be Tyrone Guthrie," said Bloomington Civic Theatre director Chris Ringham in 1963, "they should not forget they are here to serve the community."[105] Robert Stebbins writes that "if amateurs, in general, have no idea of the prowess of their professional counterparts, the latter become irrelevant as role models, and the leisure side of the activity remains at a hobbyist level."[106] The amateurs in the Twin Cities in the 1950s, with knowledge of professionalism but without much direct or recent exposure to it, *were* operating as hobbyists, but as hobbyists with a public purpose. Their ideals and their stature would be challenged, however, by larger scale

[103] Don Morrison, in the *Minneapolis Star*, quoted in TRP promotion material, undated but likely circa 1964. Publications, 1953/54 to date, TRP Papers (PA27), PAA
[104] "The Little Theatres and How they Grew," by Mel Kirkpatrick, *8:30 theatre*, February 1961
[105] "Ringham Directs, and Each in City Can Play His Part," *Bloomington Suburbanite*. September 5, 1963
[106] Stebbins, *Serious Leisure: a Perspective for our Time* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2007), 6-7.

movements on the national and the metropolitan level, to develop a more legitimate, professionalized artistic establishment.

CHAPTER 2

DEVELOPING A CULTURAL RESOURCE:

NATIONAL ARTS POLICY IN POSTWAR AMERICA

"A basic cause of the increased dependence on the arts is man's need and desire for what I can only call 'creative fulfillment.'… It is a need for positive self-expression; a need for modern man to assert, or to reassert, his individuality."[1]

"The proliferation of musicals, melodramas, miserable art classes, community cultural centers, and supermarket galleries is reducing our standards for performance. The bills before you offer no protection against the inept, the casual, or the superficial."[2]

The United States, it may seem, has no true cultural policy.[3] It has no ministry of culture; it claims not to dictate what kind of art is produced within its borders; it does not have an official national opera, orchestra, or theater. Yet during the postwar era, and particularly in the late 1950s and 1960s, influential figures from the worlds of private philanthropy, corporate industry, and politics crafted what amounts to a coherent national cultural policy, which is still largely in place. Its roots began to grow long before the Cold War, with WPA arts programs instilling ideas of potential government involvement in the minds of artists and policy makers, with a push for federal incorporation of the American National Theater and Academy in the 1930s and '40s, and with the seeds of high-level interest from major foundations such as Ford and Rockefeller. Yet it was not until the Ford Foundation's launching of its arts programs in 1957 that a slow spiraling toward policy formation on the national level began to pick up speed. By the time the National

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[1] Statement of John D Rockefeller III, October 31, 1963, *National Arts Legislation: Hearings before the Special Subcommittee on the Arts of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, United States Senate, 88th Congress,* (Washington: U.S. Gov't Printing Office, 1963), 198.

[2] Statement of Albert Bush-Brown, President, Rhode Island School of Design, October 29, 1963, *National Arts Legislation: Hearings before the Special Subcommittee on the Arts,* 77.

[3] Both Roger Stevens and Nancy Hanks, chairs of the National Endowment for the Arts, claimed that the agency "did not have a cultural policy as such," according to Michael Kammen. "Culture and the State in America," *The Arts of Democracy,* Ed. Casey Nelson Blake. See also Donna Binkiewicz, *Federalizing the Muse: the United States Arts Policy & the National Endowment for the Arts, 1965-1980*, 73.

Endowment for the Arts was established in 1965, a broad coalition of individuals and institutions maintained a cultural policy of support for highly professional artists and well-managed institutions, with a particular eye toward the performing arts, especially theater, as a new arena of legitimatization. This approach to culture, which called for democratization and increased access to the arts while embracing expertise and credentialism, was constituent as well as expressive of a particular kind of postwar liberalism, filled with tensions and contradictory expectations: a mix of American exceptionalism and fear of "lagging" behind European civilization, a fervent embrace of humanism mixed with acceptance of the values of rationality and efficiency, and a reinvigorated celebration of individualism despite the collaborative nature of much artistic work, particularly in the performing arts.

Historians like Michael Kammen have claimed that the government's refusal to prescribe aesthetic or topical guidelines—even under the National Endowment for the Arts—indicates the absence of a cultural policy in the sense that it is understood in other countries.[4] Other scholars concur, but point more directly to a lack of cohesion and intelligibility in American arts policy: "what exists by way of American cultural policy," Vera Zolberg writes, "is a patchwork of disparate elements located at various levels of government. It comprises the private as well as the public sectors."[5] I contend, however, that it is this very cooperation among "gradations of power," public and private, that gave the cultural strategy its power.[6] Most scholarly work about support for the arts on the national level focuses on the political realm and the establishment of the National Endowment for the Arts in 1965, but so much attention to the NEA has

[4] Kammen, "Culture and the State in America," *The Arts of Democracy,* 69-96
[5] Zolberg, "The Happy Few—en Masse: Franco-American Comparisons in Cultural Democratization," *The Arts of Democracy,* 102.
[6] I take the phrase "gradations of power" from C. Wright Mills' *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956)

overshadowed what was one of the prime movers and motivators of the increasingly arts-friendly (or arts institution-friendly) environment of the 1950s and '60s. In actuality, private foundations—primarily the Ford Foundation—were at the forefront of shaping the way increased interest in the arts would translate into money and action. And while arts support could have been directed toward many different ends, the emphasis of foundations and then government on professionalism, audience appreciation, and decentralization constituted a unified—though tension-riddled—policy in itself.

Arts policy was based, in this era, largely on the expectation that culture could be utilized as a resource for the nation. Alongside material resources, culture would bolster the country's claim to world leadership in the second half of the 20th century. As Henry Luce famously stated in 1941, "the complete opportunity of leadership is *ours*," but it must be seized: Americans needed to recognize their own superiority to feel justified in using it to shape the world environment. "America is already the intellectual, scientific, and artistic capital of the world," Luce claimed. "Americans – Midwestern Americans – are today the least provincial people in the world."[7] But this leadership, and the flourishing American society that undergirded it, was not yet fully recognized, appreciated, developed, or exported. Alongside technological and economic predominance, Americans needed to harness their creative energy, and understand it as central to their position as world leader.

Founders of American cultural policy in the postwar era seemed to heed Luce's call to embrace their nation's potential. Those who looked inward—in an active effort to shift focus from exporting artistic works to improving domestic achievement—believed that, with proper

[77] Henry Luce, "The American Century," *Life Magazine*, February 17, 1941.

financial support, the United States could develop into a leader of the modern arts in the Western world, and that such leadership in culture could be used to assert the country's superiority on the world stage. In order to export artistic products of which Americans could be justly proud, arts supporters, according to many leaders in both public and private realms, needed to improve—primarily through professionalizing—the arts domestically, particularly those arts, like theater and dance, that had not yet risen to the levels of achievement of other forms. W. McNeil Lowry, at the Ford Foundation, worked to convince other potential funders that the theater, in particular, could be part of a great national resource. "The theatre in America is a cultural rather than a commercial resource, and one which ranks in importance with music or the visual arts," he argued.[8] It needed significant financial support, however, to achieve the level of professionalism and institutionalization—in production and as a legitimate field—of which it was capable.

Yet this budding national cultural policy, which heralded excellence, expertise, and professionalism in the arts, was also meant to demonstrate that a democratic nation, which ostensibly provided its citizens a comfortable and happy life, could produce great art without the authoritarian means employed by America's Cold War enemy. Thus American national cultural policy was built on the premise of democratization and improved quality of life: the spreading of cultural goods across the vast country, increased opportunity to experience the arts, and the right of each individual American to creative expression and fulfillment—a product of the "reassertion of the ultimate integrity of the individual" that Arthur Schlesinger identified as an element of postwar liberalism.[9] In his position of influence at the Ford Foundation, Lowry was a particularly significant advocate of the right of the individual—in his arguments the individual professional

[8] W. McNeil Lowry, "The Ford Foundation and the Theatre," a Ford Foundation Report, from *Equity Magazine*, Vol. XLVI, No. 5, May, 1961
[9] Arthur Schlesinger, *The Vital Center: the Politics of Freedom*, (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1949), xxi.

or potentially professional artist—to pursue his or her passion. Yet Lowry also believed Americans as a whole needed to respect the authority and expertise of the artist and informed arts backers, who were able to distinguish good art from bad. Tensions between the ideals of professionalism and expertise and the imperatives of democracy were a manifestation of deeper contradictions within ideals of American identity—questions of authority and education, self-government and civic participation—that hail back to Alexis de Tocqueville's observations, and they are present, if one reads between the lines, in Congressional debates on arts legislation, and in the soaring speeches and writings of Lowry and other pioneers in the field.[10]

Underneath expectations for national culture to demonstrate both excellence and democratic potential lay unresolved questions about the nature of creativity and the experience of art that would affect the trajectory of arts support in years to come. In crafting a democratic cultural policy, emphasis on the individual's right to what supporters often referred to as "creative fulfillment" or "expression" was, as a concept, largely unexamined by those working to implement policy; thus the artistic formulations they supported did not always seem to match stated objectives in this realm. W. McNeil Lowry, while he hailed the creative experience of professional artists in developing and sharing their inner voice, had little to say about the experience of audiences who would receive such artistry. Likewise, John D. Rockefeller, in a statement before Congress in 1963, claimed that "a basic cause of the increased dependence on the arts is man's need and desire for what I can only call 'creative fulfillment," which he defined as "a need for positive self-expression; a need for modern man to assert, or to reassert, his

[10] On the conflict between values of democracy and expertise, or broader tensions between freedom and order in American history, see among many, Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967); Stephen Turner, *Liberal Democracy 3.0: Civil Society in an Age of Experts* (London: Sage Publications, 2003). Mark B. Brown's *Science in Democracy: Expertise, Institutions, and Representation* (Boston: MIT Press, 2009) tackles such questions from the perspective of scientific inquiry in a politically democratic nation.

individuality," but he did not explain how such needs would be fulfilled by the policy he supported.[11] Just at the time when people were calling for "a man, a woman, or society to feel a sense of identity, creativity, or communication on the basis of a common humanity," everyday active artmaking—one potential avenue toward this aim—was not only not financially supported, it was actually demeaned both through derisive words and warnings against the corrosive danger of amateurism.[12] Certainly those who participated in the Twin City region amateur dramatics described in the previous chapter engaged in a form of individual growth that they would have argued achieved the goals of arts policy makers; and yet this kind of participation was soon discouraged. A theory of art that involved onlookers in the experience of creativity may have been in the back of the mind of policy-makers, but they generally did not articulate such a sentiment; rather, while touting the importance of creative fulfillment for all Americans, they tended to dwell in their actual reflection on the experience of the professional artist only.

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In 1957, 44-year-old program officer W. McNeil Lowry approached the imposing Board of Trustees of the Ford Foundation—which he once referred to as a kind of "private

[11] John D. Rockefeller, Statement in *Hearings before the Special Subcommittee on the Arts, of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare*, United States Senate, October 31, 1963.
[12] The spirit of the time was recollected in "On Bearing Witness," Speech by W. McNeil Lowry at the New York Hilton Hotel, for the Association of College, University, and Community Arts Administrators, Dec. 16, 1973, W. McNeil Lowry Papers, University of Illinois Special Collections (hereafter UI)

government"—and proposed a significant program to fund the arts in the United States.[13] A small-town Midwesterner by birth, a former English professor and journalist, and a recent arrival to the Foundation, Lowry's proposal arose from his own growing commitment to the arts, as well as a sense that the United States was very obviously, and in his mind unforgivably, remiss in its neglect of this arena of life. "I had striven since the first day I entered the Ford Foundation," Lowry recalled, "to impress upon everybody, whenever I was given an opportunity, that it seemed to me an extreme, even a shocking, anomaly that the Ford Foundation was not in the humanities or the arts, and that this was compounded by the shocking fact that very few foundations were in the arts at all, and then with only a series of ad hoc grants."[14] Although overstating the Foundation's oversight—it did support limited cultural initiatives, such as public television broadcasting and the National Museum of American Innovation, and provided a number of individual grants to artists and writers—Lowry had discovered his great life mission: to encourage and direct a new wave of systematic financial investment in the American high arts. Leading the Ford Foundation toward its pioneering arts and humanities program, which would in turn influence the programs of other major foundations, corporations, and eventually the federal government, Lowry's own predilections about artistic creation—which centered on supporting professional artists—would therefore hold great significance for the shape of the nation's developing national cultural policy.

Lowry was a somewhat surprising figure to usher in such a program. His own interest in the arts did not bloom until he was nearly middle-aged, with his move to New York City at the age of forty. In the small town near Kansas City where he was born in 1913 he was lucky

[13] Interview with W. McNeil Lowry by Charles T. Morrissey, for the Ford Foundation Oral History Project, January 18, 1972, W. McNeil Lowry Papers, UI
[14] Interview with W. McNeil Lowry by Charles T. Morrissey, for the Ford Foundation Oral History Project, January 18, 1972, W. McNeil Lowry Papers, UI

enough, as he would later reminisce, to have had parents who emphasized the importance of reading and education, and who tried to expose him to as many arts as they could given the town's very limited resources. When Lowry managed to escape what he seemed to regard—with some nostalgia—as a stifling home town for college in Illinois, his love for literature blossomed. As a faculty member in the English department at the University of Illinois Lowry established his interest in new work, helping to found the journal *Accent: a Quarterly of New Literature*, which published contributions by a wide array of writers, many of them American, including Katherine Anne Porter, Kay Boyle, Irwin Shaw, Thomas Mann, and Kenneth Burke. This publication may presage his later tastes in the arts: welcoming of a broad range of political commitments and styles, but invested in the Western tradition, and devoted first and foremost to finding and supporting exceptionally talented individual artists.

It was not until much later in his life, however, after a stint in the navy and as a Washington newspaper bureau chief, that Lowry truly came to appreciate the performing arts. His epiphany came upon witnessing the New York City Ballet for the first time, and reveling in the choreographic brilliance of George Balanchine. Star-struck by the artists he encountered in New York, Lowry wrote: "without any passport I deemed legitimate and not given to pushing on stagedoors, I was content to keep the distance between myself and the select inhabitants of this bravest new world."[15] This initial admiration would translate, in his work at the Ford Foundation, first as Director of Education and then founder of its program in Humanities and the Arts, to an intense belief in the individual artistic genius, devoted almost obsessively to his or her art, alienated from the rest of society by a fierce commitment and inspiration. It would also translate into a strong push for Americans outside of New York City to experience the level of artistic

[15] Autobiographical note in Box 1, W. McNeil Lowry Papers, UI.

creation that he was exposed to only after moving to Manhattan, and a desire to support artists and potential artists in communities, large and small, across the United States.

Although his recognition of and advocacy for the arts were remarkable, as we shall see, Lowry's commitment did not arise in a vacuum. Considering the growing enthusiasm for the arts across the country—the so-called "cultural explosion"—Lowry's surprise that Ford and similar foundations had not yet begun to seriously support the arts was understandable.[16] As a 1957 Rockefeller Foundation report proclaimed, the United States had become "a society of rising standards of living, great total productivity, and a surplus above minimum subsistence needs in almost all parts of the community. We are economically able to support the arts more than ever before."[17] "Quality of life," a newly central concern for policy makers and private individuals in this era, was interpreted on one hand as fulfilling needs through access to consumer goods, raising the standard of living, and bringing comfort and convenience to most Americans. After all, this was the period of Lizabeth Cohen's "consumers' republic," most famously demonstrated during the 1959 "kitchen debates."[18] Yet among this material accumulation, attention was also beginning to turn toward the non-material enrichment of Americans' increasing leisure time which, as discussed in Chapter 1, had become for some a source of anxiety. Toward the end of the 1950s, cultural commentators began to speak of a surge of interest in the arts, bolstered by increasing numbers of college graduates with liberal arts educations, who were attending concerts and patronizing museums in rapidly increasing numbers. "The devotees of art," wrote

[16] "Cultural Explosion" became a popular phrase by the 1960s. See for instance "Lincoln Center Aide Sees Boom in Culture Taking Place in U.S." *New York Times,* April 2, 1960. Lowry did not like this phrase, as he felt it concentrated value on the quantity rather than the quality of art.
[17] "Foundation Program in the Arts," January 31, 1957. Rockefeller Foundation, RG 3.1, Series 911, Box 1, Folder 7, 1955-1958, Rockefeller Archive Center (hereafter RAC)
[18] For a brief history of the phrase "quality of life" see William Safire, *The New Political Dictionary: the Definitive Guide to the New Language of Politics,* (New York: Random House, 1993). Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: the Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Random House, 2003)

Alvin Toffler, "have gone from a lonely handful to an army."[19]

American politicians were also, at this time, beginning to see culture as a potentially powerful form of soft power in the Cold War. As scholars from Joseph S. Nye to Victoria de Grazia have shown, the attempt to win over foreign citizens through cultural influence and the attractiveness of American life was nothing new, but during the Cold War era particular emphasis was placed on the formal arts.[20] In part this embrace of culture grew out of defensiveness in the face of Soviet charges of American materialism and superficiality.[21] Soviet—more accurately Russian—culture was, quite obviously, a force to be reckoned with, and Americans' response to it consisted of emulation alongside efforts to distinguish difference. The Russian stage arts of the 20th century were widely recognized as superb; led by the Bolshoi and Kirov Ballets and the Moscow Art Theater, which rose and fell in prestige through the Soviet period but remained a main recipient of government subsidies, the accomplished dancers, theater artists, and musicians—such as Rudolph Nureyev, director Georgy Tovstonogov, composers Igor Stravinsky and Dmitri Shostakovich—that Russia produced in the 1950s and 1960s threatened to prove to onlookers that communism fostered an unmatchable degree of cultural excellence (though challenged by artist defections). Furthermore, many of these artists represented and advanced a deep Russian humanism that was re-embraced during these years of the Soviet regime, a reengagement with giants of Russian literary history, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov, that emphasized the centrality of art and literature to communicating human feeling

[19] Toffler, *The Culture Consumers*, 7.
[20] Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through 20th Century Europe* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2005); Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: the Means to Success in World Politics*. (New York: Public Affairs, 2004)
[21] These sentiments were evident in articles with titles like "The New Role for Culture," *Life Magazine*, December 26, 1960; and "New World Prepares to Show Its Cultural Achievements to Old World," *New York Times*, March 11, 1958.

and connection. Soviet theater artists—even many who departed from the Moscow Art Theatre's realism in significant ways—drew upon Konstantin Stanislavski's methods of harnessing inner truth, for what some considered an ennobling exploration of humanity's struggles, frailties, and passions.[22] In contrast to draconian images of the Soviet state, this reengagement with Russia's cultural history, and the integration of art and life that it proposed, presented an attractive vision of cultural sophistication that certain Americans, like Lowry, embraced. They were values, in fact, that Lowry hoped could flourish within a democratic nation, in bold reaction against Soviet charges of materialism and superficiality.

In the face of this Soviet cultural juggernaut, and in an effort to showcase its own culture, the federal government initially turned its attention outward during the late 1940s and 50s, shipping American artists off on international tours and funding (sometimes covert) endeavors abroad rather than concentrating on domestic artistic achievement.[23] There was growing concern among politicians, however, that the United States was not producing art of high enough caliber to compete with the Soviets. As Harry McPherson explained of the early Cold War efforts: "we were frequently destroyed in competition with Soviets or other efforts abroad. They would send the Bolshoi; we would send the East-by-Jesus State Choir to follow up; and it gave the United States a rather ridiculous and provincial third-rate aspect in the arts."[24] Representation by the

[22] See Nicholas Rzhevsky, *The Modern Russian Theater: a Literary and Cultural History* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2009)

[23] On the CIA's cultural programs, see Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*. On jazz and arts tours and American cultural diplomacy in general see Penny von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World*; Laura A. Belmonte, "Exporting America: the U.S. Propaganda Offensive, 1945-1959," in *The Arts of Democracy, Art, Public Culture, and the State;* Michael L. Krenn, *Fall Out Shelters for the Human Spirit: American Artists and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2005). The culture that the government considered representative of America was in some ways wide-ranging: from abstract expressionism to jazz, from the New York City Ballet to Martha Graham, reflecting a spectrum of classical, modern, and even popular work. Indeed it was more wide-ranging than the work supported by the federal government in the early years of the NEA.

[24] Transcript, Harry McPherson Oral History Interview II, page 6, December 19, 1968, by T.H. Baker, Internet Copy, Lyndon Baines Johnson Library

"East-by-Jesus State Choir," or the "Indian and folk art," and "contemporary crafts and design," which were widely considered embarrassing American contributions to the 1959 Brussels World's Fair, would not long be tolerated.[25] It was becoming clear that something needed to change in regard to production of culture on the home front.

While the government focused elsewhere, therefore, commentators at home—writers, corporate and foundation leaders, politicians of both political parties, and artists themselves—increasingly stressed the importance of domestic cultural achievement. Many claimed that America was already in the midst of a "cultural renaissance," demonstrated by high levels of participation in cultural activity, but one that was not widely enough acknowledged or supported. In an article provocatively entitled "Are the Communists Right in Calling us Cultural Barbarians," Democratic Senator Frank Thompson argued: "if we have no respect for our own best cultural efforts, then the peoples of other countries are hardly to be blamed if they ignore and are indifferent to the cultural contribution which we have to give to the world."[26] A small group of politicians, led by Thompson, along with figures like Jacob Javits, Claiborne Pell, and Minnesota's own Hubert Humphrey, began to press for more attention and more money to be directed toward developing the arts at home.

Their efforts on this front were bolstered by anxieties about declining cultural standards due to mass media, materialism, and so-called "middlebrow" culture, which went beyond worries about how the United States would look in foreigners' eyes. As scholars have extensively examined, the rapid rise of television, in particular, frightened American intellectual leaders who predicted that the development of technology would make many forms of human

[25] Gary O. Larson, *The Reluctant Patron: The United States Government and the Arts, 1943-1965* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), 137.
[26] *Music Journal*. 13:6 (1955: July-August), 5.

labor obsolete and (rather than do away with jobs) cut the work and increase the leisure hours of the majority of Americans, who would then spend their days spacing out in front of the tube. Worse, television and the movies directly threatened associational activities and the live arts, and would lead, some argued, to the death of theater all together. Although rumors of its demise were exaggerated—amateur arts participation flourished in the 1950s—theaters that once presented traveling productions had been converted into movie houses in the early 20th century, and by the postwar era television was a threat both to movies and to the live theater.[27] Writers and opinion leaders—many influenced by Theodor Adorno and the Frankfurt School—fretted over the implications of such changes: what would happen to their famous puritan work ethic, when Americans spent most of their time watching a screen? Could they instead find a new outlet for continual usefulness or self-improvement?[28]

As if the mindlessness of television weren't enough, cultural critics including Dwight MacDonald and Clement Greenberg feared that the rising white collar, college-educated middle-class American showed an alarming tendency to use their leisure time in pursuit of unsophisticated, "middle-brow" culture and artistic experiences that were more about social status than genuine appreciation.[29] Although as Andrew Ross has pointed out the boundaries

[27] On the relationship between new media and older forms of live arts see, for instance, Richard Butsch, *The Making of American Audiences: from Stage to Television: 1750-1990* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: the Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000)

[28] These were not new concerns. Worries about the efficiency of machinery and the subsequent leisure time of Americans, particularly women and the working class, stretched back to the late 19th century, and perhaps earlier. See for instance Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn of the Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986); T. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Anti-Modernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), among many others.

[29] On middlebrow culture, see Joan Shelley Rubin, *The Making of Middlebrow Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992); Janice Radway, *A Feeling for Books: the Book-of-the-Month Club, Literary Taste, and Middle-class Desire* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997). Dwight MacDonald's famous article is "Masscult and Midcult," *Partisan Review* 27 (Spring 1960), 203-33. For a contemporary outlining of highbrow, middlebrow and lowbrow, see Russell Lynes, *The Tastemakers* (New York: Harper, 1954).

between popular culture and intellectual authority are ever-shifting, anxieties over the blurring of these lines were particularly pronounced in the postwar world, as opinion leaders pressed for reinforced distinctions between the culturally "legitimate" and the commercially crass.[30] Indirectly supporting these demands were a plethora of books published at the time—such as Vance Packard's *The Hidden Persuaders* and William Whyte's *Organization Man*—more generally lamenting the manipulation of Americans by advertising and other forms of mass media, and expressing worries about their meaningless, superficial lives, full of squandered time and misdirected energy. Anxiety about the deterioration of American values, particularly that of industriousness and self-improvement, and the waste of leisure time through absorption in popular culture or status wars would become an important impetus in the development of national cultural policy.

At the Ford Foundation, W. McNeil Lowry agreed to an extent with commentators like MacDonald, who fretted about the content and the uses of culture in America. He was wary of the so-called "cultural explosion," which he believed confused quantity for quality, tallying up new community cultural centers and amateur arts groups rather than measuring artistry. "At the risk of appearing ungrateful for all the amateur and semi-professional artistic activities breaking out in American communities," he stated, "all the buildings and plans for buildings to be devoted to the arts, I believe we must guard against a failing which is characteristically American—the tendency to mistake the symbol for the thing, the intent for the doing, the name for the act. Is this just another example of our materialism, even as we become more active in the non-material realm of the arts?"[31] Emphasis on numbers—the kinds of figures that Alvin Toffler would cite to

[30] Andrew Ross, *No Respect: Intellectuals & Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1989)
[31] Speech before the Tamarind Lithography Workshop, January 10, 1962. W. McNeil Lowry Papers, UI

show increased interest in the arts (Americans spending $200 million in 1960 to buy art prints and $590 million for musical instruments, and choosing from 710 different opera-producing companies in 1964, for instance), focused on the wrong indications of worth.[32]

Rather than hollering blindly for *more* art and *more* culture of any kind, Lowry saw postwar affluence as an opportunity to build a richer, deeper, more artistically discriminating country. To him, a civilized nation meant one that prized and elevated its artists, and his theory of cultural development involved, first and foremost, support for professional artists or for those who showed potential to become professionals. "Lowry in fact has been… the advocate of the individual artist, dedicated to freeing the artist from encumbrances and distractions, economic and otherwise," wrote the Ford Foundation's Board of Trustees, in a celebration honoring Lowry.[33] Lowry believed fervently that art should not be a handmaiden for other purposes—educational, social, economic, but should be supported as an end in itself. Only in this way, he believed, could art provide balance and meaning in an increasingly rational, technocratic American world. Only in this way could truly excellent art emerge from those with talent and needed financial support. *And*, only in this way could American artistic production distinguish itself in the competitive international arena of cultural production. On the highest levels, and measured by the growing critical facilities of the populace, cultural policy in the United States, Lowry believed, should be grounded in meticulous discernment of quality in the arts. Without such scrutiny of standards, the nation's artistic ambitions would never be taken seriously: "America's commitment to the arts will finally be judged by our ability to discriminate," he

[32] Toffler, *Culture Consumers,* 16-17.
[33] "Resolution of the Board of Trustees of the Ford Foundation," June 27, 1964, W. McNeil Lowry Papers, UI

claimed.[34]

Unfortunately, in the early 1960s the American audience, according to Lowry, "lack[ed] as yet… discrimination as to what the arts are really about."[35] This cultural ignorance on the part of Americans was due in part, he thought, to their continual exposure to amateurism. "If one man's activity is as good as another," he warned, "if one group or company has as much claim on our society as another, if costly cultural edifices are to be erected as clean playhouses for amateurs, this loudly hailed new day is not one for art and the artist."[36] Amateurism not only distracted from professional goals, it detracted from them, robbing talented artists of resources (with the "scatteration" of funds) and betraying a casual disregard for standards in a nation striving to distinguish itself culturally.[37] Lowry was particularly frightened that subpar work—which he saw in the amateurism expanding across the nation in the 1950s, as well as in much of the countercultural performance that decried fixed standards and embraced participation—might be mistaken for serious theater and thus contribute to misunderstandings about the potential seriousness and import of the art form.[38]

He was likewise concerned that educational institutions were dampening standards for artistic quality, by watering down rigorous training with liberal arts courses, teaching lesser

[34] "The Arts in America: Evolution and Tradition," speech for "The American Revolution: A Continuing Commitment," Symposia on the American Revolution, May 6-7, 1976, Library of Congress, W. McNeil Lowry Papers, UI
[35] "The Ford Foundation and the Creative Arts," speech at Tamarind Lithography Workshop, Los Angeles, January 10, 1962. W. McNeil Lowry Papers, UI
[36] "Art and Intensity," speech at the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies, the Martha Graham Convocation, July 30, 1965, W. McNeil Lowry papers, UI
[37] "The Arts in America: Evolution and Tradition," speech for "The American Revolution: A Continuing Commitment," Symposia on the American Revolution, May 6-7, 1976, Library of Congress, W. McNeil Lowry Papers, UI
[38] To many in the counterculture, Lowry thought, "one style or one technique was as good as another. In its own way the counterculture contributed to amateurism and the blurring of artistic standards as directly as did the proponents of the arts as a means to purely social and educational goals." W. McNeil Lowry, "The Arts in America: Evolution and Tradition," speech for "The American Revolution: A Continuing Commitment," Symposia on the American Revolution, May 6-7, 1976, Library of Congress, W. McNeil Lowry Papers, UI

works, and, indirectly, by providing a living for artists to work as teachers, thus lessening the need for support to professional artists.[39] Artists should not have to work as teachers, diluting their concentration, and artistic training should not be confused with liberal arts courses; the true artist, according to Lowry, must devote all his or her efforts solely to their work, even "to the point of distortion."[40] Financial support for arts education in earlier grades was also worrisome, he thought, in that it confused a handy way of learning for art. "I recognize and welcome the fact that in the general speeding up of communication in our society, public interest in the arts is burgeoning too," he lamented. "But I worry lest in such a process every vehicle of communication, *including even our educational system*, tends toward a steady popularization and amateurization of those intangibles we call the arts." [italics are mine][41] Art, Lowry insisted, must be appreciated on its own terms, as the creative development of the individual professional artist, not as a recreational pastime or as an educational byproduct. "It is the highly talented and professionally trained artist on which all depends."[42] Raise up professionals, keep amateurs in their place, believe in the experts who delivered great art, change the relationship between education and the arts, and a more discriminating, cultivated American population would follow.

While such sentiments might appear anti-democratic, Lowry's commitment to expertise tapped a deep strain in American thought: Americans have always had a thorny relationship with

[39] There was significant tension between professional and educational theater in this era. Professional arts practitioners hoped to utilize universities as training institutions, but at the same time they disdained them for not being enough like conservatories—in other words for producing students who were unprepared for professional careers, and for not making rigorous enough distinctions between good and bad (or non) art. "If I have given the University the bulk of the credit for creating a new audience for the arts in the United States, I feel I must also give it a strong share of the blame for the lack of discrimination visible in that audiences." "The Ford Foundation and the Creative Arts," Tamarind Lithography Workshop, Los Angeles, January 10, 1962. W. McNeil Lowry papers, UI
[40] "The Foundation and the Arts," speech for the Manhattan School of Music Symposium, New York Hilton, November 11, 1963, W. McNeil Lowry papers, UI
[41] "The Ford Foundation and the Creative Arts," Tamarind Lithography Workshop, Los Angeles, January 10, 1962. W. McNeil Lowry papers, UI
[42] "The Ford Foundation and the Creative Arts," Tamarind Lithography Workshop, Los Angeles, January 10, 1962. W. McNeil Lowry papers, UI

expert authority, relying on it for guidance while celebrating public participation, heralding leaders who demonstrate exceptional skill and mental acuity, while chafing at the idea of intellectual hierarchy: in a society promising equality, de Tocqueville wrote, "all superiority, however legitimate, is irksome to their eyes."[43] Tensions over expertise are written into the heart of representational democracy, in which the knowledge of politicians battles adherence to constituents, and, as we learn from Max Weber, in the increasingly specialized and complex environment of modern society the friction between expertise and democratic participation is enhanced.[44] It seemed to some observers that Americans, blocked out of certain bodies of knowledge due to technological or scientific innovations, in other areas simply embraced ignorance. According to de Tocqueville, "only simple ideas take hold in the minds of a people. A false yet clear and precise idea will always have more potency in society than a true but complex one."[45] Lowry's worries about the arts echoed this vision: that Americans were too comfortable with their community arts entities, that they might be disinclined to support great artists.

Lowry thus made a concerted effort to tie his vision of discriminating taste and support for excellence to deep ideals of American equality. In a nation built on democratic principles, he claimed, all citizens should have the opportunity to develop their capacities and reach their full potential. As it was, in the late 1950s, the United States marginalized artists or those who could become artists and forced them to take day jobs or work as teachers in order to pursue their craft, which was diminished due to distraction and lack of time. The way to remedy this situation, Lowry proposed, was to listen to artists, decipher their needs, and help them in any way possible.

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[43] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America: and Two Essays on America.* Gerald E. Bevan, Trans. (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 231.
[44] Max Weber, *Economy and Society.* The question of elitism in democracy was also debated in academic circles in the 1950s and 60s. See for instance Jack L. Walker, "A Critique of the Elitist Theory of Democracy," *The American Political Science Review*, 60, No. 2 (June, 1966), 285-295.
[45] Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 193.

He spoke with great conviction of the importance of fostering a more deeply humanistic society in the United States, in which the work of the artist would be embraced just as much as that of the scientist or businessman: "The…basic question," he reflected later in his career at the Ford Foundation, "is the recognition of a value system which is at bottom no more in the possession of the artist or his or her artifact than in the possession of each human being."[46] In other words, a society which prized the full development of every individual human being would be one that embraced "humanism, humaneness, a sense of personal identity and creativity liberate personal and moral faculties."[47]

Such exhortations to value artists in a society which prized humanism rested in turn on one of the deepest, and most contested, strains of American intellectual tradition: the belief in the primacy of the individual and the individual's right to pursue happiness. Mixing these ideas with echoes of the Puritan work ethic, Lowry insisted that each and every American should have the opportunity to invest full effort in one's own particular talent. In speeches and articles surrounding the development of cultural policy, Lowry argued for nothing less than a kind of American dream for artists: the creation of a country in which even the little boy who locked himself in his room to paint all day could pursue his dreams, without ridicule, and with the promise of remuneration. Like any other American who wanted to become a carpenter or a businessman or a teacher, the inborn artist, if sufficiently talented, should have a legitimate opportunity to achieve his or her dream. And although individualism has historically been tempered by commitment to republicanism and civic responsibility in the United States—especially in its postwar liberal formulation—in the republican tradition, regard for the

[46] "On Bearing Witness," speech for the Association of College, University and Community Arts Administrators, December 16, 1973, W. McNeil Lowry papers, UI
[47] "On Bearing Witness," speech for the Association of College, University and Community Arts Administrators, December 16, 1973, W. McNeil Lowry papers, UI

individual would ultimately contribute to the wider public good. In ambitious rhetorical gestures, Lowry tied the situation of artists to the Civil Rights Movement: artists were minorities, he claimed, and they deserved the full rights of American life: "There are many minorities," he contended, "not all of which are racial or economic, and there need to be many bridges. The artist is a minority, whatever his color, and he has never had large segments of the society professing his rights or working for his amelioration."[48] Improving the lot of artists—like fighting for the rights of African Americans—would yield a better, more equal and free, America.

Such fervent calls for the artist to be accepted into a more fully developed American culture fit somewhat uneasily with Lowry's vision of artistic dedication. His fervent belief in the individual artist was not solely based in American individualism, but also informed by 19th century ideals of the bohemian, suffering artistic genius, inspired by Henri Murger's sketches of *La Vie de Boheme,* and the Romantic ideal of the "mad genius."[49] Both types eschewed commercial life and mainstream society, and supposedly lived eccentric and intense lives of commitment to their work. Such a conceptualization provided Lowry with a reason to support the arts as the product of gifted people with a calling that could not be ignored. "At the core of every effective artistic director is the drive, the motivation, the almost fanatical determination of a true professional artist or artistic director," claimed Lowry.[50] Beyond the social or educational

[48] Commencement address at the Minneapolis School of Art, Minneapolis, Minnesota, May 3, 1968, W. McNeil Lowry Papers, UI

[49] Henri Murger, *Scenes from the Life of Bohemia* (London, 1888). Richard Schechner describes Lowry's vision of the artist as bohemian in his article "Ford, Rockefeller, and Theatre," *The Tulane Drama Review* 10 No. 1 (Autumn, 1965), 23-49. For the history of the bohemian ideal see for instance Christine Stansell, *American Moderns*; Malcolm Easton, *Artists and Writers in Paris: the Bohemian Idea,* 1830-1867 (New York: 1964); Jerrold Siegel, *Bohemian Paris: Culture, Politics, and the Boundaries of Bourgeois Life, 1830-1930* (New York: 1986).

[50] "The Ford Foundation and the Creative Arts," speech at the Tamarind Lithography Workshop, Los Angeles, January 10, 1962, W. McNeil Lowry papers, UI

uses of the arts, the artist, in this formulation, was an individual who was called to create, who lived isolated from society in his or her own world of nearly myopic dedication. But Lowry's vision of the isolated artist integrated into an appreciative world posed a major contradiction: how to maintain a romantic vision of intense and all-consuming artistry while treating artists just as one would treat scientists or businessmen. This was ultimately a problem of institutionalization, as Richard Schechner would later point out in a scathing 1965 article for *The Tulane Drama Review*, in which he discussed the contradictions of Lowry's ideas: "What Lowry fails to analyze is the *impossible relationship* he urges between artist and institution. The alienated artist cannot live unalienated in institutions which reflect society's present values."[51]

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To begin to put his ideas into action, in 1957, with the cooperation of the Foundation's new President Henry Heald, Lowry brought before the Board a proposal for an exploratory program in the arts, suggesting the Foundation fund either ballet or regional theater as a pilot program, and asking for the relatively small sum of $2 million a year. Lowry sensed that Board members would favor his proposal in large part because this was a new philanthropic area where the Foundation could make a real impact, and because the Foundation, which wished to retain its leadership in the philanthropic community, could enhance its reputation as a forward-thinking institution by forging new paths for funding. In particular, Lowry argued, ballet and theater were at the cusp of great growth and professionalization in the United States, with small regional

[51] Schechner, "Ford, Rockefeller, and Theatre," 30.

theaters such as the Alley and Arena Stage beginning to gain legitimacy, and the classical ballet receiving new attention largely due to Balanchine and Lincoln Kirstein. "The opportunities to change the face of two kinds of art forms and therefore art institutions in the United States were greater in the theater and in ballet than in anything else," Lowry claimed, "and here was where the action was."[52] In regional theater and in ballet, the Ford Foundation could make a splash as a philanthropic leader, and Lowry could be part of a major transformation in the American cultural landscape.

The Ford Foundation, which was established in 1936, much later than peer foundations like Rockefeller and Carnegie, had through its twenty-odd years of existence aimed its funds first toward other Michigan philanthropies and then at a wide variety of lofty causes like alleviating poverty, fostering world peace, law, and justice, promoting freedom and democracy, and supporting educational institutions. Indeed, the objectives for the Foundation laid out in a 1950 report "were so broad and comprehensive that virtually everything the Foundation has done in the ensuing years can be rationalized as flowing from the original blueprint," wrote Richard Magat in an overview of the Foundation's work.[53] The Foundation's mode of operation was to adapt itself to problems and try to help solve them, rather than pick a particular area on which to concentrate, and it utilized a variety of strategies to make change: commissioning reports, organizing conferences, supporting individuals, building institutions. Thus it was perhaps more receptive to Lowry's ideas for the arts and humanities than other foundations might have been.

[52] Interview with W. McNeil Lowry by Charles T. Morrissey, for the Ford Foundation Oral History Project, New York, New York, April 23, 1974, W. McNeil Lowry Papers, UI
[53] Richard Magat. *The Ford Foundation at Work: Philanthropic Choices, Methods, and Styles* (Ford Foundation, 1979) 19.

Along with a special pilot program in the theater, the Foundation authorized an exploratory program in all the arts, including a broad study of the state of the arts across the country. Determined, he claimed, not to impose his own view of what should be funded, Lowry spent over a year meeting with artists, and through interviews, surveys, and deep conversation, attempted to decipher what kind of financial support these artists—the individual visionaries he so admired—needed to thrive. Lowry and an associate visited hundreds of theaters and other arts institutions, planned two national conferences, employed consultants in each of the arts, and compiled a vast body of knowledge. "This is a foundation administered project, in short, but it actually represents a national inquiry into the state of the arts and their support in which the leaders in these fields themselves will have the dominant role," Lowry claimed. "By the time it is finished it will have as much relevance in the public domain as it will have in any future program of the Ford Foundation."[54] Indeed Lowry's inquiry proceeded, and perhaps provided the impetus for, a number of better known studies that would follow: including those by the Twentieth Century Fund and by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, both published and enormously influential in the development of the nonprofit arts, but roundly criticized by Lowry. Lowry's study was in fact the first large-scale, nationwide survey of artistic activity of significant note, and it would be enormously influential for the future of arts funding.

While guided by the opinions of artists, Lowry's study and the demonstration grants distributed as a result of it inevitably reflected his own preconceptions: he made choices as to whose opinion was worthy of hearing, what constituted serious artistic purpose, which wishes

[54] "The Role of the Foundation in American Society," speech by W. McNeil Lowry at the Nassau Club, April 16, 1956, W. McNeil Lowry Papers, UI. Of his study, Lowry explained: "We're going to get in bed, figuratively, with the artist and the artistic director and in those terms, once we understand them, we're going to try to develop a philanthropic program in the arts," Interview with W. McNeil Lowry by Charles T. Morrissey, for the Ford Foundation Oral History Project, New York, New York, April 23, 1974, W. McNeil Lowry Papers, UI

would be taken into consideration. As his overarching goal was the development of a legitimate American artistic establishment that would buttress the American artist, he focused on professionals and rising professionals rather than those who were content as amateurs, and individuals who pursued the arts with what he considered a seriousness of purpose, rather than anyone involved in commercial endeavors. And much of the information gathering that Lowry and his colleagues pursued, through what they claimed was a democratic and wide-ranging process, was actually exclusive and secretive. For meetings in New York, in which "we might bring in twenty-two people in theater; creative writing; architecture; the whole gamut of the creative and performing arts," the Foundation planned the gathering "without announcement, writing a personal confidential letter… no proceedings, no tapings, no press release because we found that under those circumstances they would talk more freely and we could learn better."[55] These meetings were highly productive, according to Lowry, but they were also essentially private cabals of experts. Eventually these meetings were translated into the system of panels which the Ford Foundation used to determine grant allocations; completely secret and made up of experts and artistic professionals, these panels collected nominations from artists across the country, and then were able to be "objective" in their grant-making, in that the secret of their identity protected them from being unduly influenced. However their decision-making was also far from transparent, and harnessed to the particular inclinations and proclivities of the panel members. While according to Lowry, "the nominators list itself made people all over the country feel they were participating with the Ford Foundation in this program," and the judges were encouraged against partiality, Lowry's system was not—and did not pretend or aspire to be—a

[55] Interview with W. McNeil Lowry by Charles T. Morrissey, for the Ford Foundation Oral History Project, New York, New York, May 17. 1973, W. McNeil Lowry Papers, UI

democratic one. Yet this panel system would eventually provide a model for distribution of National Endowment for the Arts grants.[56]

Theater was, of course, at the heart of this study, and Lowry made clear he was interested in it "as a cultural resource rather than as commerce or entertainment."[57] As an underdeveloped art form but one that seemed to beg for legitimate establishment, theater held great promise to set the standards for a new era of arts organizations. Thus Lowry and his staff went about looking for ways to assist theater artists in developing careers in what would become resident professional theaters, rather than, for instance, developing communities in which theater would be a common participatory experience. Armed with several "demonstration grants" to confer on theaters in an effort to develop funding patterns for future grants, Lowry chose institutions which were somewhat stable but intended to further professionalize: the Cleveland Playhouse, for instance, as a rooted theater company with significant history and ambition but lacking the resources to fully professionalize on its own, was a perfect subject for expenditure. "Cleveland was on feasibility and scope criteria able to absorb this project," he wrote, and yet "when it was ended it would not collapse the institution which is another principle of philanthropy."[58] In other words, Lowry focused on the institutions and artists that showed potential and were not entirely dependent on outside funds: these were the key to the future of the legitimized, professionalized American theater. When true funding for the arts began after the years of experimental grants, the Ford Foundation would have a better sense of what both small and large institutions—like the Guthrie—needed to survive.

[56] Ibid.
[57] Interview with W. McNeil Lowry by Charles T. Morrissey, for the Ford Foundation Oral History Project, New York, New York, May 17. 1973, W. McNeil Lowry papers, UI
[58] Ibid.

While Lowry hailed the individual artistic genius, interactions with working artists convinced Lowry that they needed the levers and connections of professional association, financial assistance, and well-run institutions to survive and have the space, time, and financial stability to create. Advocating for institutionalization required different arguments, however. Lowry would have to change the way Foundation Board members thought about the arts: they were "real things," he would need to show them, "they weren't just the playthings of a few improvident, inefficient people, but real activities with real problems."[59] They deserved—he endeavored to show the board—the same large-scale organizational approaches that were applied to finance, law, medicine, and other products and services considered necessary to American society. It was not enough simply to give money to individual artists and expect them to thrive; they needed and they deserved institutional frameworks. These frameworks would, Lowry hoped, be derived from the needs of the artists, rather than from secondary considerations such as the economic development of cities, or the education of school children.

Institutionalizing the arts, and the neglected performing arts in particular, would require absorption of the sector into the wider mechanisms of organizational, corporatized American society. Legitimation would require demonstrating to Ford Board members, and to future funders, that the prized characteristics of rationality and practicality in business decision-making, such as those described by Herbert Simon in his influential 1947 work *Administrative Behavior* (described in more detail in Chapter 3), would be carefully applied to the administration of artistic organizations.[60] As David Rockefeller explained: "Even the most public-spirited corporation has, I think, a right to expect the organization seeking its help to prove that it has

[59] Interview with W. McNeil Lowry by R. W. Daum, October 19. 1981, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Copy in W. McNeil Lowry Papers, UI
[60] Herbert Simon, *Administrative Behavior: a Study of Decision-making Processes in Administrative Organizations.* (New York: Macmillon, 1957)

competent management."[61] While new trends against traditional hierarchy and toward creative input in 1960s business, as described in books like Douglas McGregor's 1960 *The Human Side of Enterprise*, were on the rise at this time, such tactics would be too risky for arts organizations, which had to prove their worthiness in the eyes of business leaders.[62] To earn respect, arts organizations needed to produce careful budgets, demonstrate efficient decision-making, manage slick marketing campaigns, and put in place strategies of development. They would have to accommodate themselves, organizationally and administratively, to conservative business practices of the time. Arts organizations needed to understand the language of financial transaction and rational exchange, and become "masters of the commercial, professional, and technical relationship," as C. Wright Mills' white collar workers were.[63]

Lowry's vision for institutionalization applied in particular to the theater, which was a relatively underdeveloped art, and for which he saw an opportunity to establish a system of professional regional theaters. "The aim was to try to create permanent companies as vehicles for theater artists of every kind not just actors, who could, five plays out of seven, or seven plays out of nine, regard theater as a cultural resource equivalent to music and the visual arts rather than as commerce or entertainment."[64] Such theaters, eventually to be led by pillars like the Guthrie, would be part of a larger theater establishment, with professional associations, standards of communication, and measurements of organization. Lowry's early study had revealed that there

[61] "Culture and the Corporation," an address by David Rockefeller. RG 1.2, Series 200R, Box 304, Folder 2832, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC
[62] Douglas MacGregor, *The Human Side of Enterprise,* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960)
[63] C. Wright Mills, *White Collar: The American Middle Classes.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 65.
[64] Interview with W. McNeil Lowry by Charles T. Morrissey, for the Ford Foundation Oral History Project, New York, New York, May 17, 1973, W. McNeil Lowry papers, UI. This quote clearly leaves room for some risk and failure—a fundamental idea behind the creation of regional theaters, which through year-long seasons, subsidization, and a committed subscriber base were supposed to have more leeway than the sink-or-swim Broadway model of production.

was not much of an artistic community to speak of on a national level; in the late 1950s artists seemed, in fact, totally disconnected from one another and unable to learn from each other's successes and mistakes. This disconnection was a particular problem in the theater, which did not even conceive of itself as a profession, let alone one with the potential for a national network.

To rectify this absence, and in part to relieve the burden of its own growing role as center of information and exchange, in 1961 the Ford Foundation put $244,000 toward the creation of a professional association through which theater artists across the country could communicate and share ideas and methods of organization.[65] Named the Theater Communications Group (TCG) to emphasize the importance of connection, discussion, and exchange among theater artists, the group intended to "bring university, community, and professional theatres around the country into practical cooperation with one another," with the ultimate goal being "*the steady professionalization of all theatrical activity, whether training, creation, or production*."[66] After its initial years of operation, TCG narrowed its constituency, focusing on Equity or near-Equity companies, or advising "new lay and professional groups planning a new professional enterprise" in order to most efficiently achieve its goal of "increasing communication and cooperation in order to improve professional standards."[67] The organization, beyond and through services to members, would both signify and contribute to the legitimation of theater as a field; it would serve as a knowledge hub for the processes by which theater artists and administrators would learn professional behavior and organizational norms, and it would be a central resource

[65] The amount would be steadily increased. In 1965, Ford would give $794,000 to TCG for "continuing demonstration of a cooperative program to improve professional standards in the theater over a five year period." Letter from Ford Foundation Secretary to Oliver Rea, then President of TCG, September 22, 1964, Administrative Files, 1964, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA.
[66] "The Ford Foundation and the Theatre," W. McNeil Lowry, *Equity Magazine,* Vol. XLVI, No. 5, May, 1961.
[67] Draft of Proposal for funding, "Theater Communications Group," in Administrative Files, 1964, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA.

for amateur or community groups to learn that professionalization was the ideal—really the only—path toward respect and recognition in the world of theater.

Led by a Board of regional theater luminaries including John Reich of Chicago's Goodman Theater, Zelda Fichandler of the Arena Stage, Nina Vance of the Alley Theater, Oliver Rea from the Guthrie, and various theater professionals and thought leaders including Theodore Hoffman and Michael Mabry, TCG was meant to serve theater practitioners across the country by disseminating the knowledge and wisdom gained by the pioneer professional theaters in their own struggles to become established. The organization facilitated professional connections and exchange through a Visitation Program, during which, in a one-year period between June 1963 and 1964, 46 staff members spent time at different theaters across the country, "sharing experiences in common problems or learning different methods of front, back, or onstage operation."[68] TCG also organized centralized auditions for young actors, where their talent could be judged simultaneously by theater representatives from across the country (and, presumably, where standards for acting could be discussed and set), an "observership" travel grant program, in which theater artists could visit a theater for a short amount of time, to "test out" a potential relationship or collaboration, and, for a short time (before duties were taken over by other entities), a script-reading program for new plays.

The Guthrie Theater and the theater leaders of Minneapolis were from the first at the heart of these programs. Not only was Oliver Rea President of the TCG Board from 1964-1967, and Peter Zeisler Executive Director from 1971-1995, but the Guthrie would be a central entity in terms of setting organizational standards and developing administrative programs. In a 1964

[68] Draft of Proposal for funding, "Theater Communications Group," in Administrative Files, 1964, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA.

report, the Guthrie was listed as one of the pillars of TCG, and "an example of the rapid development of a professional nonprofit company whenever both proven artistic leadership and expressed community support existed at the same time and place."[69] Guthrie staff members were some of the most active in the Visitation Program, as theater staff across the country were eager to learn from the designers of such a successful organization. As the idea behind all of the Ford Foundation's theater funding was "model-building, pace setting, standard setting, where a whole company—a whole theater becomes a model for others to follow and imitate," TCG, which was its creation, also operated on this principle, with the Guthrie one of the central standard-setters.[70]

One of TCG's most notable, and most influential, initiatives was its so-called "Consultant Program," which operated for the most part to circulate the wisdom of Danny Newman, self-styled expert and proselytizer of subscription audience development, and publicity officer at the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Also enlisted as a consultant to theater companies directly by the Ford Foundation, Newman's belief in the power of subscription audiences to boost box office (and thus attractiveness to foundations and other sources of money) was steadfast and fervent. And his methods seemed to work, almost magically: "gains of between 200 percent and 400 percent in subscription sales have been produced over two years by several theaters adopting Mr. Newman's systems."[71] He was, according to Lowry, a remarkable salesman with talents so prodigious that he had once sold "seventeen thousand advance subscriptions to a non-existent theater company," but he was also able to encapsulate his "gospel" and teach other administrators how to sell the idea of subscriptions to potential audiences, for instance by timing

[69] Memo, "Theater Communications Group," in Administrative Files, 1964, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA.
[70] Interview with W. McNeil Lowry by Charles T. Morrissey, for the Ford Foundation Oral History Project, January 18, 1972. W. McNeil Lowry Papers, UI
[71] Draft of proposal for funding, "Theater Communications Group," in Administrative Files, 1964, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA

sales campaigns effectively and discerning the percentage of possible subscribers in the population of a metropolitan area.[72] The subscription audience would become a fundamental technique through which regional theaters and other arts organizations hedged against failed productions and ensured steady income, enabling them to become the reliable institutions they needed to be as part of legitimate United States society, while retaining their link to the capitalist economy by earning income at the box office.

Another aspect of creating an American performing arts—and theater—establishment, and providing opportunities for artists, as Lowry hoped to do, was to begin to work toward a national artistic canon of works. As was the case for the theater as a whole, drama as a literary form had a meager reputation in the United States, not helped by the dominant Broadway fare of the first half of the 20th century, which most critics regarded as unoriginal fluff, often derived from popular novels.[73] While Eugene O'Neill, especially when rediscovered after WWII, was widely considered a spark of light, and stars like Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller, along with Lillian Hellman, William Inge, and perhaps Clifford Odets, seemed to advocates like Lowry to provide a basis for the development of a literary canon, in the 1950s and 60s, many of those pressing for the legitimation of theater believed they had a major project before them. Of course, in jumping to this conclusion, advocates ignored important work that was being developed off-Broadway in the 1950s and 1960s by figures like Gertrude Stein and Maria Irene Fornes, as Marc Robinson and other scholars have argued.[74] Yet Lowry and others did not see this work as constituting a significant, widely-heralded canon. Thus the Ford Foundation worked to develop

[72] Interview with W. McNeil Lowry by Charles T. Morrissey, for the Ford Foundation Oral History Project, January 18, 1972, W. McNeil Lowry Papers, UI.
[73] See Susan Harris Smith, *American Drama: the Bastard Art* for a detailed analysis of the drama's lowly status both within the profession and within the academy.
[74] Marc Robinson, *The Other American Drama* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997)

American dramatic literature through support for the production of new plays, matching playwrights and theaters, and providing fellowships to poets and novelists to spend a year in residency with a theater company and begin to write for the stage. According to the Ford Foundation chronicler John LaHoud, "Introducing new energies into the theater, it was hoped, would raise the intellectual quality of plays and librettos being written."[75] Writers like Robert Lowell, Shelby Foote, and Anne Sexton took part in the program, and a few notable scripts resulted, but nothing close to a renaissance of American playwriting.

Attempts to build an American dramatic heritage were limited by many factors—traditional American prudishness toward the form, critical and academic disdain, a belief in commercialism and the market—but a particular stumbling block for Lowry and other policy makers and funders in the 1950s and '60s was their ambiguous relationship with European aesthetics, forms, and organizational structures. The Guthrie Theater, soon to be considered at the forefront of the growing American regional theater network, was founded by a British director on the premise of importing European-style repertory theater to the United States. Indeed, the development of American institutions, especially the regional theater program, would make possible incorporation, adaptation, and development of the European forms on the forefront of theatrical innovation. "Enlarging the institutional base has had an effect on style and repertoire that has been little noted," Lowry claimed in later years. "The chief effect has been on the speed with which the avant garde or the experimental is transformed into standard repertoire," for instance "from Pirandello through Ionesco, Beckett, Pinter, and Albee."[76] Continuing on to include the incorporation of new British and American forms in this list, Lowry

[75] John LaHoud, *Theater Reawakening: a Report on Ford Foundation Assistance to American Drama* (New York: Ford Foundation, 1977), 16.
[76] "The Arts in America: Evolution and Tradition," in "The American Revolution: A Continuing Commitment," Symposia on the American Revolution, May -7, 1976, Library of Congress, W. McNeil Lowry Papers, UI

noted that American artists were beginning to take experimental forms in new directions in the 1960s, and the Foundation would fund groups like La Mama Experimental Theater Club and the Open Theater beginning in 1968. But in its early arts programming, Lowry most strongly supported theater institutions that combined what had been since the early 20th century European high art repertoire such as Shakespeare and Moliere, with modern art also of Europe, such as the work of Beckett and Brecht, with classical or soon to be classical American drama, such as that by Williams or Miller. While believing strongly in the vision of individual artists, and despite reflecting on America's love affair with newness and its "consciousness of the very concept of uniqueness," Lowry was unafraid to emulate what he believed worked well from European tradition.[77] Without a strong American theatrical base to fill in, however, much of the early repertory theater across the United States looked very European.

As the Ford Foundation made strides toward the creation of a theater establishment, Lowry's embrace of professionalism and institutionalization and worries about amateurism were echoed in the work of increasing numbers of significant players in the development of national cultural policy. When the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, led by John D. Rockefeller III, published *The Performing Arts: Problems and Prospects*, its own highly influential blueprint for the funding of performing arts in the United States, in 1965, worries about amateurism and heralding of professionalism seemed almost a given. Prepared by a geographically diverse panel of economic and intellectual leaders, including the Guthrie's Oliver Rea, the Rockefeller Report urged a vigorous commitment to support of arts institutions on the part of corporations, foundations, individuals, and the government. The motivation of its authors was similar to

[77] "The Arts in America: Evolution and Tradition," in "The American Revolution: A Continuing Commitment," Symposia on the American Revolution, May -7, 1976, Library of Congress, W. McNeil Lowry Papers, UI

Lowry's, in that they wished to develop a more institutionalized and respected performing arts sector to demonstrate, in this Cold War era, that "democracy is as capable of fostering works of artistic excellence as any aristocracy." But the Rockefeller Report focused more on audience development, insisting that "more important," a performing arts establishment would show that a democracy "is capable of creating a far broader audience for them than any other form of society."[78] Thus financial support to the arts should be targeted to highly professional organizations, which provided the only possibility of bolstering the nation's prestige, and attention should be paid to getting Americans into seats to witness such excellence.[79] Heralding a national explosion in culture, the panel concluded that "next to this glowing picture must be placed another, more sobering one: *Almost all this expansion is amateur*."[80] Like Lowry, the Panel Report warned of the dangers of amateurism in watering down standards and promoting false ideas about art: "inexperienced audiences, whose only exposure to the living theatre is through amateur dramatics of less than first-rate quality, sometimes compare it to the superior quality of television and motion pictures and conclude that the difference is in the media rather than in the level of acting."[81] While the Report acknowledged that amateurism could foster enthusiasm for the arts and a climate more receptive to professional theater (as was the case, many claimed, in Minneapolis), and noted that "amateur interests" should be encouraged, it steered funders away from that arena.[82]

Amidst calls for professionalism, the Rockefeller Panel Report claimed that the arts were a way for Americans to achieve "the end objectives of life—the emotional, intellectual, and

[78] Rockefeller Brothers Fund, *The Performing Arts: Problems and Prospects* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), 1.
[79] Rockefeller Brothers Fund, *The Performing Arts*, 12.
[80] Rockefeller Brothers Fund, *The Performing Arts*, 14.
[81] Rockefeller Brothers Fund, *The Performing Arts*, 203.
[82] Rockefeller Brothers Fund, *The Performing Arts*, 205.

aesthetic satisfactions that constitute his higher needs."[83] Since Americans would, as a whole, experience the performing arts as audience members or patrons, the writers of the Report presumably assumed, without ever fully stating it, that spectatorship would provide these "emotional, intellectual, and aesthetic satisfactions." With an intelligent and appreciative audience, the Report stated, "a work of art," could "arouse the sense of drama and conflict without which art ceases to be a living, vital matter."[84] Whereas television was considered "entertainment which makes no demand upon the mind or the body [and] offers neither a permanent enrichment of the spirit nor a full measure of delight," presumably the performing arts would be more demanding for their audiences—requiring deeper thought, or providing greater spiritual delight.[85] The arts, according to the Report, "tend to make [members of society] both wiser and happier—inwardly healthier, outwardly more alive… they are also educating and civilizing… and, at their greatest, the arts are exalting."[86] Just as television could be damaging (and thus increased leisure time could be dangerous for American culture as a whole), the arts could be edifying, helping to produce more enlightened and thoughtful citizens, and a more broadly content and wise public. The writers of the Panel Report departed from Lowry's thought on several points, heralding the arts as educative, highlighting the importance of culture for young people in "finding themselves," and the usefulness of art in diplomacy. Whereas Lowry would acknowledge but downplay these ulterior motivations for arts support, the Rockefeller Panel touted them as gains.[87] But the thrust of Lowry's and the Rockefeller Panel Report's goals was the same: support should go to highly professional arts organizations with high standards,

[83] Rockefeller Brothers Fund, *The Performing Arts*, v.
[84] Rockefeller Brothers Fund, *The Performing Arts*, 5.
[85] Rockefeller Brothers Fund, *The Performing Arts*, 3.
[86] Rockefeller Brothers Fund, *The Performing Arts*, 7.
[87] Rockefeller Brothers Fund, *The Performing Arts*, 8.

and the vast majority of the American population would achieve creative fulfillment through appreciation. Neither Lowry nor the Panel Report, however, fully fleshed out what creative fulfillment would look like for those audience members, or why it was not just as important—for the good of the American people—to engage actively in creative production.

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In many of his preferences—the quest for quality, the desire for a legitimate theater establishment, efforts to develop a canon—Lowry found wide agreement. Yet as the scope of his work at the Ford Foundation grew, certain figures began to think Ford and Lowry had too much impact on the shaping of arts-focused philanthropy in the United States. With neither the federal government nor many other foundations yet involved, Ford greatly influenced the direction of dollars towards the arts, not only through its own decision-making but in its position as model and catalyst for other funders. And at the Ford Foundation, when it came to the arts, Lowry seemed all powerful. Even within the Foundation Board itself, some thought Lowry "had an undue influence," and had become "Mr. Arts in the United States."[88]

In a certain sense it seemed appropriate that private foundations should take the lead in arts support: who better to prove that a capitalist society could have a flourishing cultural life than the private foundation? The major foundations were established, after all, in part to show socialists of the early 20th century "that capitalism was capable of promoting the greatest

[88] Interview with W. McNeil Lowry by Charles T. Morrissey, for the Ford Foundation Oral History Project, January 18, 1972, W. McNeil Lowry Papers, UI.

'general good,'" in the words of the Rockefeller Foundation.[89] Yet in a democratic society, why should a private pool of wealth have such power to direct social ends? Although foundations were established in part to assuage public mistrust of massive collections of wealth, their very ability to influence society—to do what they conceive of as good—had long been a source of suspicion, even resentment, in some corners. As "an institutional basis for the hegemonic function" of the ruling class, appearing "distant from their corporate origins and support, so they may claim a neutral image," foundations could be among the most influential of societal organs.[90] Indeed, one might imagine that such power to change the nature of society, deriving from the hand of an individual or corporation, would raise more alarm bells than it generally has. As Peter Frumkin put it, "philanthropy is a complex phenomenon precisely because it tends to be individualistic in nature yet it operates in the public sphere… The freedom and power that donors possess and their ability to act without consultation or real accountability allow them to act allow quicker and take greater risks than government."[91]

Despite wariness about the role of private foundations in American life, and the prominence of McNeil Lowry himself, private philanthropy possessed even more power than many realized in its capacity to impact, directly and indirectly, the work of government. On a general level foundations can function as a kind of testing site, as they are more nimble than government, they do not need Congressional approval for action, they do not need consensus, and they can act by fiat. They can take risks in their funding without being accountable to the entire population of the United States. In the mid-20th century, the Ford Foundation served as

[89] Merle Curti and R. Nash, *Philanthropy in the Shaping of American Higher Education* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1965), 215.
[90] Joan Roelofs, *Foundations and Public Policy* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2003), 2
[91] Peter Frumkin, *Strategic Giving: the Art and Science of Philanthropy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 2.

something of a laboratory for many programs and areas of philanthropy that would become part of the Great Society. According to Lowry, "there were individual members of [Ford Foundation] staff that were working so influentially, so closely with government programs it would have been ridiculous for them not to take advantage of our experience… as first the New Frontier and then the Great Society thing developed, there was a great deal of traffic back and forth…"[92] While a number of politicians in Washington already had their own ideas about the arts and were pushing independently for recognition and funding, they could naturally learn from the significant work the Ford Foundation had already completed in beginning to formulate policy.

Lowry had built a wide network of contacts as a writer for the Office of War Information during WWII, as a Washington journalist, and during his years at the Ford Foundation. He was interested in the relationship between the foundation and the government, and his persistence in building relationships and high regard within the Ford Foundation enabled him to communicate with government officials about policy. In collaboration with Hubert Humphrey, for instance, Lowry called a meeting with government policymakers regarding the uses of foundations in exploring policy, and the (lenient) tax policy that should thus be imposed on them. In a "four hour session off the record," foundation and government representatives discussed various areas in which foundation work could or had influenced government activity.[93] According to Lowry, "there are certain things that foundations can do on a pilot basis which government can't do; and then, once that something is demonstrated, make this a very large activity. And the list of things the Ford Foundation has done just in that respect would take over a page single space, if you only listed the subject matter: the VERA thing for bail, the legal defense bill, the Poverty

[92] Interview with W. McNeil Lowry by Charles T. Morrissey, for the Ford Foundation Oral History Project, January 18, 1972, W. McNeil Lowry Papers, UI
[93] Ibid.

Program, Community Action Program, Humanities and the Arts…"[94]

Lowry's relationship with government figures as they moved toward the establishment of a National Council on the Arts was not entirely cut and dry. He was not originally in favor of government funding for the arts, having witnessed problems of bureaucracy and corruption related to it in his visits to Europe.[95] However, if there were to be federal funding in the United States, Lowry wanted to lend his expertise. He attended meetings with key figures, in which he provided recommendations—solicited or not ("Mac Lowry would not go away," Livingston Biddle complained).[96] He was good friends with Frank Thompson, who was deeply involved in crafting federal legislation. "I had a lot to do with that legislation behind the scenes," Lowry remembered, but continued: "I don't mean that I was responsible for it. I just helped out with advice. And actually it was carrying messages and being an errand boy and what if I had been registered we would call lobbying."[97] More than any communication between Lowry and political figures, however, the Ford Foundation's programs in the arts were important in the making of national policy in that they served as models. The fact that many government officials, particularly those in Kennedy's executive office, were previous members of the Ford Foundation staff, helped in translating Ford initiatives into ideas for federal policy.[98] According to Livingston Biddle, "the foundation was considered a model of excellence comparable to Mac

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[94] Ibid.
[95] "The Economics of the Arts in America," for *The Voice of America Forum Lectures*, W. McNeil Lowry papers, UI
[96] Livingston Biddle, *Our Government and the Arts: a Perspective from the Inside* (New York: ACA Books, 1988), 140.
[97] Interview with W. McNeil Lowry by R. W. Daum, October 19. 1981. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Copy in UI
[98] Rockefeller Foundation staff members also entered government positions; Nancy Hanks herself was a former Rockefeller Foundation executive. According to Shauna Saunders, "the structure of the NEA under Hanks, in particular its reliance on peer panels, would mirror many of the administrative strategies of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. Its ideology would follow her too." Shauna Saunders, "The Case for the National Endowment for the Arts: Federal Funding for the Arts in America in the 1960s and 1970s," *History of Political Economy*, 37, No. 3 (September, 2005), 608.

Lowry's reputation," and various elements of Ford policy—from employing the opinions of professional artists in decision-making to determining standards of artistic excellence—were folded into national legislation.[99]

Support for arts funding on the national level did not begin or end with McNeil Lowry, of course. Government funding of the arts has its own history, though a modest one, in the United States prior to 1965. Congress commissioned fine art from famous painters throughout the 19th century, and Theodore Roosevelt (like Kennedy after him) invited musicians to the capitol and established a national Commission on Fine Arts, which existed on and off—without doing much—until the 1920s. Most famously, of course, the Works Progress Administration's New Deal arts programs provided employment for visual artists, musicians, writers, and theater artists in the 1930s. The New Deal programs, however, were focused primarily on job creation and only secondarily on the arts themselves (despite efforts by those involved to build them into continuing institutions). Prior to the 1960s, the United States government had never funded the arts, directly, for the sake of the arts. Arts institutions were supported by the government in other ways, predominantly through tax incentives—both in the allowance of nonprofit, tax exempt status for arts institutions and tax breaks for those who gave philanthropically to the arts—but the rolling enthusiasm for direct support of the arts on a national level was unique to the post-WWII period.

In part the development of arts support by the state in the 1960s was a response to the legacy of the perceived and projected values of John F Kennedy, for whom the establishment of Washington D.C.'s Kennedy Center for the Arts, and the very passing of the bill for the National

[99] Biddle, *Our Government and the Arts*, 138.

Endowment for the Arts, were intended to honor. While Kennedy's actions were indeed useful in garnering support for arts legislation, and he was the first to appoint an advisor on the arts (August Heckscher), his role both while alive and posthumously in arts support have been somewhat overstated. Kennedy, like Johnson after him, did not personally care much for the arts (although both first ladies did), but they perceived—as hard as it is to believe now—that support for the arts could be politically popular, that although there were detractors, there was also a growing constituency of college-educated liberals in support of the arts, and that many of these liberals were opinion leaders and public intellectuals with outsized influence.

There were, in Congress, several key figures who had been pushing for arts legislation for many years, some long before Lowry initiated his programs. Among the most prominent were Claiborne Pell, Democratic Senator from Rhode Island, who was deeply invested in the Humanities more generally and was ultimately better known for sponsoring the Pell Grants than for his role in the development and passage of legislation that led to the creation of the National Endowments for the Arts and for the Humanities. As a child of wealth who grew up in Manhattan, Pell's support for the arts and humanities was much more predictable than Lowry's. He was joined as an outspoken advocate in Congress by Jacob Javits of New York, and Democrat Frank Thompson of New Jersey. Hubert Humphrey was also a critical presence both in the passage of national legislation, and in establishing the Twin Cities as a central node in imagining a decentralized, broad-based American culture. As a Senator, Humphrey introduced a bill to establish a Federal Council on the Arts, and co-sponsored related bills on establishing various iterations of a U.S. Arts Foundation and/or Advisory Council.[100]

[100] On the activities of government arts supporters prior to establishment of the National Endowment see for instance Larson, *The Reluctant Patron*; Binkiewicz, *Federalizing the Muse*; Smith, *Money for Art.*

In the process, Humphrey delivered impassioned speeches about the importance of meaning and creativity in an individual life, and the government's rightful role in supporting the benefits of civilization. "We are talking now about, really, the soul of the Nation when you speak of 'the arts,'" he told his fellow Senators. "We are talking about the expression of the spirit and of the mind and of the intellect."[101] Not only were the arts the manifestation of the soul of the people, they represented creation and life—the opposite of the destruction of war to which the United States so readily shelled out money. Furthermore, the United States was on the precipice of a great renaissance in the arts, according to Humphrey, but one that—as Luce suggested regarding America's superiority in every respect—Americans must recognize and embrace, this time in the form of government support. "If America is to take a lead in this advance," he warned, "we must have Federal participation." And places like Minneapolis, where "the Guthrie Theater has been an outstanding success," would take the lead internally, demonstrating to the country its own potential for a democratized, decentralized artistic culture.[102] Humphrey's vision aligned with Lowry and others in terms of support for professionals, for the upholding of standards and the development of "excellence," but he emphasized perhaps more than others the importance of decentralization to national legislation, and the notion that great art could emerge from what many considered America's "provinces."

[101] *Hearings before the Special Subcommittee on the Arts, of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, on S. 165, a Bill to Establish a United States Arts Foundation and S. 1316, a Bill to provide for the establishment of a National Council on the Arts and a National Arts Foundation to Assist in the Growth and Development of the Arts in the United States*, United States Senate, October 28, 1963, 49.

[102] Humphrey's heralding of Minnesota and Minneapolis's leading role in this artistic renaissance was central to the growing belief among those in the arts world that the Twin Cities were a major artistic bastion. "As you know," he addressed fellow Senators, "the Guthrie Theater has been an outstanding success in a Midwestern city. I believe that kind of example will encourage others to do as we've done." *Hearings before the Special Subcommittee on the Arts, of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare on S. 165, a Bill to Establish a United States Arts Foundation and S. 1316, a Bill to provide for the establishment of a National Council on the Arts and a National Arts Foundation to Assist in the Growth and Development of the Arts in the United States*, United States Senate, October 28, 1963, 52.

Throughout the postwar period, and in some cases earlier, these figures worked from different angles to try to push some kind of arts legislation through Congress. Legislative debates over the possibilities of arts funding revealed a number of different directions in which national cultural policy might have headed, starting with discussion over a series of bills proposed in 1954 to support the arts. There was, for one, a stronger populist strain among arts supporters at this time, with democratization of the arts defined less as increased access to fewer centralized professional products and more as a deeply grassroots, participatory movement across the United States. During earlier debates in 1954, National Association of Concert Managers past President Patrick Hayes called for "a veritable TVA for the arts," in which artistic talent would be developed and supported from the grassroots in locations across the country.[103] In general the bills at this time included amateur or participatory art among their protected interests: for instance the proposed "American National Arts Act," debated at this time, stated as one of its intentions: "to initiate and support professional and amateur activities in all fields of the fine arts" and "to assist financially and otherwise in the preparation and presentation of professional and amateur fine arts productions and programs."[104]

Debating legislation later in the 1950s, Olveta Culp Hobby, then Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, argued that "new ways should be sought to bring the enjoyment of and participation in the arts to more of our people," and outlined "essential governing principles" of newly proposed federal arts plans: they included that "the growth and flourishing of the arts

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[103] *Federal Grants to Fine Arts Programs and Projects. Hearings before a Special Subcommittee of the Committee on Education and Labor, on H.R. 452, 5136, 5330, 5397, 7106, 7185, 7192, 7383, 7433, 7533, 7953, 8047, and 9111.* 83rd Congress, 2nd session, 1954, 59. Of course, a "veritable TVA for the arts" was established under the WPA in the 1930s.

[104] *Federal Grants to Fine Arts Programs and Projects. Hearings before a Special Subcommittee of the Committee on Education and Labor, on H.R. 452, 5136, 5330, 5397, 7106, 7185, 7192, 7383, 7433, 7533, 7953, 8047, and 9111.* 83rd Congress, 2nd session, 1954, 6.

depend upon freedom, imagination, and individual initiative," and "that the encouragement of creative activity in the performance and practice of the arts, promotes the general welfare and is in (the) national interest."[105] The very fact that in hearings for the 1954 grouping of bills, Milo Christiansen, Superintendent of Recreation in Washington DC, was asked to speak, is revelatory of the different priorities supporters had at this time. Christiansen emphasized the importance of participation in the fine arts for leisure time recreation, mentioning in particular amateur drama clubs as an element of a healthy recreational society.[106]

As discussion began to focus more on both the professional artist's need to earn a living and the dangers of amateurism representing American culture in the competitive Cold War context (inspired in part by the embarrassing Brussels showing mentioned above), emphasis on the benefits of active participation began to drop from the conversation. Yet through the early 1960s, speakers testifying before Congress continued to offer alternate avenues for cultural policy development. While conservative artists like sculptor Wheeler Williams expressed misgivings about "expert" determination of aesthetic standards and in the process challenged dominant ideas of professionalism, representatives from the folk arts movement presented perhaps the most prominent and compelling counterpoint.[107]

The folk arts were, at this time, positioned somewhere between the professional and amateur arts, based in ideas of heritage and "authenticity," but without a developed

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[105] Letter from Hobby to Sam Rayburn, Speaker of the House, *Congressional Record*, 84th Congress, 1st Session, 1955, 6844.

[106] *Federal Grants to Fine Arts Programs and Projects. Hearings before a Special Subcommittee of the Committee on Education and Labor, on H.R. 452, 5136, 5330, 5397, 7106, 7185, 7192, 7383, 7433, 7533, 7953, 8047, and 9111*. 83rd Congress, 2nd session, 1954, 10.

[107] *Hearings before the Special Subcommittee on the Arts, of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, on S. 165, a Bill to Establish a United States Arts Foundation and S. 1316, a Bill to provide for the establishment of a National Council on the Arts and a National Arts Foundation to Assist in the Growth and Development of the Arts in the United States*, United States Senate, October 31, 1963, 252.

organizational base. In a statement submitted to the Senate Subcommittee, Sarah Gertrude Knott, National Director of the National Folk Festival Association, explained: "We are not engaged in a commercial enterprise, and we do not look for profit. We do what we do in an earnest endeavor to help save for America a treasure which it is losing; a heritage which is crumbling into dust; the intimate history embodied in the lore of our forefathers—fading away."[108] Knott was particularly interested in the historical integrity of folk art, arguing that the folk arts represented, or preserved, a more authentic, more relatable, more intimate history than textbooks could. Folk artists were worried, though, that because their work did not fit into traditional definitions of professionalism, it would not receive the government support it so needed. Melville Hussey, Executive Vice President of the National Folk Festival Association, pointed out that "the act refers to professional groups, groups meeting professional standards. Now, our groups do not meet professional standards unless you use the very broadest interpretation or construction of that phraseology." Hussey suggested that the bill instead read that the arts to be supported would include "those which are traditional or inherited, whether of known or unknown origin, which have substantial artistic educational or historic significance, giving preference to encouraging those of residents of the United States or those which are part of its traditional or folk heritage."[109] The rise of professionalism in the arts had in fact already become a problem for folk artists: "One of the reasons the honest-to-goodness folk festival is in need of financial support is the intrusion of professionally trained and professionally staged performers and productions… the professional quality they exhibit should not be taken as a standard in derogation of the

[108] *Hearings before the Special Subcommittee on the Arts, of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, on S. 165, a Bill to Establish a United States Arts Foundation and S. 1316, a Bill to provide for the establishment of a National Council on the Arts and a National Arts Foundation to Assist in the Growth and Development of the Arts in the United States*, United States Senate, October 31, 1963, 257.
[109] Statement of S. Melville Hussey, Executive Vice President, National Folk Festival Association, before the Special Subcommittee on the Arts of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, United States Senate, 88th Congress, First Session, October 31, 1963, 256.

historical, cultural, and educational values inherent in a properly assembled folk festival," Knott explained.[110] Likewise, policy-makers' emphasis on individual artists and their creations, or "works," seemed to leave folk artists, whose dances, songs, and traditions were often distinguished by *lack* of an individual creator, in a funding no-man's land.

Yet folk art in fact shared some characteristics with professional art: it needed to be vetted, deemed authentic, by the proper authorities. Knott, in her testimony, decried the fact that "so-called country music and hootenannies" were sometimes considered folk art. "The great American audience is being deluded into believing that it is seeing and hearing folk music, song, and dance, when it often is not."[111] There must be some way for people to discriminate between real folk art and commercialized or otherwise demeaned activity in its name. "Thought must be given to concerted effort in setting common standards among scholars and festival leaders, recreation directors, and teachers," Knott demanded.[112] Folk artists needed to be set apart in order to preserve their inheritance, so that the particular expressions of art would not be lost in the sweep of the changing American cultural landscape—commercialized, or professionalized, or morphed into something new. Folklorists wanted to be part of the national culture, part of the new role of the United States as world leader: "we should bring to [the present world situation] the best of the cultural past of all our people to serve us as we take our place as one of the world's greatest cultural and spiritual ambassadors."[113] But to do so they required an alternative

[110] *Hearings before the Special Subcommittee on the Arts of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare*, United States Senate, 88th Congress, First Session, October 31, 1963, 261.
[111] *Hearings before the Special Subcommittee on the Arts of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare*, United States Senate, October 31, 1963, 258.
[112] *Hearings before the Special Subcommittee on the Arts of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare*, United States Senate, October 31, 1963, 260.
[113] Ibid.

idea of professionalism, a kind of legitimizing system that respected the origins of their work and the historic and imperfect ways in which it was created.[114]

While the folk arts were included, to a limited degree, in the National Endowment for the Arts' funding, emphasis on professionalism as indicating high levels of excellence in production persisted, and the arguments Pell, Javits, Humphrey, and others made in pushing for arts legislation were in many ways very similar to those Lowry had made in his efforts at the Ford Foundation.[115] Certain concerns were of course more central for government than for private philanthropy, however. While Congressmen in support of the arts aimed to prove that a democracy could create the conditions for artistic production just as successfully as an autocracy, they also battled with their own and others' resistance to establishing anything that would resemble an official cultural policy.[116] The United States, many argued, valued cultural freedom, and it was not supposed to exercise control over matters of creativity and innovation. Furthermore, discrimination over *quality* in the arts seemed especially antithetical to democratic notions of creative imagination and participation. "Specialized technical discourse," according to Stephen Turner, "not only science but other kinds of expert knowledge—presents a fundamental *political* problem for liberal democracy."[117] While the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations could more easily rely on expert knowledge, the entity that represented the democratic existence of the

[114] The folk arts were recognized in the National Endowment for the Arts' first full grant year (1967), with a grant of $39,500 to the National Folk Festival Association. This was substantially less than was given to most other areas of the arts. Theater, in fact, received the greatest windfall, with $1,007,500 split over 23 grants, and much of it directed to regional theaters. Mark Bauerlein, Ed. *National Endowment for the Arts: a History. 1965-2008.* (National Endowment for the Arts, 2008), 20-21.
[115] "In my judgment," recalled Livingston Biddle, "the emphasis on the value of the professional to the development of quality in the arts is beyond argument." Biddle, *Our Government and the Arts,* 144.
[116] As Humphrey put it: "I do not know why the arts need to have as their history the fact that it took a king or an emperor or a duke to be the patron of the arts. Why is it that tyranny or aristocracy or autocracy has to be the patron of the soul of the people; namely the expression of the spirit through art?" *Hearings before the Special Subcommittee on the Arts,* United States Senate, October 28, 1963, 54.
[117] Stephen Turner, *Liberal Democracy 3.0: Civil Society in an Age of Experts*, 5.

United States was in a tighter spot. How could a central authority dictate anything regarding art to such a diverse and decentralized nation? "The cultural life of the United States has at its best been varied, lively, and decentralized," President Kennedy himself submitted in a statement to Congress establishing an Advisory Council on the Arts in 1963. "I hope these characteristics will not change."[118] How could such variety, decentralization, and resistance to cultural control be accommodated within the developing national cultural policy?

In part the diversity of the country would be accommodated through state arts councils, which would channel federal money to local organizations. Worries about a federal cultural policy would also be rendered unwarranted through the touting of sample cities and regions as having embraced the arts and succeeded in bolstering their reputation on the national stage. Minneapolis was by the 1960s at the heart of arts supporters' arguments, as it served as an exemplary test case, primarily for the regional theater, and more broadly as a mid-sized regional center with a flourishing arts scene. Stanley Young, Executive Director of ANTA, testified that "I get letters from chambers of commerce now who want to know how the arts can be aided in their communities. This is a new trend… When I went [to Minneapolis], I discovered that they had a reluctant chamber of commerce in the beginning. They find now that the entire community is proud of the theater that is in the black financially. From Atlanta, from Oklahoma City, from Los Angeles, from Seattle have come requests, how do we do for our cities what Minneapolis did?"[119] In other words, a potentially flattening national cultural policy was shown to be

[118]"Statement by the President Establishing the President's Advisory Council on the Arts," *Hearings before the Special Subcommittee on the Arts, of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare*. United States Senate, Submitted November 6, 1963, 45

[119] *Hearings before the Special Subcommittee on the Arts, of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare,* United States Senate, October 31, 1963, 247.

potentially beneficial for individual cities, across the country, interested in embracing the arts as a development tool.

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The establishment of the National Endowment for the Arts in 1965 clearly changed the game. It brought the legitimizing power of the federal government into the world of arts support, it opened up debates about the meaning of art and the satisfactions (or not) of creative fulfillment—and indeed of the general welfare—to the population at large, and it consolidated what was finally a true national cultural policy. Yet the crystalizing power of government involvement should not overshadow the overwhelming influence of McNeil Lowry, the Ford Foundation, and to a somewhat lesser extent the Rockefeller Foundation, in shaping the contours of American cultural policy. As Lowry himself recalled, Roger Stevens, first Chairman of the NEA, " began by doing a National Endowment program pretty much on the lines of the Ford Foundation program in the arts," Lowry recalled, but "he would try to pick up gaps that had not been done or grantees that had been left out for one reason or another."[120] National cultural policy would continue to be an unfinished, widely debated, continual process of improvement and change on which public and private (or simultaneously public *and* private) actors worked together and sometimes at odds, through the current day

[120] Interview with W. McNeil Lowry by R. W. Daum, October 19. 1981. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Copy in UI

CHAPTER 3

CIVIC THEATER IN A POSTINDUSTRIAL CITY

"In our increasingly mechanized and computerized world, the arts afford a measure of consolation and reassurance… a measure of beauty and human emotion that can reach and move most men."[1]

"What must be grasped is the picture of society as a great salesroom, an enormous file, an incorporated brain, a new universe of management and manipulation."[2]

In 1959, Minneapolis and St. Paul joined an unusual inter-city competition. Rather than a contest for industry or sports teams, this rivalry centered on the acquisition of a major cultural institution, which, in an era of increased attention to the role of the high arts in American society, promised to lend prestige to the chosen urban center. Alongside Milwaukee, Cleveland, Denver, Ann Arbor, and San Francisco, leaders in the Twin Cities vied for the establishment in their region of a brand new, highly professional theater, to be led not by a local cultural authority, not even by an American, but by renowned British director Tyrone Guthrie, who, through Brooks Atkinson, had advertised in the *New York Times* for bids from cities across America. To be chosen by such an eminent international figure would catapult the Twin Cities to a new status as a regional urban cultural center, boosters thought. Alongside such preeminent institutions as the Walker Art Center and the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, and in harmony with the city's embrace of the white collar professional knowledge worker, many believed that a major new theater would enable the Twin Cities—and Minneapolis especially—to claim a reputation as a

[1] "Culture and the Corporation," an address by David Rockefeller. RG 1.2, Series 200R, Box 304, Folder 2832, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.
[2] C. Wright Mills, *White Collar: the American Middle Classes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953) xv.

truly world-class locale, where cultivated, educated people would want to live, work, and visit. According to Minneapolis Mayor Arthur Naftalin: "our experience and our potential combine to present us with the opportunity of becoming Minneapolis, the Creative City, a city that will have demonstrated that a modern community can fashion a creative and satisfying environment for all of its citizens."[3]

Such an acquisition was important, local leaders thought, in part because by the late 1950s Minneapolis seemed to be experiencing a crisis of identity. Inhabitants of the country's coasts never considered the city much more than an arctic outpost. But now, as was the case across the country, its commercial downtown was losing out to shiny new suburban malls, and leaders considered many of its neighborhoods "blighted," with low income populations, dilapidated buildings and sanitation problems. The entrance to the city, Minneapolis's "lower loop," which stretched up from the banks of the Mississippi on the main thoroughfares of Hennepin and Nicollet Avenues, had become a "skid row," where old men resided in rundown hotels. There were few places for suburbanites to park, and even fewer reasons to visit. Urban leaders saw the economic deterioration of their city not only as a financial problem, but also as a problem of identity, both in terms of local residents' perception of and pride in their home, and in the eyes of visitors and onlookers across the country and abroad. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Minneapolitan leaders would explore ways to define and distinguish their city, in an effort at economic and emotional reinvigoration.

As in cities across the country, urban renewal was the primary course of revitalization Minneapolitans pursued. Yet this effort, particularly the demolishment of the lower loop skid

[3] Arthur Naftalin in his 4th term inaugural speech, quoted in Minneapolis Housing and Redevelopment Authority, *Three Decades: 1947-1977, Renewal in Minneapolis,* 1967.

row and erection of a shiny new Gateway Center, complete with block-long office buildings and massive parking lots, seemed to many to overrun the human functions of the city and obscure its particular local character. Thus as urban renewal picked up steam, a distinct group of local leaders, inspired by Guthrie's advertised theatrical experiment and reflecting on the region's long history of music, visual arts, and investment in higher education, began to look to culture, and particularly the arts, as an additional way the city might distinguish itself. It seemed to many of these supporters that culture, as opposed to the effects of the business-driven renewal in the Gateway and other areas, would emphasize the city's ancient role as engine of human creativity and center of civilization. Furthermore, unlike the standard modernist principles applied in building the Gateway, culture might relate more specifically to the particular character of the Upper Midwest metropolitan center, where residents were proud of the many opportunities for involvement in artistic and cultural activities. The city as cultural capital would be an expression of its distinctive homegrown identity as a place that valued intellectual pursuit, quality of life, and creative expression.

Although certain boosters saw the arts as an antidote to corporatism, as the region began to stake its claim as a leader in what would become known as the knowledge economy, the spirit of local business practice seemed in a certain sense quite compatible with cultural development. By the late 1950s, Minneapolis was an emerging postindustrial "paper center" for white collar, creative, information-based "brain industries" as well as high tech manufacturing led by industry leaders such as Control Data Corp, maker of computer technology, Honeywell, developer of aeronautical and other scientifically advanced instruments, and 3M, originator of post-it notes

and other office supplies.[4] While the city continued to lose manufacturing plants to the suburbs—the General Mills headquarters, for instance, moved to Golden Valley in 1958—by the time of its cultural reinvigoration the city's past as a hub for lumber and flour milling was far behind it, and its struggles with deindustrialization were slowly becoming overshadowed by a vision of its future as a mecca for paper-based professionals and high tech manufacturing. By the late 1950s it seemed that the development of human creativity, in both culture and business, could become Minneapolis's calling card.

Despite such connections, Twin City boosters' approach to establishing arts institutions to some degree counteracted the very objectives they were pursuing. In choosing to back a highly professional, well-funded, institutional entity rather than participatory artistic activities or less organized, smaller-scale endeavors, these boosters applied many of the same corporate values to the operation of arts organizations that had resulted in the sterile Gateway. To fulfill expectations for professionalism in administration and production, cultural institutions hired experienced managerial staffs to garner publicity, launch marketing campaigns, and woo funders, and artistic energy was more and more diverted to the needs of organization, an ironic twist considering the vision of a cultural city in opposition to the over-corporatized downtown, and the arts as part of the new creative, postmodern economy as opposed to the austere, hierarchical industries of old. While certain information industries began to encourage more creative, unconventional practices within their organizations during the 1960s, the business management techniques that boosters applied to arts were methods of segmented function and decision-making that were considered the norm in increasingly corporatized American culture. In this way, the cultural institutions of

[4] "'We're not a Detroit or a Cleveland,' dominated by manufacturing, Quiggle said. 'We're a regional center. A paper center,' where a compact downtown facilitates the cross-fertilization of 'first-echelon management." Dan Wascoe, Jr., "Peavey finds 'spirit, vitality' downtown," *Minneapolis Tribune,* October 21, 1973

the 1960s would find themselves inhabiting two worlds—that of the rationally ordered business and that of the expansively creative, often anti-establishmentarian, arts.[5]

Emphasizing the theater as professional institution and applying business techniques to its management also hindered the construction of a unique, locally-rooted urban identity for Minneapolis. Those touting the Guthrie promised that it belonged to the entire local and regional community, but they attempted to define such a civic enterprise in a new way: rather than encourage local participation in the creative process, the incipient Guthrie saw itself as belonging to the community due to local participation in fundraising for the theater's establishment and, eventually, hoped-for attendance. This was a new kind of civic cultural entity, for a new kind of city. But despite relatively widespread financial support for the theater, and although the city gained international attention and began to build its reputation as a cultural hub, the Guthrie, a world-class operation founded by a non-local, a leading institution in national professionalizing organizations such as the Theatre Communications Group, and a progenitor of the major arts organizations of the second half of the 20th century, was far from a reflection of grassroots Minneapolitan urban life. As boosters attempted to distinguish their city from regional centers of a similar size, their embrace of the high profile arts institution resulted in a cultural landscape that was in some ways indistinguishable from what one might find in cities across the country.

Scholars usually point to the late 19th and early 20th centuries as the period in which America's major urban cultural institutions were built, in this case by civic elites threatened by changing urban demographics and hoping to cordon off the arts as an arena for high class

[5] On changing business culture in the 1960s see Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997). On the role of theater in the transition from a modern to a postmodern city and, in his account, a nationally-oriented to transnationally-oriented urbanism, see Michael McKinnie, *City Stages: Theatre and Urban Space in a Global City* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

enjoyment.[6] Indeed this was the critical moment in the sacralization of what we now know as the "high arts," and their separation from popular entertainment, as Lawrence Levine has shown.[7] The post WWII period ushered in a new phase of institution building in cities across the nation, again with the support of urban elites, but this time in response to new problems, with different purposes, and with the aid of major establishments such as foundations and corporations, and, eventually, the government. This second phase—which introduced theater to the mix of major music and visual arts institutions—took place in cities that looked vastly different than they did in the 19th century, at a time when the very significance of the urban core was eroding, when the tendency to think about metropolitan rather than urban centers drove boosters to reinvigorate their defense of the city. The institutions built during this time were meant, according to their founders, to democratize the high arts, to bring them to a wider audience that would cross lines of class. But their approach to institution building, as we will see, turned out not to be wholly compatible with such an aim.

While scholars have taken varied approaches to the political, economic, and social origins and effects of urban revitalization, and overarching theoretical views—such as Harvey Molotch's urban growth machine thesis, and the work of such central figures as Henri Lefebvre and David Harvey—are central to understanding the ways that cities developed in the postwar era, fewer

[6] For accounts of 19th century institutionalization see Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Culture and the City: Cultural Philanthropy in Chicago from the 1880s to 1917* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1976); Steven Conn, *Museums and American Intellectual Life: 1876-1926* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Neil Harris, "Four Stages of Cultural Growth: the American City," *Cultural Excursions: Marketing Appetites and Cultural Tastes in Modern America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 12-28; Kathleen McCarthy, *Noblesse Oblige: Charity and Cultural Patronage in Chicago, 1849-1929* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982). For institution-building in Minneapolis and St. Paul see John S. Adams and Barbara J. VanDrasek, *Minneapolis-St. Paul: People, Place, and Public Life* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 144-45.

[7] Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: the Emergence of a Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988).

scholars have taken an in depth look at the role of the arts in efforts at regeneration.[8] Those who have broached the topic have uncovered significant social, economic, and political tensions between developers, artists, residents, and other players as they negotiated the meanings of culture and the role of the arts in urban or suburban life.[9] Other work, critical to my own investigation, has concentrated on the implications of building an urban identity through "branding," or what Frederick Wherry has called the "production and marketing of place character," approaches that have at times involved the arts.[10] An area that begs more study, however, is the kind of culture postwar urban boosters hoped to support, not only in terms of aesthetic preference but in their underlying assumptions regarding cultural production: the methods by which they believed art should be created, and the intellectual framework within which all involved—supporters, audiences, artists, administrators—operated.

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[8] See for instance Jon C. Teaford, *The Rough Road to Renaissance: Urban Revitalization in America, 1940-1985* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1990); Arnold Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Alison Isenberg, *Downtown America: a History of the Place and the People who Made It* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Harvey Molotch, "The City as a Growth Machine," in John R. Logan, Harvey Molotch, ed. *Urban Fortunes: the Political Economy of Place* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987); David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (New York: Free Press, 1989); David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1973); Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publishers, 1992).

[9] See for instance Sarah Schrank, *Art and the City: Civic Imagination and Cultural Authority in Los Angeles* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009); Samuel Zipp, *Manhattan Projects: the Rise and Fall of Urban Renewal in Cold War New York* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Julia Foulkes, "Streets and Stages: Urban Renewal and the Arts after World War II," *Journal of Social History* 44, No. 2 (Winter 2010): 413-444**;** Sharon Zukin, "Art in the Arms of Power: Market Relations and Collective Patronage in the Capitalist State," *Theory and Society* 11, No. 4 (1982): 423-451; Elizabeth Strom, "Converting Pork into Porcelain: Cultural Institutions and Downtown Development," *Urban Affairs Review* 38, No. 1 (2002): 3-21; J. A. Whitt, "Mozart in the metropolis: The Arts Coalition and the Urban Growth Machine," *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 23, No. 1 (1987): 15-36.

[10] See for instance Miriam Greenberg, *Branding New York: How a City in Crisis was Sold to the World* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Frederick Wherry, "Producing the Character of Place," *Journal of Urban History* 36, No. 4 (July, 2010): 554-560. See also Mark Goodwin, *Selling Places: the City as Cultural Capital, Past and Present* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1993); J. Mark Souther, *New Orleans on Parade: Tourism and the Transformation of the Crescent City* (Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 2006); Thomas S. Bremer, *Blessed with Tourists: The Borderlands of Religion and Tourism in San Antonio* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Dydia DeLyser, *Ramona Memories: Tourism and the Shaping of Southern California* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005); Bryant Simon, *Boardwalk of Dreams: Atlantic City and the Fate of Urban America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Also Michael Sorkin, ed. *Variations on a Theme Park* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992).

This chapter addresses a piece of this puzzle through the lens of a mid-sized regional city that became, by the end of the 20th century, a model for what is now the much-touted "creative city." In the Twin Cities—most successfully in Minneapolis—urban boosters took careful steps to develop the reputation of their home as a cultural capital, known for well-educated residents who cared about quality of life and did not have to travel to experience arts produced expertly. In developing such a culturally-inclined city, however, supporters made specific choices about the type of arts organizations they would fund and the way such entities should be managed. Such choices were made, to be sure, alongside artists, art directors, and arts administrators, and institutional development in the arts was the result of a complex collection of causes and not the creation of urban boosters alone. But as the case of Minneapolis's Guthrie Theater shows, the business-minded elite who backed postwar cultural institutions greatly influenced the shape those entities took, and the ramifications of their approach to the arts—despite changes in cultural production and notable resistance to predominant practices—are still widely felt in the environment of today's creative cities.

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By 1963, Minneapolis's downtown Gateway District, which extended about 7 long blocks up from the bank of the Mississippi, had been transformed from what was widely considered a deteriorating "skid row" into a sleek, orderly landscape of modern office buildings, superblocks, and parking lots. Among recent additions were an imposing IBM office, a luxurious

Sheraton Hotel, and the Northwestern National Life building, its long white pillars evoking a cathedral to corporatism.

This scene was the creation of a massive urban renewal project, meant to present Minneapolis as a high-tech business capital: a sleek, architecturally-forward new American city, at the forefront of urban design and laid out grandly for the use of the college-educated white collar workers who would populate its office buildings. "Minneapolis is rebuilding," wrote a Kansas City reporter in admiration: "A spanking new downtown rises from the redbrick rubble of yesterday's buildings."[11] Yet in many ways the Gateway architecture was less forward-thinking and creative and more a manifestation of what David Harvey refers to as modernism's "subterranean celebration of corporate bureaucratic power and rationality," which entailed, among other things, "a prevailing passion for massive spaces and perspectives, for uniformity and the power of the straight line."[12] The renewed Gateway was meant to be the image of the cutting edge city: devoted to mental rather than manual work, a city of sharp professionals. But its vista was one of imposing sparseness, privileging oversized offices and automobiles rather than a dynamic pedestrian population.

The new Gateway was a major departure for Minneapolis's lower loop area. Since the end of the 19th century the district had been home to seasonal workers who supplied the labor force for the region's agricultural, lumber, and railroad industries. By the early 20th century, however, the Twin Cities were no longer the worldwide center of the flour industry, the lumber

[11] Giles M. Fowler, "Getting the Guthrie: a Tale of Two Cities," *Kansas City Star,* June 6, 1965
[12] Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: an Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1990). The shape of urban renewal as a modernist aesthetic product is also illustrative of the incorporation of modernism into the corporate political power structure. "Establishment art and high culture became such an exclusive preserve of a dominant elite that experimentation within its frame became increasingly difficult…" Harvey, 37.

mills had eaten up almost all of Minnesota's pine, and many industrial plants—no longer tied to rail centers—had moved to inexpensive and roomier land outside the city.[13] With the collapse of its major industries, widespread agricultural depression, the opening of the Panama Canal and the area's subsequent loss of centrality as a trade root, Minneapolis and St. Paul struggled economically in the 1920s and 30s. Intense political and economic strife broke out during this period, as simmering tensions between labor and the conservative and anti-union Citizens Alliance exploded in a violent trucker's strike of 1934.[14] Considering the truckers' victory in this conflict, the future of labor in Minneapolis may have seemed bright. Yet while progressive political leaders continued to win elections, a confluence of circumstances including local business groups deliberately working against labor, federal intervention, and macroeconomic changes in modes of production, spelled the end of the heyday of labor in the region.[15]

During the same period, major local firms like 3M, Dayton's, and what would become Honeywell were quietly developing, so that many of the firms that would shape the region's postindustrial identity had established solid foundations by mid-century. By the postwar period, much of the local economy was devoted to marketing, graphic arts, printing, research, development of electronics, brokerages, and sales. And although no longer an industrial center, the region was becoming a hub for high tech manufacturing, distinguished by companies like Control Data Systems, founded in Arden Hills by a former Navy contractor and Engineering Research Associates entrepreneur, which developed computers for scientific research, and

[13] For a description of the flight of industry out of central Minneapolis and the corresponding dilapidation of the lower loop area, see Minneapolis Planning Commission, "First Report on the Central Minneapolis Plan," December, 1959.
[14] See Charles Walker, *American City: a Rank and File History of Minneapolis.* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1937)
[15] Mary Lethert Wingerd, Forward to Walker, *American City*

Medtronic, also located in the suburbs, which built biomedical devices and eventually heart pacemakers.[16]

These economic changes were part of the broader international transition to the postindustrial economy, brought on by technological developments in communication and transportation, advances in science, and the accretion of knowledge and information, changes in "the way in which the economy is being transformed and the occupational system reworked," including "the increasing bureaucratization of science and the increasing specialization of intellectual work into minute parts," and the move to a service-based rather than goods-producing economy.[17] As these changes occurred somewhat unevenly throughout the country, and with the industrial balance swaying toward the growing "Sunbelt," Minneapolis and St. Paul were among those Northern cities contemplating an economic future that would look very different from the past. Unlike less immediately flexible cities like Detroit or Buffalo, however, Minneapolis and St. Paul were highly conscious of the potentials of the new economy, and were at the forefront of "Snowbelt" cities that more successfully adapted to the changing economic environment.[18] At the center of new efforts at research and development and science-based industries, and with the increasingly powerful University of Minnesota and other local centers for higher education surrounding the highly educated region, the Twin Cities actively embraced

[16] The local economy still boasted substantial manufacturing from corporations like Honeywell, 3M, and General Mills, although usually outside of the central cities. During WWII, some of these firms had turned to defense manufacturing, including Honeywell, which turned out turbo regulators, tank periscopes, and automatic release mechanisms for high-altitude precision bombing. See Wuthnow, *Remaking the Heartland,* 235.
[17] Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: a Venture in Social Forecasting. Special Anniversary Addition* (New York: Basic Books, 1973, 1999), 12-13. In Bell's formulation, among a number of changes the economy had moved from goods-producing to service-based, the professional and technical classes were growing in both numbers and power, and theoretical knowledge had become a "source of innovation and of policy formation for the society. Bell, *Coming of Post-Industrial Society,* 14.
[18] See Thierry J. Noyelle and Thomas M. Stanback, Jr. *The Economic Transformation of American Cities.* (New Jersey: Rowman & Allanheld, 1984)

technological change and the white collar, administrative and managerial work that would suffuse the population. But such adaptation was not without its problems.

As a result of these economic transformations, by the mid-20th century most of the seasonal jobs for lower loop residents in Minneapolis had disappeared. Yet former workers, many of them over the age of 60, still resided there, mostly in hotels and lodging houses. Considered derelicts by much of the Minneapolitan population, lower loop residents were, according to chronicler David Rosheim, "pensioners, migratory workers (in much smaller numbers than forty years before), men without a family who included a minority of real alcoholics in their midst."[19] Legitimate small business-owners also lived and worked in the area, supplying residents with basic shops and services, and places to eat and socialize.

More powerful Twin Citians were uninterested in the nuanced urban existence of the lower loop residents, however. They were instead occupied by the economic problems of central Minneapolis in the 1950s and '60s, dismayed by the flight of residents and employers to the increasingly attractive suburbs, and anxious about the city's deteriorating tax base, as shopping malls like Edina's Southdale drew commerce away from downtown. Although the city's African-American population grew steadily between 1950 and 1970—an era in which Native Americans also returned to the city— Minneapolis's postwar population was still overwhelmingly white (in 1960 the population was 96.8% white, and 2.4% African-American).[20] Thus although the city experienced some degree of "white flight," many inhabitants did not perceive it this way: they saw themselves as drawn to the easily-reached tree-lined suburbs made

[19] David Rosheim, *The Other Minneapolis, or the Rise and Fall of the Gateway, the Old Minneapolis Skid Row* (Minnesota: Andromeda Press, 1978), 170-171.
[20] Statistics from Research Department of the Community Health and Welfare Council of Hennepin County, "Profile of Minneapolis Communities," September 1964, 35.

accessible through the availability of automobiles, and they were frightened by the deterioration of housing in the city and the growing perception (and diminishing reality) of the cities as too densely populated—a belief born in part out of the Cold War era reverence for the nuclear family living on its own, roomy plot of land.[21] As the middle and upper class population moved out of the city, its dependent population of elderly, children, and low-income inhabitants increased.[22] And as retailers followed the wealth out, those who remained committed to downtown Minneapolis for political, economic, or social reasons were left with an enormous challenge: how to reestablish their urban center as an exciting and distinctive place. According to these city boosters, the lifestyles of the Gateway residents and the dilapidated, unsanitary conditions in which they lived contributed to the city's deteriorating economy and did not fit its potential image as a center for the postindustrial, information age. Furthermore, the lower loop didn't *look* like a modern, forward-thinking place. It looked crowded, chaotic, and old.[23]

City planners imagined many ways to reinvigorate the city, and in particular to "clean up" the lower loop area. The Central Minneapolis Plan of 1959, while never fully implemented,

[21] For the urban crisis and urban renewal efforts in the Twin Cities, see Jeffrey Hess and Paul Clifford Larson, *St. Paul's Architecture: a History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006); Arthur Naftalin, *Making One Community Out of Many: Perspectives on the Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities Area* (St. Paul: Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities Area, 1986) 6-7, 15-17; Ronald Abler, John Adams and John Borchert, "Recycling the Central Cities," *The Twin Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis* (Cambridge: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1976); Adams and VanDrasek. *Minneapolis-St. Paul: People, Place, and Public Life.* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993) 93-4. Naftalin insisted that "with 96 percent of its population Caucasian, regionalization is not regarded as coming at the expense of one racial group over another." Arthur Naftalin and John Brandl, *The Twin Cities Regional Strategy* (St. Paul: Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities Area, 1980), 5. However, the *Minneapolis Tribune* documented white flight from areas in which blacks relocated after their neighborhood of Glenwood underwent renewal: see Pat McCarty, "The Negro and Urban Renewal: Are New Ghettoes Replacing Old as Areas are Cleared?" *Minneapolis Tribune,* November 8, 1964.

[22] Minneapolis Community Improvement Program, *A Summary Report,* 1967.

[23] This was of course not a concern unique to Minneapolis. As Bernard J. Friedan and Lynne B. Sagalyn explain, for most cities in the 1950s, "downtown was not only a crisscross of inefficient streets, but it was also cluttered," and "in order to save downtown, it was going to be necessary to destroy it." *Downtown, Inc.: How America Rebuilds Cities* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), 15-16. For more on the economic condition of postwar Minneapolis, see Denise R. Nickel, "The Progressive City? Urban Redevelopment in Minneapolis," *Urban Affairs Review* 30, No. 3, (1995), 355-377.

contained a blueprint for what would eventually become the iconic Nicollet Mall, a winding pedestrian and bus passageway through the heart of downtown Minneapolis, completed in 1968. The 1959 plan also identified the need for more office space in the downtown area, and the possibility that drastic measures, such as removing "large numbers of buildings," would be necessary to truly change the trajectory of the city center.[24] The plan introduced other ideas that would be completed later in the city's development, although not to the exact specifications of that plan: the skyway system linking downtown buildings, a convention center, and, of course, the destruction of much of the old Gateway and its large-scale rebuilding.

Redevelopment of the Gateway was a federal urban renewal project, made possible by the urban renewal provision of the 1949 Housing Act and backed by the city's Housing and Redevelopment Authority, but—as in many American cities at the time—much of the vision for it was that of private investors and businessmen, who would finance the commercial developments erected in place of what was torn down.[25] While elected local and state government figures were fully committed to the Gateway redevelopment, private developers and businessmen, with quite a lot to gain, were among the most ardent supporters of the plan. They included members of Minneapolis's Downtown Council, organized in 1955: leaders of the new economy, including heads of banking, media, and advertising, rather than representatives of older industries like lumber or the railroad.[26] According to Donald Knutson, whose firm was

[24] John R. Borchert, David Gebhard, David Lanegran, Judith A. Martin, *Legacy of Minneapolis: Preservation Amid Change* (Bloomington, MN: Voyageur Press, 1983), 47.
[25] Such collaboration between public and private entities, according to Daniel Bell, is a key characteristic of postindustrial societies, as the centrality of knowledge and technology in decision-making pose "'management' problems for the political system," which must depend on the expertise of the private sector. "The relationship between the social structure and the political order thus becomes one of the chief problems of power in a post-industrial society." Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, 1999 edition, 13.
[26] Joseph Hart and Edwin Hirschoff, *Down & Out: The Life and Death of Minneapolis's Skid Row* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 42-3.

selected as the Gateway's main developer, the 72-acre space would "be a prestige area of beautiful and functional office buildings, residential and transient housing, all integrated into a sort of 'central city.'"[27] While a residential apartment complex was planned, as well as a new library, the area would primarily be devoted to offices, in which it was predicted that "close to 2,000 persons would be going to and from regular jobs in Gateway by 1964."[28] This was a cityscape for the new Minneapolis: the brain capital of the Upper Midwest, made legible through the sleek roads and buildings of the corporatized Gateway.

Although groups like the Downtown Council seemed to put forward a unified vision of renewal, like any project of revitalization the process was not so simple. A great variety of agencies and individuals was involved in city planning—the Housing and Redevelopment Authority, the Minneapolis City Planning Commission, the Park and School Boards, and the Highway Department to name but a few—and businessmen and city officials often disagreed significantly amongst themselves regarding redevelopment priorities. Whereas financially-minded figures considered urban planners like Lawrence M. Irvin, Director of the City Planning Commission, idealistic and impractical, those involved in urban design often saw more pragmatic businessmen as short-sighted.[29] Agencies within or under the authority of the City Council also quarreled among themselves; the Community Improvement Program, a "blight-control" group which aimed to comprehensively study the root of individual neighborhood

[27] "Knutson Sees Bright Future for City's New Gateway Area," *Minneapolis Star*¸ September 22, 1960.
[28] "Gateway Shapes Up as City's Largest Private Building Job," *Minneapolis Tribune,* October 30, 1960.
[29] The *Minneapolis Tribune* quoted Alderman Frank Moulton as claiming that "Irvin represents the idealistic 'planner' school of thought, as opposed to the pragmatic, fiscally conscious City Council school." "Two Planning Agencies May Clash in City," *Minneapolis Tribune,* October 5, 1964. According to the *Tribune*, many city officials held planners in low regard, with Alderman Moulton often telling Irvin to "come down from the treetops." "City's Multi-Million Dollar Projects Lack Single Rule," *Minneapolis Tribune,* January 12, 1964. This article also reveals how disorganized Minneapolis city planning efforts were, with many agencies working through the same projects. See also "7 Needed to Explain City Plan," by Daniel M. Upham, *Minneapolis Tribune,* September 3, 1961, which documents efforts to clarify the function of the agencies involved in city planning.

problems, for instance, came up against the financially-minded Capital Long Range Improvement Committee in debates over renewal projects in 1964.[30] It is thus a mistake to see the results of urban renewal as an overarching, utopic, fully planned and carried out accomplishment; although certainly reflecting the values of the elites involved, urban renewal was a conflicted process and its final outcomes were not the utopic vision of one particular group but the imperfect and less than fully satisfactory manifestations of many factions' ideologies. Attempts to create a certain kind of urban identity, or to develop "place character," were never clear-cut, even in a project arising from ostensibly unified economic motivations.

While those planning renewal had a hard time agreeing amongst themselves, as in cities across the country public resistance came quickly on the heels of demolition, and to some degree even earlier, with the announcement of renewal plans in the late 1950s.[31] In the case of the Gateway, opposition was due in large part to the perceived dehumanizing factors of renewal: the displacement of residents and the replacement of structures with great character and/or history—including the famed Metropolitan Building, with its ornate ironwork and glass floors—with the imposing modern facades of office buildings.

Quite a few people took a look at the Gateway that rose in place of the teeming lower loop and came to the conclusion that while renewal was meant to seal Minneapolis's reputation as a city on the make, the corporatized downtown actually *robbed* the city of identity: the sterile buildings sat isolated, disconnected from one another and alien to any sense of human scale, friendlier to cars than to pedestrians. "I've never seen such a bleak town," claimed visiting

[30] Pat McCarty, "Two Planning Agencies May Clash in City," *Minneapolis Tribune*, October 5, 1964
[31] Jane Jacobs is the most widely known urban renewal resister. Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961). Jacobs was not alone, however. Samuel Zipp, in *Manhattan Projects*, traces resistance to urban revitalization projects as far back as the 1940s, when slum clearance was favored.

architect Lewis Crutcher.[32] To make matters worse, the new Gateway mimicked redeveloped central cities elsewhere: built in the internationally-lauded modern style, but without a trace of local color, even its name labeled it as only one of many nearly identical Gateways across the country. Again, this tendency seemed to indicate a lack of regard for the very Twin Citians that would people its streets: "The center's buildings, like many others today, meet all the requirements of the architect, but not of the sociologist," claimed one visitor. "They seem to be without the human scale, where you feel intimate and comfortable." [33]

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While similar complaints rang out in renewed downtowns across the country, the dehumanizing effects of renewal seemed to pose a particular problem for Minneapolis—a city somewhat removed from the national and international network, with grating weather and a location easily overlooked, north of the national thoroughfares. The last thing Minneapolis needed was a reputation as bland and soulless. Rather, local leaders believed the city must go above and beyond other areas in its efforts to improve quality of life. The Minneapolis Community Improvement Program, a body organized in 1961 to report to the City Council on "the elimination and prevention of physical and social blight," noted that for Minneapolis to attract and retain talented residents and employees, "housing and neighborhood qualities, educational, cultural and recreational opportunities must be superior. Minneapolis must meet and surpass other industrial centers in these qualities if it hopes to compete with them

[32] Barbara Flanagan, "Expert Says City Being 'Wrecked' by Planners, Architects," *Minneapolis Star*, June 6, 1967
[33] "Architects Call Gateway Area 'Disorderly,'" *Minneapolis Tribune*, Dec. 7, 1962

successfully."[34] Such an endeavor meant attending to the overall experience of daily life in the city rather than economic development alone, an increasingly popular approach, manifest at the highest levels in Lyndon Johnson's calls for a Great Society. Prominent architect Weiming Lu, member of the Minneapolis Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, proclaimed that Minneapolis ought to aspire to the values of what he called the "New City," which "meets, as expressed by President Johnson, not only the needs of the body and demands of commerce, but the desire for beauty and hunger for community. The New City is a place where man rediscovers his own value, reestablishes his fellowship with his neighbors, renews his contact with nature."[35]

Twin Citians proposed many paths toward this kind of "New City" as well as varying conceptions of what efforts might improve quality of life. One approach was to emphasize the natural beauty of the Twin City region, a suitable choice given the area's many lakes and the imposing Mississippi River. As one City Planning Commission member put it, "can Minneapolis, with its disadvantages of climate and poor geographical location, afford not to be beautiful?"[36] Yet in a region known for its educational institutions, and developing its reputation as a hub for the information economy, it seemed to some boosters even more fitting to emphasize the advantages of human capital, and to promote Minneapolis as a center of civilization—a place humans had built, where creativity was valued in work and at play, rather than a place simply bestowed, arbitrarily, with natural beauty. Such a reputation would underscore the value of urbanity at a time when it was constantly questioned, and distinguish the area from its rural and naturally beautiful Dakotan and Iowan neighbors. "Minneapolis, as you have said often, has

[34] Minneapolis Community Improvement Program, *A Summary Report*, 1967, 10.
[35] Weiming Lu, "Toward a New City." Paper to accompany Urban Design Exhibition at the Walker Art Center, September 21-October 24, 1965. Box 30, T.B. Walker Foundation Records, MNHS
[36] John Heritage, "Experts: Beautification Vital to City's Image" *Minneapolis Tribune*, May 28, 1967

natural charms and beauty," wrote Charles Hanna of Minneapolis' Office of Public Information to Mayor Arthur Naftalin. "We must complement these natural assets with those that have come with settlement and development of the city by its people."[37] The Mayor, a major advocate of beautification, agreed: "Our experience and our potential combine to present us with the opportunity of becoming Minneapolis, the Creative City," he proclaimed, "a city that will have demonstrated that a modern community can fashion a creative and satisfying environment for all of its citizens."[38]

The arts, it seemed, were an appropriate arena through which Minneapolis might build its reputation as a creative center, and a convenient path in that art supporters could ride a swelling national wave of interest and investment in the high arts; as one enthusiastic reporter put it, Minneapolis would be "at the barricades of a cultural revolution that is beginning to become one of the signal phenomena of American life in the 1960s."[39] And the city and the greater region were well-prepared to become a leading arts center; by the early 1960s the Twin Cities already boasted several art museums, most famously the contemporary Walker Art Center, and a long tradition of classical music. Many of the city's most prominent arts institutions were established in the late 19th century, when urban elites, like their peers across the country, founded the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.[40] Yet residents of the city continued to demonstrate interest in the arts through the 20th century, participating in amateur theater and choral organizations, attending touring concerts and performances of drama and dance.

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[37] Letter from Charles Hanna to Arthur Naftalin, September 20, 1965. Box 26, Papers of Arthur Naftalin, MNHS.
[38] Arthur Naftalin in his 4th term inaugural speech, quoted in Minneapolis Housing and Redevelopment Authority, *Three Decades: 1947-1977, Renewal in Minneapolis,* 1967.
[39] Al McConagha, "In Twin Cities Culture Outdraws Big Leagues," *Minneapolis Tribune,* May 30, 1965.
[40] For institution-building in Minneapolis and St. Paul see Adams and VanDrasek, *Minneapolis-St. Paul,* 144-145.

Through the 19th and into the early 20th century there was a strong regionalist aesthetic to much of the art, especially the literature, produced in the Twin City region and the Upper Midwest more broadly.[41] This aesthetic regionalism was in part a deliberate attempt by Midwesterners to distinguish their identity from that of the East, and to push against the characterization of the Midwest as a colony of the culturally superior and dominant Northeast.[42] Writers like E. W. Howe and Hamlin Garland developed, through their writing, an invigorated culture apart from the East, different and proud of the unique heritage and environment of the Midwest, distinguished by an emphasis on the land, agriculture, and small town or rural life**.** While regionalism, at least as a true literary movement, had for the most part subsided by the mid-20th century, the embrace of national and international artistic standards in the late 1950s and '60s, in a place like the Twin Cities, is still a somewhat surprising strategy for a region trying to distinguish itself and build a unique identity. City leaders were adamant both about the greatness of local culture, and the need to impress those from across the country, and the world, with the quality of Minneapolitan life, but they seemed generally uninterested in distinguishing the content of artistic work or the methods of cultural production as particularly Midwestern.

One aspect of distinctive local life that city leaders *did* emphasize was the Twin Cities' long history of philanthropy, a tradition among the cities' elites, passed from generation to generation, beginning with early leaders like George Draper Dayton of The Dayton Hudson Company (later Target), flour giant Charles A. Pillsbury, and railroad magnate James J. Hill.

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[41] On Midwestern regionalism see for instance William Barillas *The Midwestern Pastoral: Place and Landscape in Literature of the American Heartland* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006); James R. Shortridge, *The Middle West: Its Meaning in American Culture* (Lawrence, Kansas: the University Press of Kansas, 1989); Robert L. Dorman, *Revolt of the Provinces: the Regionalist Movement in America, 1920-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

[42] Edward Watts, *An American Colony: Regionalism and the Roots of Midwestern Culture.* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002)

Citing the philosophy that "what's good for the community is good for the company,"— and recognizing the support of a flourishing community as key to the growth of business—this practice continued into the 1940s, when leaders at several Minnesota corporations began donating 5% of their pretax profits to charity, and pressuring one another, as well as executives new to the area, to give to a variety of causes.[43] A focus on philanthropy was considered not only a way to improve the community, but as a unifying force among corporate leaders themselves, who entered into a hallowed tradition, one that they believed helped define the region as forward-thinking and humane. Through philanthropy not only would leaders contribute to a self-consciously-built regional reputation for altruism, but they could also help shape their community, in the process ensuring its amenability to their needs. Or as John Pratt and Edson Spenser, in their overview of corporate philanthropy in the state, put it: "Minnesota's charitable impulse is less the result of longstanding social attitudes and cultural habits than it is of a strategic intervention by leaders able to refocus attention from private conflicts to projects benefiting a broad public."[44] Acquiescence was not necessarily a primary aim or even a conscious intention of individual business leaders in the Twin Cities, but it most likely greased the wheels of community relations.

As the postwar urban crisis threatened the health of the city and urban renewal projects proved unsatisfying, many of the area's philanthropists strengthened their commitment to culture. "It seems to me," explained Kenneth Dayton in 1965, "that there has been an increasing awareness on the part of all of our leaders that… while we may not have the economic advantages of certain other cities, one of the things that makes this a thriving area is the fact we

[43] Kenneth Dayton quoted in "Dynamics of Corporate Philanthropy in Minnesota," Jon Pratt and Edson W. Spencer, *Daedalus* 129, No. 3, (Summer, 2000), 274.
[44] John Pratt and Edson W. Spencer, "Dynamics of Corporate Philanthropy in Minnesota," *Daedalus* Vol. 129, No. 3, (Summer, 2000), 272.

have outstanding cultural institutions. There is a realization that there is something more to life here than just the job and fishing and baseball or whatever."[45] Those coming to this conclusion in the 1950s and '60s were a new breed: no longer the industrial barons of old, they were, like the backers of the Gateway, mostly members of the new economy, many of them quite young. They were part of the growing postwar intellectual class, graduates of major universities (in this case many from the University of Minnesota) and situated in white collar professions, the new "culture consumers," according to Alvin Toffler, educated to appreciate the high arts and interested in them in part for the status they conferred.[46] They were bankers, lawyers, editors, University administrators and professors, presidents of major companies, and heads of the cities' existing cultural institutions. They were members of the Kiwanis Club and the Minneapolis Club. They included Louis Zelle, head of the Jefferson Transportation Company, who liked to point out that "nobody remembers Athens for its plumbing," Roger G. Kennedy, of Northwestern National Bank, involved in almost all aspects of Twin City urban affairs, and John Cowles Jr., up-and-coming editor of the *Minneapolis Star and Tribune,* an impassioned devotee of Twin Cities culture and himself married to a modern dancer.[47] As was the case for the Gateway backers, the arts supporters were not a monolithic group. Some were intellectuals with professorships at local institutions, some busy businessmen who casually directed philanthropic dollars to the arts. Some were interested in jazz and modern art, others in the old masters and major orchestral works. A few, such as Kenneth Dayton, were involved in a high level campaign to increase corporate donations to the arts. In an address to a meeting of Business schools,

[45] Kenneth Dayton quoted in Al McConagha, "Cultural Boom is Many Phased," *Minneapolis Tribune,* May 30, 1965.
[46] "In the United States, by 1956, the number of white-collar workers, for the first time in the history of industrial civilization, outnumbered the blue-collar workers in the occupational structure." Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, 17.
[47] Quoted in "Louis Zelle," *Riverfront News*, November, 1979

Dayton proclaimed that corporations had an "obligation to help build a better society," and that entities like the orchestra could be among the "community's greatest assets."[48] These varied supporters all understood that the increasingly white collar population of the Twin Cities, along with the supposed "cultural explosion" occurring across the country, made for an excellent opportunity to support the arts as part of a thriving community.

While in the late 1950s the Twin Cities boasted great museums and musical organizations, this did not yet distinguish the area from other metropolitan centers. Thus in the early 1960s, arts supporters came to focus their energies on attracting famed director Tyrone Guthrie and his two collaborators, Broadway veterans Oliver Rea and Peter Zeisler, to Minneapolis to found a new professional theater company. The project that became the Guthrie Theater was born out of an announcement in the *New York Times* in 1959 that Guthrie, Rea, and Zeisler—fed up with the limitations and commercialism of Broadway—were searching for an American city outside of New York where they could establish a professional venue for the production of the great classics of Western drama. Frank M. Whiting, a theater professor at the University of Minnesota, was the first Minneapolitan to respond to Guthrie's solicitation, taking it upon himself to express the region's interest and suggest the University of Minnesota as a potential partner, promising to solicit the aid of the University President, Governor Orville Freeman and other public officials, important members of the local press, "various social leaders and influential citizens and theater enthusiasts," and, importantly, a contact at the Ford Foundation.[49] Whiting was quickly joined by John Cowles Jr., heir to the *Minneapolis Star and*

[48] Kenneth Dayton, "Business and the Arts," address given at the Mid-Continent East Region Annual Meeting of Collegiate Schools of Business in Minneapolis, 1967. Box 30, T.B. Walker Foundation and Related Foundation Records, 1938-1976, MNHS.
[49] Letter from Frank M. Whiting to Oliver Rea, October 19, 1959, Administrative Files, 1959, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA3), PAA.

Tribune editorship, who lent devotion, influence, and potentially money to the enterprise. Cowles's involvement helped to attract a larger band of Twin City leaders to become actively involved in trying to attain the theater. And relatively quickly significant financial resources were directed to the cause, as demonstrated by elaborate undertakings such as a last minute trip, organized by Cowles, via the private *Minneapolis Star* airplane, "to have lunch at the Century Club with the trio [of Rea, Zeisler, and Guthrie]. At that time, the thought of going to New York for the day was unheard of and excitement was high."[50]

The Twin Cities faced stiff competition in their courtship of Guthrie, with bids from San Francisco, Cleveland, Milwaukee, and Detroit, among others. Competition among cities was not a new phenomenon, but battling for the establishment of a cultural institution by an internationally-known theater director was. One of the greatest challenges for those luring Guthrie, therefore, was to convince fellow residents of the project's value. They did this in part by hailing the economic benefits of the theater, pointing to Guthrie's previous project, the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, as a model for the arts' potential to build a loyal audience, revitalize a city, and serve as a major tourist draw. "When the festival started in 1953, Stratford was facing an economic disaster," a sympathetic journalist wrote. "This is what has happened since: Fifteen new industries have come to town and employment, instead of dropping, has risen. Deposits in local banks have risen on an average of $2 million a year."[51] Such a success story might apply to Minneapolis as well. In what is now a familiar argument in the creative city debate, advocates suggested that those who came to see a show at the Guthrie might eat at a local restaurant or stay in the new Sheraton, spreading their dollars around. The institution's prestige,

[50] Louis Zelle quoted in Peg Guilfoyle, *The Guthrie Theater: Images, History, and Inside Stories*, 30.
[51] Dan Sullivan, "New Theater May Aid Economy," *Minneapolis Tribune*, January 13, 1963

they maintained, would ensure plenty of visitors: after all, according to Oliver Rea, it had the potential to be "the Number One theatre company in the English-speaking world," even "the leading theatre institution in this hemisphere," according to supporter Philip von Blon.[52]

Furthering the economic case, Guthrie supporters claimed that the arts would attract and retain a well-educated white collar population—perfect for the city's information industries—by offering them the possibility to amass cultural capital in the Bourdieuian sense. White collar workers were the new norm in the cities, both C. Wright Mills' middle class of clerks, salesmen, and secretaries, and the higher professional ranks of new businessmen whose work rested on knowledge and technology, increasing numbers of lawyers and financiers, scientists and technocratic administrators. This new class would form the target audience for a major cultural organization. According to the *Kansas City Star*, Von Blon "noted that the cities' economy is based largely upon companies that need brain power. And brain power is attracted by cultural benefits—a fact obvious to businessmen here."[53] Prominent arts institutions could convince corporations to locate in the city, for there they would find or attract well-educated, happy employees. Even if many of these professionals never attended the theater, the mystique of such an establishment, its influence on the city's intellectual climate, and the signals it projected about the character of the region, could contribute greatly to the city's economy.[54] Brain industries and cultural institutions were a perfect, mutually reinforcing, match.

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[52]Oliver Rea in a letter to Louis R. Lurie, San Francisco, December 2, 1959. Administrative Files, 1959, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA3), PAA; Letter to E. William Boyer from Philip von Blon, September 12, 1961, Administrative Files, 1960, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA3), PAA.

[53] Giles Fowler, "Getting the Guthrie: a Tale of Two Cities," *Kansas City Star,* June 6, 1965.

[54] As Henry Hansmann writes, nonprofit cultural institutions "may, through indirect cultural processes of cultural stimulus and transmission, ultimately contribute to the cultural experience even of people who do not attend their performances." "Nonprofit Enterprise in the Performing Arts," in *Nonprofit Enterprise in the Arts: Studies in Mission and Constraint,* Paul J. DiMaggio, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 18.

Beyond this instrumental argument, the very competition itself was key to gathering local support for the theater, as the glory of defeating other cities would speak volumes for the worth of both the victorious city and the prize, a motivation stated most blatantly by the San Francisco delegation, which claimed that "the project must be made to appear as if it had been won by San Francisco over all other U.S. cities."[55] Competition was effective in that it called on residents' local loyalty—"place patriotism" in the words of Harvey Molotch—to drum up support for the project and to argue for the superiority of the Twin Cities over all other locales.[56] In order to maximize this competitive spirit, Guthrie supporters emphasized that the theater, should it be established there, would belong to *all* residents of Minnesota and the Upper Midwest region, not Minneapolitans or Twin Citians alone. It would be a symbol of the city's vivacity, to be sure, but accessible to urban, suburban, and rural denizens alike, proving the quality of the region by enhancing the significance of its cities. One way they would prove that the theater would belong to the larger regional community would be by raising money from far-flung residents.

In developing wide-ranging backing, Guthrie supporters realized that they were actually speaking to a more diverse audience than they may have originally presumed. Much of the surrounding population was, as those trying to lure Guthrie claimed, well-educated and relatively wealthy, but not only did urbanites have a different outlook than suburbanites or northern Minnesotans, individuals in all areas disagreed about the meaning, importance, and uses of the professional arts. Without obvious arguments based in local connections or roots, boosters crafted a variety of pitches to sell the idea of a world-class theater, which they varied according to the audience: "I would stress the commercial aspect of the theatre at the home of Mr. Ed

[55] Memo to Oliver Rea and Associates, regarding the San Francisco Repertory Theatre, September 11, 1959, Administrative Files, 1959, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA3), PAA.
[56] Molotch, "The City as a Growth Machine," *Urban Fortunes*, 60.

Ruben and at the Kiwanis Club," advised administrator Lou Gelfand, "and the cultural gains when speaking at the out-of-town assemblages."[57] To local theaters, the Guthrie posed as a friendly competitor, helping to raise esteem for theater in general and enhance audiences across the board. On the other hand, supporters promised it would rescue Midwesterners from their cultural desert. The theater, it seemed, might be all things to all people—or, at least, to all people arts advocates considered potential audiences.

In the face of a diffuse local population, advocates did their best to play on residents' pride in their home to argue that winning the Guthrie would prove their city—and by extension their region—equal to the cultural centers of the United States: an exciting, sophisticated capital of the Upper Midwest, capable of drawing visitors from "all over the world."[58] Yet in vying for the Guthrie, city leaders betrayed a split self-image: proud of their region's (contested) distinctiveness but also envious of larger cultural capitals like New York and London, appealing to fellow residents' attraction to those centers to argue for the new theater. Guthrie's project, after all, would not rise from the distinct soil of each city; rather it would be imported, distinct from Broadway but similar to the great European theater ensembles, employing actors, designers, and directors from New York, Canada, and Europe. While proclaiming the greatness of their own cities as a reason to choose them, leaders bidding for the Guthrie hoped to attract an institution that would make them more like other, more renowned urban centers; this split-purpose was manifest in the theater's change of name from the Minnesota Theater Company to the Guthrie Theater, only a few years after its establishment, as the balance between theater as belonging to place (however tenuous the connection), and theater as extension of world-

[57] Letter from Lou Gelfand to Oliver Rea, October 26, 1960. Administrative Files, 1960, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA3), PAA.
[58] Lou Gelfand quoted in "New Theater May Aid Economy," *Minneapolis Tribune*, January 13, 1963

renowned artist, was negotiated. Indeed these local leaders were in the midst of a much broader transformation in the relationship between the local and the national: "The kinds of relations that exist between the countryside and the town, the town and the big city, and between the various big cities, form a structure that is now national in scope," wrote C. Wright Mills in 1956. "Today, to remain merely local is to fail; it is to be overshadowed by the wealth, the power, and the status of nationally important men."[59] As was the case in the Gateway renewal, in the midst of a quickly nationalizing elite culture, supporting the arts as a way of claiming distinction for the city proved a complex task: how would Minneapolis be both world-class *and* distinct?

Guthrie, Rea, and Zeisler, of course, were unconcerned with such dilemmas of urban identity in choosing their location. In an indication that promoters' perceptions of the city were being heard, however, they were attracted by many of the qualities advocates touted: the intellectual and creative climate of the Twin Cities, its educated population, potential for drawing audiences from across the Upper Midwest, and the possible involvement of the University of Minnesota.[60] Contending bids were promising but problematic: San Francisco, where the mayor believed Guthrie's purpose in visiting was "to promote the sale of Irish whiskey," was too distracted, Cleveland already possessed a well-known playhouse, and Milwaukee was too close to Chicago.[61] Detroit was too large, its businessmen, while highly capable of raising money, too serious; "were we unjust," Guthrie questioned, "to think that, as well as extracting the facts, they had also extracted every ounce of humor, of pleasure, of potential poetry and discarded these

[59] C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), 39 and 46.
[60] Approximately 1.5 million in the Metropolitan area and 5 million in the potential audience base of the Upper Midwest as of 1960. "Some Summary Data about Minneapolis-St.Paul, Minnesota, and the Upper Midwest as the Location for the Proposed Guthrie-Rea-Zeisler Repertory Theater," Administrative Files, 1960, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA3), PAA. The potential role of the University is drawn out in Letter from Oliver Rea to President James L. Morrill of the University of Minnesota, December 7, 1959. Administrative Files, 1959, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA3), PAA.
[61] Tyrone Guthrie, *A New Theatre* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964) 47.

impractical ingredients firmly and forever?"[62] On the contrary, suitors in the Twin Cities were earnest and convincing, young and energetic, and they seemed united and agreeable in their efforts, having gathered the support of political figures such as Governor Orville Freeman as well as the intellectual and business leadership of the region. Citing "the vitality of cultural activity in the area, and its potential growth," the enthusiasm of the "heirs apparent," as Guthrie called the young local leaders, as well as a crucial financial gift from a local foundation promising a new theater building next to the Walker Art Center, the three chose Minneapolis.[63]

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In plying the people of the Twin Cities to support the new theater, those funding and running it claimed professionalism as their highest priority. This emphasis was not inevitable; in establishing a theater for the community, which the Guthrie purported to be, supporters might have focused on the opportunity for the local population to participate in the creative process, or the possibility of extending the reach of already-existing amateur, educational, or semi-professional groups in the area. Instead, they promised a brand new institution run by experts presenting high quality, polished productions with experienced, trained, skilled (some famous) actors: excellence in production and operation. In rallying supporters, John Cowles, Jr. extolled the project "because the professional experience and ideals of these men guarantee living theater of the highest excellence."[64] Such professionalism would ensure institutional longevity, provide

[62] Guthrie, *A New Theatre*, 53.
[63] "Statement by Oliver Rea and Peter Zeisler," May 31, 1960. Administrative Files, 1960, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA3), PAA. "Heirs apparent" is from Tyrone Guthrie, *A New Theatre,* 58.
[64] Statement by John Cowles Jr., May 31, 1960. Administrative Files, 1960, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA3), PAA.

a steady living for many artists, and legitimize the project in the eyes of potential supporters, proving it the equal of other high arts such as the symphony. But the emphasis on professionalism also had unplanned implications—on organizational, aesthetic, and social levels—for the kind of artistic experience Twin Citians would come to expect, as administrative goals grew in importance, and the audience for and artistic output of the theater were affected by operational demands. Support for a major professional institution developed from the top down, rather than organically from the local environs, also counteracted the development of a distinctive urban identity, leading instead to a creative culture that although vibrant, in many ways mirrored that of cities across the country.

The years of the Guthrie's fundraising, planning, and physical establishment, from 1959 until its opening in 1963, made manifest some of the problems inherent in support for professional arts institutions as a method of urban identity development. While the meanings and longer-term implications of professionalism will be interrogated in the next chapter, approaches to the Guthrie's early organization provide a vision of how expectations for professionalism, and the business-centered way in which that was understood, began to shape the kind of creative city that Minneapolis would ultimately become.

In postwar America, the values of the corporation seemed to define the values of society. "Americans like to think of themselves as the most individualistic people in the world," wrote C. Wright Mills in 1956, "but among them the impersonal corporation has proceeded the farthest and now reaches into every area and detail of daily life."[65] The principles of business-like efficiency and rationality were so pervasive by the early 1960s that they took the shape of

[65] Mills, *The Power Elite*, 120.

common sense, forming the worldview of the leaders behind the Guthrie's establishment, and influencing the structure and administration of cultural organizations. Although seemingly natural, the operational values that supporters applied to the arts were in fact historically developed rules of business practice, part of the increasingly rational, scientific, technocratic post-WWII American society, in which leaders prized efficiency, decision-making, and specialization.[66] "In modern society," wrote Daniel Bell, "the axial principle is *functional rationality,* and the regulative mode is *economizing.* Essentially, economizing means efficiency, least cost, greatest return, maximization, optimization… There is a simple measure of value, namely utility."[67] The functional organization of this period called for a workforce unified by working toward the same goal and with identical values, but differentiated according to skill, hierarchical level, and contribution. For the theater in Minneapolis, the intangible functions that largely drove the work of the amateur theaters of the 1950s would have to be replaced by more concrete functions: developing the local economy, cultivating the local population, and perhaps most important, the development and continuation of the organization itself.

Indeed, by mid-century, management was a well-developed profession, with its own tools and knowledge set. Herbert A. Simon, in his descriptive and influential 1947 book *Administrative Behavior,* rejected the old tenets of management and promoted a new "theory of administration" that was "concerned with the processes of decision" and could be applied to a broad swath of human endeavors.[68] His book detailed various facets of the administrative process, such as predictability of function and outcome, and hierarchy of ends and means, and focusing on the centrality of rational thought in decision-making. Rationality, he wrote, "is

[66] Herbert Simon, *Administrative Behavior a Study of Decision-making Processes in Administrative Organizations* (New York: Macmillon, 1957), 75.
[67] Bell, *Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism,* 11.
[68] Herbert Simon, *Administrative Behavior,* 1.

concerned with the selection of preferred behavior alternatives in terms of some system of values whereby the consequences of behavior can be evaluated," and in the postwar era it was becoming easier to predict outcomes for all sorts of undertakings through data, science, and new technologies. As Daniel Bell has argued of the era of postindustrial society, "what has become decisive for the organization of decisions and the direction of change is the centrality of *theoretical* knowledge… the codification of knowledge into abstract systems of symbols that, as in any axiomatic system, can be used to illuminate any different and varied areas of experience."[69] As a profession—which cordoned off a body of abstract knowledge to be applied to varying circumstances—the same principles of management could be used to conduct almost any realm of human endeavor, including the arts, no matter the content.[70] Surrounded by this logic in their work and daily lives, supporters of the Guthrie had no reason to question it: of course best business practice would benefit the theater.

Although approached with particular vigor in Minneapolis, business leaders across the country increasingly supported the arts during this period, many applying to them business values along the lines of those Simon describes. Alongside new investment by foundations and the government in the arts, corporations, many inspired by the Rockefeller Panel Report *Performing Arts: Problems and Prospects*, were beginning to look to culture, including the newer philanthropic realms of theater and dance, as a good community investment in the early 1960s. "The demands of our society are placing a strong burden on businessmen to become more fully aware individuals, and involvement with the arts can help add dimension and understanding to people," Charles F. Jones, president of Humble Oil and Refining Company, told the Houston

[69] Bell, *Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, 20.
[70] On these aspects of professionalism see Andrew Abbott, *The System of Professions: an Essay on the Division of Expert Labor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), and the discussion in Chapter 4.

Chamber of Commerce in 1968.[71] Corporations had numerous reasons to support the arts, but perhaps most significantly they worried about their image in an era of increased criticism and anxiety over the "organization man," when many young college graduates looked on the corporation with suspicion if not disgust. "To attract to a business career a fairer share of the brightest, most creative and most venturesome college students than the current 12 per cent who make it their first choice," claimed Frank Stanton, President of CBS, "business has got to offer a cultural environment as rich and varied and meaningful as that of competing fields."[72] Trying to prove their social mettle, corporations began to make a conscious effort to put themselves forward as responsible citizens of the community. "The public has come to expect corporations to live up to certain standards of good citizenship," wrote David Rockefeller in 1969.[73]

Notably, business interest in the arts took the form not only of financial investment, but also of active participation. "To the rather passive corporate role of purely donative support of the arts, there was added the consideration of more active involvement," wrote Arnold Gingrich in his study of the intersection of business and the arts in the 1960s, nodding to *Esquire*'s "Business in the Arts" awards, inaugurated in 1966.[74] Several national organizations were formed to encourage business investment—and participation—in artistic enterprises, including the Business Committee for the Arts, founded by David Rockefeller in 1967 to organize, lead, and rally for support and active engagement with management of the arts throughout the business world. The group organized seminars to bring together business and arts leaders, in which

[71] Charles F. Jones, president, Humble Oil and Refining Company, "Cultural Environment Aids Corporations," speech before Houston Chamber of Commerce, March 7, 1968, quoted in Gingrich, *Business & the Arts: an Answer to Tomorrow* (New York: Paul Eriksson, Inc., 1969), 55.
[72] Frank Stanton, quoted in Gingrich, *Business & the Arts,* 58.
[73] David Rockefeller, "Forward" in Gingrich, *Business & the Arts,* xi.
[74] Gingrich, *Business & the Arts,* 4.

businessmen could "provide constructive guidance to arts representatives."[75] In taking an active part in the management of arts organizations, businessmen hoped that the arts would learn to manage themselves like businesses, so that they could attract more business support. As George M. Irwin, of Illinois's Colt Industries, put it: "Only when the local arts organization has done the best job possible in managing itself, in setting artistic goals and standards, in showing that it recognizes its total community role, can that group expect corporate officials to contribute money, or the time and talents of company personnel."[76]

Ideally, such active participation would, in turn, make businessmen even more committed to the arts. "The adage about charity's commencing where the heart is applies as well to the arts as to the home," claimed Gingrich. "A person who works with, suffers for and participates in any group, performing or fine arts, finds that the money he gives in addition is no longer a charitable contribution but has become a gift of love, true philanthropy."[77] The ways such businessmen could participate included having accountants "set up the books, draft a budget form that is intelligible to the board, or establish an efficient system of accounting," by leveraging tax advice, and management council. Business leaders could also help arts organizations budget for their five-year plans, "an unfamiliar process to most arts administers," and one, an observer might argue, with unknown challenges for accountants.[78] With so much involvement, it is perhaps unsurprising that business leaders saw themselves as becoming immensely influential in running arts organizations. As he addressed the deans of business administration schools, Minnesota's own Kenneth N. Dayton included an intentional slip-up in his remarks on business and the arts:

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[75] "Arts leaders are asked to avoid using the sessions as an occasion to request aid. Rather, they are asked to regard them as an opportunity to establish rapport with the people who can advise them, and to consider in common with business leaders how best their problems can be solved." Gingrich, *Business & the Arts,* 29.
[76] Speech reprinted in Gingrich, *Business & the Arts,* 45-6.
[77] Gingrich, *Business & the Arts,* 96.
[78] Gingrich, *Business & the Arts,* 100.

"increasingly the same men are running both," he stated. Then, correcting himself, "or at least the men who are running the one are lending increasing support to the other."[79]

While Daniel Bell saw a contradiction between values of order and hierarchy in the economy (or the "techno-economic sphere"), and those of rebellion and self-fulfillment in the cultural sphere, the businessmen who were integrally involved in founding the Guthrie did not see such a contradiction.[80] Any spontaneity or overturning of order would happen safely onstage, but not at the point where the arts organization truly intersected with society: either in terms of spillover between actors and audience or in terms of relations between arts administrators and funders, individual audience members, or the larger structure of society. This feeling of safety was in part because the main long-term goal of the theater was clear, and was nonthreatening to the status quo: to perpetuate itself as an institution, one which was economically tied to the financial strongholds of the community.

Many theater artists, however, also perceived that the adoption of widely-accepted business practices would be good for them and for their art, legitimating their endeavor and promising financial stability by hitching it to the norms of society. Regional theater pioneers like Margo Jones, Nina Vance, and Zelda Fichandler, of Theatre '47 in Dallas, the Alley Theater in Houston, and Arena Stage in Washington, D.C., respectively, were quick to embrace the possibilities of business practices not only for budgeting and marketing help, but for the respectability the apparatus of business would bring to their art form. Guthrie's early administrators, and in some cases Guthrie himself, made an effort to establish relationships with local businessmen and to solicit them for advice on how to run an efficient operation. They did

[79] Kenneth N. Dayton, "The Arts and Corporate Citizenship," remarks to deans of college business administration schools, Minneapolis, October 19, 1967. In Gingrich, *Business & the Arts*, 41.
[80] Daniel Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism,* 14.

so through organizing lunches, coffees, and cocktail parties, reaching out through letters and phone calls, and inviting them onto the Board of Directors. The solicitation continued after the theater opened. For instance, Guthrie staffers breeched their own protocol against complementary tickets in trying to build a relationship with the Minneapolis Junior Chamber of Commerce, which asked for tickets to provide to winners of an auction. "Members of your organization have been very helpful to us," Public Relations Director Bradley Morison wrote, and he hoped to "have the chance to thank the business community for the help and cooperation they have given us."[81]

With the blessing of the involved artists, the local businessmen and professionals behind the development of the new theater went to work. The campaign to raise money for what would become the Guthrie Theater was initially split between two entities: the Tyrone Guthrie Theater Foundation, which planned for the erection of the physical theater building, and the Minnesota Theater Company Foundation, which prepared for the work of the acting company. Both groups worked to attract donors, entice their contacts to promote the theater, and set the endeavor on a stable organizational foundation. The Tyrone Guthrie Theater Foundation managed the Walker Foundation's grant of $400,000 toward building what they initially believed would be a $1,900,000 theater (which eventually cost somewhat more). The steering committee included lawyer Pierce Butler III, John Cowles, Jr., banker Roger G. Kennedy, former International Milling Co. executive Philip von Blon, Professor Frank Whiting, transportation executive Louis Zelle, and H. Harvard Arnason, Director of the Walker Art Center. By April, 1961, the Tyrone Guthrie Theater Foundation had raised at least $1,000,000 beyond the initial $400,000, and was

[81] Letter from Bradley G. Morison, Public Relations Manager of the Guthrie, to Robert Arend, Minneapolis Junior Chamber of Commerce, February 27, 1964. Administrative Files, 1964, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA

well on its way to completing its financial goals. Clearly, there was significant financial power and social prestige behind the establishment of the theater, and although supporters boasted that they received almost 8,000 separate contributions, they were from the first indebted to their most important donors, the elite of the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, who opened up their pocketbooks to the foundation, and their homes to wine and dine Guthrie, Rea, and Zeisler in their early visits to the region.

On a day-to-day level, the incipient theater project operated under the influence of local business luminaries. Prior to the opening of the theater, many non-artistic challenges—publicity and marketing campaigns, relationships with funders, and audience development, for instance—were handled by the theater's board members, businessmen and professionals who utilized their connections as well as the prestige of the Guthrie to secure pro bono advertising work from local firms, which took out newspaper ads, erected billboards, and even arranged for television and radio spots. Through its members' connections, the Tyrone Guthrie Theatre Foundation engaged local advertising firm Knox Reeves to put the word out through, for instance, a "6 column and full page testimonial 'ad' in the *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune* featuring Olivier, Paddy Chayefsky, Julie Harris, and John Gielgud," as the "first in a series of advertisements requesting funds for development of the theater."[82] The Minnesota Theatre Company Foundation, tasked with raising money for the theater company itself, received pro bono advertising and public relations work from a different local firm, BBD&O. With them the foundation planned a blitz of advertising and public relations: placards in yellow cabs in Minneapolis, a sign at the airport, photomurals in high end hotels, contacting airlines to promote counter brochures in their sales

[82] "Summary of Knox Reeves Activities for the Guthrie Theatre Account, March 16, 1961 – July 14, 1961," Administrative files, 1961, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA

offices, along with direct mail advertisements and other publicity material.[83] Supporters also corresponded with high powered acquaintances in the government, in the corporate world, in the press, and in major foundations, to spread word of the theater project and drum up increased support. Such efforts were necessary to realize the lofty goals of the theater originators, who hoped not only for a world-renowned institution, but also to attract an ambitious 152,000 patrons a year (by comparison the Old Log Theatre, the main commercial theater in the area, counted approximately 42,000 attendees annually according to 1960 figures).[84] In their efforts to bolster the Guthrie's professionalism, the business-oriented board members—peers of the corporate Gateway developers—were key to the initial organization of the theater and the development of its earliest public image.

Beyond the direct influence of the Board of Directors, the professional operation of the theater also required a staff of business-minded administrators. One of the first actions of the Tyrone Guthrie Theater Foundation was to hire Lou Gelfand, whose prior experience was not with the arts but as a public relations executive with the Minneapolis and St. Louis Railroad. Gelfand served primarily as a publicity director, but he also took on sundry management-related jobs; for instance he helped plan the physical organization of the theater's administrative offices. "In the design of the theater the proximity of all paper-work offices—administrative, box office, and publicity—will increase the effectiveness of a pool-type secretarial force," he wrote to Oliver Rea in 1960.[85] Gelfand's main job was to "coordinate the monumental fundraising efforts

[83] "Minnesota Theatre Playing Company Promotion-Advertising-Public Relations Outline," Guthrie Administrative Files, 1962, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA
[84] "Memorandum on Budget," November 28, 1960, Administrative Files, 1962, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA3), PAA. Old Log number is from "Attendance at Various Twin Cities Institutions and Events" Administrative Files, 1960, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA3), PAA.
[85] Letter from Lou Gelfand to Oliver Rea, September 20, 1960. Administrative Files, 1960. Guthrie Theater Archives (PA3), PAA

being made by the finance committee: arrange appearances for Rea and Guthrie; make as many speeches himself as possible; recruit volunteers; get things organized; open the mail."[86] Administrative duties were thus central to the theater's identity, and to the city's vision of cultural activity, from the first, and staffers would pioneer many methods of arts administration that would become de rigueur in regional theaters across the country, as described in Chapter 4.

Through these early years, Twin City businessmen—including but not limited to Members of the Board—loaned their expertise to the artistic administration of the theater in other ways. Board members conferred with theater staff on an informal basis, offering advice in person or through letters and memos. Conferences and seminars, such as the two-day "In Quest of Audience," organized by the Guthrie and aimed at sharing audience development practices among theater companies, drew on the expertise of local businesspeople. This particular workshop included lectures by Robert Sturgis, Account Supervisor at a local advertising agency, James Porterfield, Director of Public Relations for Honeywell, Emmett Morgan, of a prominent local printing company, and Robert Connolly, Executive Art Director at Minneapolis' MacManus, John, and Adams Advertising Agency, who urged attendees to "have a trademark for your theater."[87] The Downtown Council (behind the Gateway redevelopment) also expressed its desire to assist with the Guthrie Theater, according to a 1962 letter to O.D. Gay, the Council's Executive Vice President. Gelfand proposed various ideas for how they might do so: "the display atop buildings and inside stores on opening day of attractive flags, showing the symbol of the

[86] Brad Morison and Kay Fliehr, quoted in Guilfoyle, *The Guthrie Theater,* 33.
[87] Notes taken by Dottie Berns, Assistant Manager of the Alley Theater, at "In Quest of Audience," Administrative Files, 1964, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA3), PAA.

acting company… Another is space in stores for a small portable display manned by our women volunteers."[88]

While the corporatization of the theater world was far from the doing of Twin City businessmen alone, their influence was key to the administration of the Guthrie, and in turn the Guthrie, as a model, was central to the development of regional theaters around the country. Given the standard business practices implemented and the reach of the Guthrie's influence, it is easy to forget that it was originally built on the premise of community attachment, on a professed devotion to the local, whether defined as Minneapolis, Minnesota, or the entire Upper Midwest region. Early fundraising efforts continually emphasized that the Guthrie would belong to the people of the Upper Midwest, that it was *their* theater. The Guthrie project was put forward as a campaign to improve life in Minneapolis and St. Paul, and to do so by harnessing the good will, communal financial power, and the implied "spirit" of the community to a project that would then *belong* to them as much as any other civic entity. Guthrie noted of the steering committee that "none of them needed this project for his own advancement, either socially or financially. Demonstrably they were giving their services for the benefit of the community."[89]

But what did this appeal to community really mean? The requirements of the kind of professionalism touted by Guthrie, Rea, Zeisler, and those supporting the development of the regional resident theater were clearly incompatible with many traditional characteristics of a locally-rooted theater, given that an institution of world-class excellence would require highly experienced actors and designers imported from New York or other cultural centers, as well as a repertoire of proven classics and largely European classical faire. In wooing Guthrie and

[88] Letter from Louis Gelfand to O.D. Gay, July 26, 1962. Administrative Files, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA3), PAA, 1962.
[89] Guthrie, *A New Theatre,* 57.

focusing on a world-class professional institution, arts supporters ignored what was in fact a flourishing amateur and grassroots theater tradition in the region. In the late 1950s, as described in Chapter 1, Twin City residents participated actively in at least eleven amateur theater organizations, attended the commercial Old Log Theater, and got their fill of more challenging fare through productions at the University of Minnesota.[90] Despite Guthrie's worry that without professional theater, Americans would "remain in a theatrical Sahara," many Twin City residents led fulfilling cultural lives, including, for many, actively participating in theatrical endeavors, rather than simply serving as audiences.[91] Presenting a new, high profile institution to the Twin Cities as the ideal cultural experience and the new civic theater ignored—and to some degree pushed aside—organic cultural activities that were rooted in the community, including amateur groups that thought of themselves as civic theaters, much as a generalized corporate aesthetic overran Minneapolis's unique lower loop area in the Gateway renewal. Many Twin Citians were aware of and unhappy with this ostensible cultural imperialism; local actor Ken Senn, for instance, lamented the fact that a well-respected local staple, the Old Log Theater, was forgotten in excitement over the Guthrie: "almost totally ignored in the glamorous aura surrounding the coming of the Guthrie Theater has been another organization (and the man behind it) which has really been more responsible for the rebirth of theater in the Twin Cities."[92]

In these ways—and in ways that will be illuminated in Chapter 4—arts support in the early 1960s and office-oriented urban renewal projects in Minneapolis shared a disconnection from place, a distance from local history and the distinctiveness of daily life in Minnesota. The

[90] The number of amateur organizations differs slightly depending on the source, as amateur groups formed and dissolved somewhat quickly. The number eleven is from Mel Kirkpatrick, "The Little Theatres and How They Grew," *8:30* (February 1961).
[91] Guthrie, *A New Theatre,* 36-7.
[92] Ken Senn, "Who Really Brought Theater Back to Town," *Minneapolis Herald,* June 28, 1962

role of the *genius loci*—roughly the feeling, or spirit, of a place—in urban development has been remarked upon in terms of the destruction of historic buildings and the commercialization of space, but is less often tied to the employment of arts and culture in urban development.[93] Guthrie supporters tried to develop true ties to their locale, initially naming their company the Minnesota Theater Company and welcoming members from across the state to the Board of Directors. But ultimately, just as most of the buildings in Minneapolis's downtown "could be anywhere," according to many observers, the professionalized arts institution had little to do with Minnesota or Minneapolis.[94] Indeed the very activities with the most potential to reinforce the distinctiveness of locale—art, music, dance, theater—were susceptible to homogenizing forces, of which professionalism was among the most effective. As one disaffected journalist observed in 1967, "that the Midwest has and appreciates 'culture' does not necessarily mean it has a distinct culture of its own. Many experts say there is no longer a strong regional theme in the literature, art, and music produced there."[95]

Yet rather than completely delegitimize its claim to local belonging, the construction of the Guthrie Theater as a community entity provided a reinterpretation of the notion of a community, and civic, theater. Theater for the community, as defined by the Guthrie, meant not so much participation in the art being made, or even necessarily wide attendance (although this was hoped for), but expressed support for the theater, or, as one writer put it, a kind of civic stature gained through financial and moral support. In this sense the Guthrie "was built through the efforts of the community, and therefore is a public institution."[96] As Stacy Wolf points out in

[93] See for instance Gunila Jive'n & Peter J. Larkham "Sense of Place, Authenticity and Character: A Commentary," *Journal of Urban Design* 8, No. 1 (2003), 67–81, as well as the works on place character mentioned above.
[94] Paul Goldberger, "From Architects, Praise for Twin Cities," *New York Times*, May 20, 1981.
[95] Lucia Mouat, "On the Importance of Being Midwestern," *Christian Science Monitor*, October 21, 1967
[96] "Guthrie Theatre Opening Heralds New Culture Era" *Minnesota Motorist*, April, 1963

the case of the Madison Civic Center, support for the arts could be seen as a kind of "civic religion" that implied that locals cared about quality of life, and valued something beyond money (although ironically they expressed these values through the contribution of money to the cause).[97]

In creating this new definition of civic theater, Guthrie leaders also forged tangible ties to the community through relationships with important local figures and institutions. Guthrie leaders were careful to forge alliances not only with elites in the private sector, but also with powerful representatives of the local population: political luminaries like Hubert Humphrey, Mayor Arthur Naftalin and Governor Karl Rolvaag. The theater also ingratiated itself—at least in its very earliest years—with the local cultural behemoth of the University, an entity itself undergoing major expansion in the 1960s. Tyrone Guthrie intended to set roots in the community by developing a fellowship program with the University of Minnesota through which students would work and train at the theater while pursuing a B.F.A.; some students, it was thought, would be talented enough to eventually join the company. Such ties to the University, an established and respected pillar of American cultural life, would be central to the theater's claims to local legitimacy. According to Guthrie, in a letter to a representative of the competing city of Milwaukee, "if this repertory theater manages to assume the indigenous character which we feel it must if it is to be educationally and culturally productive to the community, it must strike roots from the start within the university graduate drama school… in most American communities, a university is taking the cultural and intellectual lead. We would like to join with that leader, and the community in general, in a contribution toward the cultural development of this country."[98]

[97] Stacy Wolf, "Civilizing and Selling Spectators: Audiences at a Madison Civic Theater" *Theatre Survey* Vol. 39, Issue 2 (November 1998), 7-23.
[98] Letter to LeRoy Peterson from Tyrone Guthrie, Dec. 7, 1959. Administrative Files, 1959, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA

The Guthrie's relationship with the University of Minnesota proved more contentious than originally hoped, but it did tie the theater to the region in a concrete way.

The Guthrie also secured itself to the local community and to the University by hiring University of Minnesota architect Ralph Rapson to design its building, an edifice meant to be modern and functional, like the Gateway buildings, but also eye-catching, distinctive, and dramatic. To this end Rapson combined international architectural principles with structural elements particularly suited to the role of the building: its glass façade allowed onlookers to watch theater attendees parading up and down stairs inside the building, underscoring the arts' contribution to the humanistic city as well as its role in fostering spectacle and social occasion. The building played its part in impressing visitors and distinguishing Minneapolis: "It is stunning," attested a reviewer from the *Chicago Sun Times*. "Chicago doesn't have anything anywhere near its equal."[99] Inside the auditorium was a thrust stage, a relatively new innovation in theatrical circles, and an intimate arrangement in which all seats boasted clear views, a setup meant to ease distinctions between audience members and diminish boundaries between audiences and the action of the play. Despite these democratic intentions and its distinct aesthetic, the new Guthrie Theater was in other ways similar to the new buildings of the Gateway: it was not part of a bustling, mixed, downtown streetscape but set apart in a greenway by the Walker Art Center, it was an impressive, some might say intimidating, modern building which cost over two million dollars to erect and would take great effort to maintain, and it was brand new, a neighbor of the Walker but otherwise unrelated to its Minnesotan surroundings. It

[99] Review by Glenna Syse, *Chicago Sun Times*, reprinted in "What Other Critics Said" *Minneapolis Tribune*, May 8, 1963

manifested on a physical level the contradictions of the professional artistic organization as urban development tool.

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It is tempting to oppose the vision of Minneapolis as cultural capital—a place where the arts would flourish—to that put forth by the Gateway developers, which in purpose and physical manifestation touted the efficiency, rationality, and orderliness of the new corporation, in which knowledge workers would pursue productive creativity within the bounds of the functional office building. Even Twin Citians involved in supporting the arts seemed to consider the projects as originating from different impulses, and with different aims. In the end, however, the apparent contradictions between urban development strategies were largely illusory: the arts institutions of the revitalized Minneapolis were developed in the same world as the new downtown, a world in which for those with the most power to craft the city's identity, the values of professionalism were paramount, despite the encroaching counterculture. And approaching culture with a corporate mindset affected the production of art as well as its reception, helping to determine who would most enjoy such art and in what ways.

CHAPTER 4

THE EFFECTS OF PROFESSIONALISM

On May 7, 1963, a trio of "white-suited" trumpeters announced that the Twin City elite, dressed to the nines for the opening of the Guthrie Theater's production of *Hamlet,* should take its seats.[1] This unusually humid spring night not only launched the theater's four-hour, spectacularly-staged production of Shakespeare's masterpiece, but it also marked the much-anticipated birth of a fully professional, lavishly-funded operation, sure to launch Minneapolis to the forefront of national conversations about "artistic excellence." At its opening, the Guthrie Theater made its mark as a unique undertaking: gathering the elements of nonprofit professionalism that had been developing through the efforts of theater-makers across the country and philanthropists at the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, it deployed them full-force through an intricately-planned artistic organization and into the lives of the citizens of Minneapolis, St. Paul, and surrounding regions. For an area flush with lively amateur theater activity, Tyrone Guthrie and his collaborators presented a new conception of what a civic theater could be: a highly professional manufacturer of polished dramatic products developed by skilled practitioners, delivered to what Guthrie and his partners hoped would become an appreciative, theater-hungry populace.

[1] Margaret Morris, "Guthrie Theater Has Glittering First Nighters," *Minneapolis Star,* May 8, 1963

As described in previous chapters, the founding of the Guthrie Theater was part of a wide-ranging national effort, forged by major foundations, influential cultural commentators, and a contingent of political leaders, to establish the American theater as a legitimate artistic tradition along the lines of the orchestral or visual arts, through the development of nonprofit professional theaters producing high quality work in cities across the country in the late 1950s and 1960s.[2] Intended in part to develop a consensus around the kind of plays that would be considered high dramatic art—traditional Western masterpieces as well as a new American canon—such an Establishment necessitated a network of structurally-sound, stable theater institutions in which to present this repertoire to the American public. At the forefront of this endeavor, the Minneapolis enterprise served as an administrative and artistic model for the organizations that followed, both locally and across the nation. Thus the Guthrie's embrace of a highly developed nonprofit structure, emphasizing financial support from major funders and the development of a specialized administrative staff, had a critical influence on those involved, interested, or potentially interested in the arts, either as direct participants or as patrons, in the Twin Cities region and across the country.

The professionalization of theater, however, presented many theater artists, both amateurs and professionals, with fundamental philosophical contradictions in how they viewed and participated in the art form. At the same time that many young Americans were rebelling against the rationalization and segmentation of daily life, professionalism entailed the building of rational, segmented administrative frameworks in order to steady and stabilize the production of this culture. Such institutionalization appeared particularly contradictory for artists—many who

[2] The development of this movement on a national level is discussed in Chapter 2. The standard volume on the regional theater movement is Joseph Zeigler, *Regional Theatre: the Revolutionary Stage* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1973).

saw themselves as devoted to a realm of humanistic criticism, questioning, and challenge, and even more so in theater, historically and in public perception an arena for subversion and protest. Ideally, the support of foundations and corporations, unconnected (at least directly) to individual productions, would allow theaters to challenge the status quo through creative experimentation without putting the life of the company on the line. In practice, however, the freeing of creative energy through the sustained financial support of a new class of funders was dubious. In fact, the courting and keeping of funders introduced new pressures that ultimately constrained artistic institutions' potential to fully embrace riskier work.

In the meantime, just as Happenings and street theater were attempting to break down the socioeconomic divides of artistic participation, professionalization reinforced the connection between art and upper (or upper-middle) class leisure. Contrary to the stated goals and often genuine intention of advocates to democratize the art form, lavish buildings, opening night celebrations, and the support of prestigious members of the local and national community tied theater, in the minds of many Americans, irrevocably to elitism. Although regional theaters tried to reach out to new audiences and diversify their patron base later in the 1960s, their image as belonging to a certain social class was already largely cemented, and their trouble diversifying audiences was compounded by an unwillingness to include such populations in the actual development of their work. And even theater-makers who started out with more inclusive missions, like the community-minded Theatre St. Paul and Minneapolis's avant-garde Firehouse Theater, found that the norms of professional structure constrained their ability to break through the divides that pervaded the 1960s.

The professional theater institution *did* enable more Americans to see what many considered serious theater, especially with the decline of popular road shows, even if the

audience was mostly made up of professionals and members of the middle and upper-middle class. There was, after all, an expanding population of white collar professionals who desired such cultural institutions, particularly in Minneapolis, as described in Chapter 3. And many of those who attended the Guthrie appreciated it not only as a way to build cultural capital and network within a certain social group, but also (or, for some, only) as an enriching, intellectually stimulating way of broadening knowledge and perception, as a mode of reflection and/or active critical inquiry into the dilemmas of humanity. Appreciation—for those the theater served—could involve the varied kinds of participation that scholars of reception or audience theory have proposed.[3] Professional audience members saw themselves not only as productive in their own field, but as connoisseurs of many others, as recognizing excellence and quality in other realms, appreciating, supporting, and becoming enriched by it.

Thus the growth of regional professional theaters pleased audiences by presenting highly crafted productions of often great plays, and it provided the space and financial backing for many artists to devote their full time and energy to the creation of theatrical art. The professional regional theater as civic entity also provided a prestigious local entity of which residents could be proud, and which promised to make their region more attractive to businesses and white collar residents. Yet professionalization presented new questions as well: what kinds of artistic experiences did it push aside? How would a professional theater, run as a business-like and bureaucratic entity, recognize and potentially embrace the rebellious currents that were so crucial to the health of its own field? How would smaller and less immediately prestigious theatrical

[3] On reception theory in theater see for instance Susan Bennett, *Theater Audiences: a Theory of Production and Reception* (New York: Routledge, 1990). Central texts in reception theory for literary analysis are Stuart Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," *Culture, Media, Language* Eds. Stuart Hall, et al. (London: Hutchinson, 1980), 128-138; and Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception,* Trans. Timothy Bahti (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1982).

entities, perhaps ones with unconventional missions or amateur groups that thought of themselves as civic resources, survive in a cultural milieu that increasingly valued the professional over the amateur, and that paid little attention to those who could not legitimize their existence through a list of funders? Were the structures and methods used to bolster creative production fundamentally at odds with the endeavor they were meant to support?

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"Outside of folklore, fairy tales and exotic dreams one seldom runs across giants these days. The only one I know is a mixture of Scottish, Irish, and English blood… His castle, appropriately enough, is a huge rambling house overlooking a lake in a very remote and heavily wooded part of County Monaghan, Ireland… As I write, his shadow lies on Minnesota, where he was invited by the people of Minneapolis to act as artistic director of the new Tyrone Guthrie Theatre there."[4]

By the time Tyrone Guthrie first visited Minneapolis in 1959, he was a world-renowned director, most famous for his imaginative and forceful productions of Shakespeare and his uncouth, casually clad but imposing 6'5" countenance and frank demeanor. "He had no front," wrote John Cowles, Jr. "He wasn't interested in trying to make a good impression by how he dressed or namedropping or any of that. He was beyond feeling the need to impress anybody."[5] Born in England but Irish in ancestry and in chosen home, Guthrie was knighted in 1961, just as the prospect for his theater in Minnesota was taking off, which turned out to be very convenient

[4] Brian Friel, "The Giant of Monaghan," *Holiday*¸ May 1964, Guthrie Theater Administrative Files, 1964, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA
[5] John Cowles, Jr. quoted in Peg Guilfoyle, *The Guthrie Theater: Images, History, and Inside Stories* (Minneapolis: Nodin Press, 2006), 28.

for fundraising purposes. But despite his exalted status Guthrie maintained an unkempt (if studiously so) personal presence. Observed the *New York Times*: "he has wandered about Times Square in clashing jacket and trousers, blue-canvas half sneakers and no socks."[6] "One cannot be afraid to be thought a little odd, a little bit of a freak," Guthrie explained.[7] His remarkable countenance contributed to his reputation as a strikingly original director, "as a man who was earthy and profane in his eccentric personal habits, but had a classical and spiritual vision of theatre as ritual and ceremonial," according to Robert Shaughnessy.[8]

Guthrie was perhaps best known at the time for his vigorous 1937 Old Vic production of *Hamlet* with an athletic Laurence Olivier, at the Kronborg Castle in Helsingor, Denmark, the model for Elsinore. In this production Guthrie showed his prowess for soliciting dynamic, forthright performances from his actors, and for forging a sense of immediacy and vibrant life in Shakespeare's plays. Significantly, the opening of this production had to be moved inside due to rain, producing a last minute decision to perform on the floor of a local hotel ballroom, with the audience "in the round" surrounding the actors—one of the first times this technique had been used, the success of which would launch Guthrie's career-long commitment to intimate staging and the thrust stage. When, in 1953, he became the first director of the Stratford Festival in Ontario, an endeavor that the theater in Minneapolis would in many ways echo, Guthrie was determined to demonstrate the virtues of a thrust stage for immediate, unconventional productions of Shakespeare; there his *All's Well That Ends Well,* with Alec Guiness, and *Richard*

[6] "1,000 Miles Off Broadway," *New York Times,* May 9, 1963
[7] Quoted in "1,000 Miles Off Broadway," *New York Times,* May 9, 1963
[8] Robert Shaughnessy, *The Shakespeare Effect: a History of Twentieth-Century Performance* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), 80. Shaughnessy, in his work on Shakespearean performance, sees the myth of Tyrone Guthrie the man as coexisting with his productions in such a way as to magnify both: the personality and the performance, both during his life and after his death, melding into one great story.

III were particularly well-received.[9] By the 1950s, Guthrie's experience ranged from England to Canada to Broadway and other New York stages.

While Guthrie was largely successful in New York, even winning a Tony Award for his direction of Thorton Wilder's *The Matchmaker*, the sink or swim nature of Broadway production, and particularly the box office failure of Leonard Bernstein's *Candide* (on which he worked with Stage Director and future Minnesota collaborator Peter Zeisler), soured his opinion of commercial American theater.[10] In 1959 he renounced the risk-inhibiting conditions on the Great White Way and proclaimed his dedication to establishing a theater where serious, thoughtful productions could thrive under a supportive and loyal audience. Rather than try to satisfy capricious New York theater-goers, who more often than not wanted what he considered cheap thrills, Guthrie, collaborating with Zeisler and Broadway producer Oliver Rea, turned to the middle of the United States, where he believed a nonprofit theater with a resident acting company, situated in an accepting environment and offering carefully-rehearsed productions of great plays, might develop a tradition of high quality American theater unlike anything yet achieved. Guthrie and others hoped that detaching financial support from individual productions initially through foundation and corporate season funding and then through subscription audiences—as the nonprofit structure promised to do—would free such a theater from the commercial constraints of a single ticket-based model, allow for greater artistic creativity, and mitigate the cramping effects of feared failure. In a long article in the *New York Times Magazine* prior to his active solicitation to regional cities to compete for his favor, Guthrie laid out the

[9] The Stratford Festival has been interpreted by some scholars as neo-colonial. According to later director Michael Langham, there was "never anything Canadian about Stratford… that was a diplomatic thing Guthrie cooked up." Shaughnessy, *The Shakespeare Effect,* 124.
[10] Guthrie often articulated his impatience with Broadway, perhaps most publicly in the *New York Times* article "Why I Refuse Invitations to Direct on Broadway," December 20, 1964.

benefits of a settled repertory company, where artists could earn a steady salary and build a sense of loyalty to the company and the community in which they worked, something that was impossible to do in the unstable, constantly competitive atmosphere of New York. "Without this feeling," he wrote of the comradeship of a repertory company, "our theatre, however glamorous, however efficiently organized… is comparatively poor."[11] According to biographer James Forsyth, such rhetoric was intended to shore up the support of other American artists in his repertory theater project, to attract talented actors and designers to leave New York behind and buy into the European mode of theatrical production.[12]

Guthrie was, of course, not the first theater artist to embrace the nonprofit professional form as a possible solution to the problems of commercial and less well-funded professional theater. Margo Jones is perhaps the most famous pioneer of what would become the regional theater movement. Settling in Dallas to develop her own theater in 1947, Jones insisted that similar entities be built across the United States: "these theaters must be resident," she wrote, "because they should give the community as well as the staff an assurance of continuity, and they must be professional because, if we insist on the highest standards of production, the actors and staff must spend eight hours a day in the theatre. If we want young people of talent and intelligence to go into this field and give the best they have, we must offer them the compensation of dignity and security."[13] The way to do this, thought Jones and others—like Zelda Fichandler in Washington D.C. and Nina Vance in Houston—was to set up a well-

[11] Quoted in James Forsyth, *Tyrone Guthrie: a Biography* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1976), 265.
[12] James Forsyth, *Tyrone Guthrie: a Biography* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1976), 264.
[13] Margo Jones, *Theatre-in-the-Round*, (Wesport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1951), 6.

managed nonprofit institution that could offer stability and salaries to actors, designers, directors, and perhaps playwrights, and provide the time and freedom to work diligently on their craft.[14]

The establishment of such a theater was not meant only to serve artists, however. According to Guthrie, Americans previously deprived of high quality dramatic art would benefit spiritually and socially from such an endeavor. Without professional theater, Guthrie feared, Americans might "remain in a theatrical Sahara, entirely content with what they had—movies, TV, amateurs working with high aspirations and low budgets, and rather grubby little shows in dark nightclubs."[15] Akin to the public library, Guthrie claimed that his theater would provide a "public service," exposing the citizens of the Midwest to theatrical masterpieces.[16] His new establishment would be a civic resource, open to all, and capable of providing an education in high dramatic art, with the ultimate goal of forming a more sophisticated, enlightened populace that would, in turn, call for more and more theater. Guthrie did not seem to recognize that such a view of his own mission as ambassador to the culturally-deprived Midwest could be construed as condescending; in fact he furiously denied such an idea: "Our theater… must not condescend just because the area has never had really big league theater before," he stated. "Our audiences won't be bumpkins. Now and then they must have something besides imps jumping out of inkwells and trying to sell you something on the television."[17] According to Guthrie, Midwesterners just had no idea what they were missing. Once confronted with professional theater, they would naturally

[14] Oliver Rea, in fact, traveled to Washington D.C. with money from the Ford Foundation in April 1962, to visit Fichandler and discuss budget and general management issues. See letter from Oliver Rea to W. McNeil Lowry, April 11, 1962. Administrative Files, 1962, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA.
[15] Guthrie, *A New Theatre,* 36-7.
[16] Guthrie, *A New Theatre,* 151. According to the *Minneapolis Tribune*, Guthrie claimed he "has to assume that a Minnesota audience is not sophisticated, 'but this is not to say you are unintelligent.' Rather, he explained, Minnesotans have not seen enough professional theater." "Guthrie Tells Why He's Coming to City," *Minneapolis Tribune*, March 31, 1961
[17] "Guthrie Cites Stage Value to Community," *Minneapolis Tribune,* January 31, 1963

recognize its excellence, although it might take some time for them to fully understand it. Guthrie's attitude toward the Midwest was typical: professionals and critics often feigned admiration for cities like Minneapolis while suggesting their inherent inferiority. Much of this inferiority, they thought, stemmed from and was reflected by a dearth of professional arts organizations and an overabundance of amateurism.

Despite appeals to cultural progress and a commitment to presenting Midwesterners with the Western canon, Guthrie worried that theater would become an upper class enclave. While in many ways his vision fit well within the larger ideas of cultural excellence advocated by the Rockefeller Foundation and politicians like Livingston Biddle and August Heckscher, Guthrie was concerned with keeping theater accessible to non-wealthy audiences. He claimed to despise the idea of "uplift," (although earlier in his life he had extolled this purpose), considered entertainment and enlightenment compatible, and thought audiences should attend the theater because they wanted to, not because they felt they should.[18] He liked the idea of settling in Minneapolis because audiences would not be seasoned, expectation-laden theater-goers. According to Roger Kennedy, "Tyrone Guthrie went to the Twin Cities to break away from the venues in which theater was so familiar as to be taken for granted, seeking a place where audience response would arise from shock, surprise, and unexpected joy."[19] Yet enjoying the theater did not entail a mental vacation. "We are so childishly constituted that we cannot conceive of a good time that is not unstrenuous," Guthrie complained.[20] Wary of the

[18] In *A Life in the Theatre* Guthrie writes: "Just as I have abandoned the idea of illusion as the aim of theatrical performance, so I have also abandoned the idea that the theatre has a moral aim: to uplift the public, to instruct it, to do it good. For the greater part of my professional life this aim had loomed quite large," Guthrie, *A Life in the Theatre* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959), 303.
[19] Roger G. Kennedy, "Tyrone Guthrie's Audience," in Polly Grose, Ed. *Guthrie Theater: the First Fifty Years* (Edina, MN: Beaver's Pond Press, 2012), 13.
[20] John Kelly, "Divine Finger Pointed Here," *Minnesota Daily,* Feb. 26, 1963

sacralization that theater had already undergone, Guthrie understood his own mission as rebelling against it: "the serious theater of the moment stands in danger of being hanged in the noose of its own new-found respectability," he wrote, portentously, in his memoir *A Life in the Theatre*.[21] Yet he himself would be caught by the institutional apparatus, attending opening night parties and schmoozing with influential guests while denouncing such measures under his breath.

Although he worked firmly within mainstream culture, Guthrie was also not a conventional director; in fact, he hoped a theater far from Broadway would enable less "commercial," potentially more experimental fair—at least in terms of production and unpopular classics. Guthrie grew through his career to despise naturalism. The theater, he claimed, was "interesting and exciting not the nearer it approached 'reality' but the farther it retreated into its own kind of artifice."[22] He believed the traditional proscenium theater stifled the potentials of the theatrical form, and promoted theater in the round and the thrust stage not only as a way of immersing the audience in the action, but as forcing artists and viewers to use their imaginations in the creation of place.[23] "Theatre to Guthrie is a kind of make-believe," wrote critic Seymour Peck, "a ritual rather than a strict slice of life."[24] Considered by many a visionary, his directorial choices in Minneapolis were inventive. The use of modern dress, flashlights, and tennis rackets in the Guthrie's opening production of *Hamlet*, for instance, stirred critical and audience commotion, and the theater's thrust stage was at the vanguard of theater architecture at the time.[25] Like many in the 1960s, Guthrie was torn between conformist and rebellious impulses

[21] Guthrie, *A Life in the Theatre*, 142
[22] Quoted in "If You Like Theater, Listen to Guthrie," *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, March 26, 1961
[23] This approach gained national attention, described in articles like "Guthrie's Thrust Stage Serves to 'the Play the Thing,'" by Richard L. Coe. *Washington Post*, July 22, 1964.
[24] "Tyrone Guthrie's Three-Ring Circus," by Seymour Peck, *New York Times*, December 23, 1956
[25] The *New York Times* called Guthrie's *Hamlet* "by turns startling and ludicrous… never commonplace or dull." "Modern Dress Hamlet at the Tyrone Guthrie," Howard Taubman, May 9, 1963. A vigorous retrospective defense of

both individually and in his creative work. According to Shaughnessy, "he appears to seek an as yet undefined mode of experimental performance that somehow can be accommodated within the cultural mainstream."[26] But the financial pressures of running a major organization and the tastes of a broad audience would ultimately constrain the new theater from fully indulging Guthrie's bolder tendencies.

What Guthrie and his collaborators wanted with perfect certainty was to provide a fully professional theater institution for Midwesterners who, ostensibly, had previously known only amateur, educational, or commercial theater. In the context of postwar American cultural development, and in the face of an increasingly confusing and in many ways uprooted society, professionalism in the arts seemed to imply—above all—*control.* Nick Salvato has discussed the ways in which professionalism connotes mastery over one's body and emotions, whereas excessive effusion is associated with both amateurism and effeminacy, themselves inextricable in his definition.[27] In the professionalizing theater of the mid-20th century, actors were indeed expected, through years of training and experience, to be able to control, to stabilize, their emotions and their bodies.[28] Along with physical and emotional control, actors were meant to have absorbed the proper behavioral discipline to work in a professional setting. They were to adopt norms of conduct that included an unquestioning respect for hierarchy, or as Theodore Hoffman dryly put it: "don't criticize anyone, be a pollyana, and treat the producer as an

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Guthrie's controversial choices for *Hamlet* is included in the theater's newsletter "Setting the Stage: a guidebook to season '66," RG 1.2, Series 200, Box 379, Folder 3330.69, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

[26] Shaughnessy, *The Shakespeare Effect*, 96.

[27] Nick Salvato, "Out of Hand: Youtube Amateurs and Professionals," *TDR* 53, No. 3, 67-83

[28] Some, including Guthrie, also saw this kind of emotional control as particularly Western, perhaps especially American. Of interpreting Chekhov, he wrote: "I believe we should not try to force ourselves into the extreme expressions of grief and joy which come quite easily and naturally to Slavs," but instead should work with "our more restrained behavior." Guthrie, "The Cherry Orchard is a Prism Reflecting Many Interpretations," *Minneapolis Tribune*, June 13, 1965

invaluable avuncular sage."[29] Such notions of professional control were also highly gendered, and professionals seeking respect and legitimacy for the theater made a concerted effort to emphasize its masculinity. Supporters of the new Guthrie Theater, who were reaching out to new audiences and fundraising across the region, tried to convince locals that their endeavor was one of virility and strength. Assistant Director Douglas Campbell recalled telling loud, bawdy stories in front of two golf-playing potential theater supporters: "I knew those two men had been dilly-dallying out on the golf course, complaining to each other about their wives forcing them to have dinner with two artsy, intellectual theatre sissies," Campbell recalled, "and I wanted to prove to them that we aren't *like* that."[30]

The appeal to professionalism was important in part because much of the Guthrie's audience would be made up of professionals and those who shared professional values, including businessmen, clerical, and other white collar workers—52.4% of the audience in 1963, a number that did not include what were probably a large number of wives of these professionals.[31] The professional audience member would likely expect excellence on stage, and not just excellence but control and order—or highly controlled and planned disorder, if that was what the play called for. The fact that the theater production was in professional hands meant that there was little chance of seeing a messy, inept, thrown-together work. Rather the professional audience member would theoretically retain control over his time and his experience by choosing to see what had

[29] Theodore Hoffman, "Report on the Training of Actors," Submitted to the University of Minnesota for the Conference on the Education and Training of Actors, May, 1965. Administrative Files, 1965, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA. This study was undertaken with funds from the Rockefeller Foundation, given to the University of Minnesota's Speech, Communication, and Theatre Arts Department to send investigators to various sites to study methods of actor training. The program is an example of the close collaboration between national foundations and local entities in developing a network of professionals and a common vocabulary to shape the expanding regional theater movement.

[30] Kay Fliehr and Bradley Morrison, *In Search of an Audience: How an Audience was Found for the Tyrone Guthrie Theater* (New York: Pitman, 1968), 66.

[31] Morison and Fliehr, *In Search of an Audience,* 38.

been advertised as an expert production. When John Cowles, Jr. told potential supporters that "the professional experience and ideals of these men guarantee living theater of the highest excellence," he was priming them to count on a certain kind of event.[32] (Such an audience member could likewise deliberately choose to spend his time on something more freewheeling, like a Happening, although even there the experience would be in a sense controlled, or planned.)

The notion of control in this period extended beyond the work of actors and the experience of audiences and in fact encompassed the artistic organization and the network of professional establishments of which each was a part. Professionalism meant the carefully managed development of polished products, a vague ideal of "quality" reflected in national conversations about artistic excellence, but one that implied a level of directorial control over actors and designers that would result in a smooth, coordinated end product. This goal usually entailed deliberate crafting by a single director, an approach lauded but also vociferously challenged in the 1960s.[33] Along with the director, a controlled, professional production necessitated the enlistment of trained actors, designers, and directors, at first hard to come by in the 1950s and early 1960s, but soon ubiquitous with the expansion of University theater programs and sister theaters in which emergent theater artists could gather experience. Such

[32] Statement by John Cowles Jr., May 31, 1960. Guthrie Theater Administrative Files, 1960, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA3), PAA. Such expectations at times haunted the theater, which could not, after all, always live up to the ideals of its audience members. One angry audience member, refusing to re-subscribe, complained of "a drop in your audience's confidence in your dedication to good theater…If the theater is giving us poorly conceived artistic work, why should we pay to subsidize that effort in the community?" Letter from Julian McCaull to Peter Zeisler, May 31, 1967. Administrative Files, 1967, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA3), PAA. Zeisler responded that "for a number of years I should think we would be judged on whether we're interesting—not whether we're good." But such a humble exhortation was far from what audiences had been led to expect. Letter from Zeisler to McCaull, June 2, 1967, Administrative Files, 1967, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA3), PAA.

[33] Raymond Williams points out the connection between the rise of managerial power in the labor market and the ascent of the director in the theater: "The 'producer', 'director' or 'manager' emerged when wholly coordinated production not only of the acting but of new staging techniques, including new kinds of design and lighting, was seen as necessary and desirable… The new role rapidly increased in importance until by the mid-twentieth century the director could see himself, and was often seen by others, as the central productive figure." *The Sociology of Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1981), 114. By the late 1960s, however, the role of the director was also widely challenged.

theater artists were increasingly specialized in their own form: actors studied deeply as actors, designers earned specialized degrees as costume or lighting or scenic designers. Professionalism, as it did across fields, meant mastery: excellence and expertise in a given segmented field. Guthrie and his colleagues ensured that their theater would attract the highest quality artists in each area, and used this as a selling point for Minnesotans: an early publicity pamphlet ensured that "the cast will be all-professional, coming from Broadway, London, and Canada," blatantly discounting any local hopefuls.[34] For instance the theater's stage designer, Tanya Moiseiwitsch, had worked with Guthrie on many productions and was internationally renowned for her work in her field, the epitome of a professional theater artist.

While similar to other professions in specialization (although in fact looser in the arts than in other fields), training, a focus on excellence, and the centrality of pay, noncommercial professionalism in the arts departed significantly from professionalism in fields such as law or medicine. Professionalism in the arts has not been—as a field—autonomous in the way that other fields, most of which professionalized in the 19th or early 20th century, are understood to be. While no individual professional is completely independent, and many entire fields (like nursing or social work) are functionally dependent on others, they are generally autonomous in their power to make rules, set standards of professional conduct, determine the boundaries of their knowledge and application, and defeat "outsiders who attack that control."[35] The nonprofit arts, on the other hand, unable to support themselves through ticket sales, are dependent on people and institutions to give them money, without direct return of a professional service or any particular functional connection; such financial support detracts from the autonomy of the

[34] "Facts about the Tyrone Guthrie Theatre Project." Administrative Files, 1961, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA.
[35] Abbott, *The System of Professions,* 2.

profession, which ultimately must defer to their benefactors for administrative and, indirectly, artistic decisions. Whereas other professions control "the acquisition and application of various kinds of knowledge," according to Andrew Abbott, noncommercial arts professionals do so within their field only to a limited degree.[36] In the 1960s the professionalizing regional theater organized itself through national entities like the Theater Communications Group and the League of Regional Theaters, and established field-defining journals and magazines which set certain standards of administration, financial control, and relationships with artist unions. But individual theaters, while not entirely dependent on the capriciousness of the marketplace, still had to explain themselves not only to the board of directors, but to the gatekeepers of funding: the foundation directors, corporate executives, and cultural policy makers. Their "jurisdiction," to use Andrew Abbott's term, was shaky.[37]

In part due to the influence of their financial benefactors, the noncommercial theater professionals of the early 1960s displayed their professionalism not only through organization and artistic achievement, but also through spectacle. For the Guthrie, not only would the play itself be produced in an altogether professional way, but the theater event—the "occasion" of the play—must also be controlled and composed, capable in this case of attracting not the best actors, but the most prominent members of Upper Midwest society. According to Guthrie, who was ambivalent on this score, the opening "was a highly social occasion. Everyone who was Anyone in the Twin Cities was present in full regalia."[38] A sumptuous opening would signify to onlookers and participants that dramatic art was worthy of lavish celebration, that the theater was to be esteemed as much, or more so, than the orchestra; it would be a "social signal," in

[36] Abbott, *The System of Professions,* 1.
[37] Professionalism in the arts also differs from other fields in its relationship to academia, which is unusually strained.
[38] Guthrie, *A New Theatre,* 108.

Raymond Williams' words, that theater was now Art.[39] "In addition to what goes on on our stage, it is equally important that we knock everybody's eyes out in and around the theatre for that period of time," Oliver Rea claimed. "People should not feel that they are just seeing a show. They should be made to feel the magnitude of the occasion."[40] He went on to argue that to organize such an opening, the theater should hire a professional "party giver," as, "like most other things in this world, the art of giving a party has become complex and professionalized."[41] As much as Guthrie insisted on the non-pretentious quality of his work, as much as the theater's founders proclaimed their art to be for all the community, opening night of *Hamlet* was a spectacle of Midwestern wealth and extravagance. Attendees were "almost everybody who is anybody in state and local government, the music and art worlds, and society," and "the ladies showed up in satin and mink."[42]

Despite—or in a sense, because of—its exclusive nature, in another sense the Guthrie opening did manage to be a neighborhood event, providing alternative spectacle for those who could not attend the performance inside. A number of articles on the opening featured photographs of Minnesotans peeking into the festivities from the outside, a study in contrasts: "As the attractive crowd of first nighters began arriving," critic Barbara Flanagan noted, "another crowd of casually dressed neighborhood residents began gathering outside to watch the show on the sidewalk."[43] One writer described young people "barefoot and bluejeaned," who "watched in awe as a shiny black chauffeured Rolls Royce and two poodles pulled up to the curb," the

[39] "The most common kinds of signal are those of *occasion* and *place."* Williams, *The Sociology of Culture,* 130-1.
[40] Letter from Oliver Rea to Roger Kennedy, December 14, 1962, Administrative Files, 1962, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA
[41] Ibid.
[42] Margaret Morris, "Guthrie Theater Has Glittering First Nighters," *Minneapolis Star,* May 8, 1963, and "An Evening to Remember," *Sunday Suburban Life,* May 12, 1963.
[43] Barbara Flanagan, "Guthrie Theater Opens Historical Stage Venture," *Minneapolis Tribune,* May 8, 1963

disparity of the 1960s epitomized.[44] A photograph with a caption beginning "Not so glamorous onlookers" showed a cross-armed, casually-posed woman in jeans and bandana watching well-heeled ladies and gentlemen marching toward the theater door.[45] While the opening made manifest such gaps between Twin City residents, the thrill of the event was shared among diverse residents of the Upper Midwest in that they were now living in a city that was officially "on the map." The theater's glamorous opening attracted national and international attention, and Twin City newspapers reveled in it as a reflection of the developing identity of their local community: "This has been a mighty ego-building week for Minneapolitans, with the glow reaching all through the Upper Midwest," wrote one columnist. "As the news magazines arrived with their column-after-column coverage of the Tyrone Guthrie Theater, we kept getting a new look at ourselves."[46] The Guthrie opening was a deliberately executed, professional production both for those officially invited and for those watching from outside.

Much was made of the idea of the Guthrie as a wide-reaching civic entity—as a community-based theater supported by pillars of local society and intended to serve all Minnesotans—upon the theater's opening. Prior to the first performance of *Hamlet* the theater was anointed with a religious Service of Dedication at a local church before "six of seven hundred people" who "found it a very moving occasion."[47] A local Lutheran minister, Jewish rabbi, and a Catholic Priest presided to demonstrate the intended wide reach of the theater and to cater to the large segment of the population that practiced religion. Theater leaders and supporters worked hard to develop relationships with local and state politicians, convincing

[44]"An Evening to Remember," *Sunday Suburban Life,* May 12, 1963
[45] "Real Stars—Sir Tyrone, Audience." *Sunday Suburban Life,* May 12, 1963
[46] George Grim, "I Like It Here," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* May 18, 1963
[47] Guthrie, *A New Theatre,* 108.

Minnesota Governor Elmer L. Andersen to dedicate the week of May 7 "Guthrie Week."[48] Sprinkled through the Guthrie's early publicity materials were acknowledgements by local leaders that the theater would play a prime role in the community of the Twin Cities and greater region; in a promotional pamphlet, Minnesota Governor Elmer Anderson was quoted as lending his support to the enterprise alongside figures such as O. Meredith Wilson, President of the University of Minnesota, Reverend James P. Shannon of the College of St. Thomas, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, Director of the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, and Robert E. Hess, Executive Vice-President of the Minnesota AFL-CIO. All attested to the theater's contribution to local and national culture, with Hess, for instance, stating that "Minnesota citizens now have the opportunity to round out their cultural fare… The Guthrie group's selection of Minnesota as the scene for such an endeavor is deeply gratifying to all of us."[49] A general description of Tyrone Guthrie from the same pamphlet later claimed that "Guthrie envisions his stage as a place where sampling 2,500 years of tears and laughter can become a part of the Upper Midwest's way of life."[50] The theater's Board was also selected to represent a broad cross-section of Minnesotans through their leadership: "It seems to me," wrote Oliver Rea to John Cowles, Jr., in 1961, "that the board should be a large, all-inclusive one… I think the board should have some 'snob' value but at the same time include both Jew and Christian, Greek and Scandinavian, Irish and Amish," as well as "Labor and Management," and represent the theater as serving the region beyond the

[48] Letter from Elmer L. Andersen to Roger G. Kennedy, June 12, 1962, Administrative Files, 1962, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA
[49] "The Tyrone Guthrie Theatre of Minnesota," promotional pamphlet, Administrative Files, 1962, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA3), PAA
[50] Ibid.

Twin Cities: "The whole state could be made to feel that they are a part of the working operations of a professional theatre."[51]

It took more than excitement and a few stars to make such a high profile case for the theater as a community entity, however. The Guthrie was, from the get-go, a highly-developed and complex operation, an exemplar of professionalism in organizational management and administration. While a number of regional theaters like Arena Stage in Washington D.C. and the Alley Theater in Houston were already in operation, having developed from smaller, grassroots origins, the Guthrie was a new model, set down in Minneapolis as an "oak tree," presented to the community as a fully conceived and financed institution.[52] Indeed, it was to be a bold experiment in implementing the nonprofit method of arts organization emerging as a solution to the seeming irreconcilability of the market and so-called "serious" art, utilizing a new combination of funding from foundations, corporations, and the government.[53] By the time the Guthrie was founded, the Ford Foundation was already supporting regional theaters, as discussed in Chapter 2, and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund was soon to publish its guide for increased financial support of professional artistic organizations. But the Guthrie would be the first theater established with all aspects of the nonprofit framework in place (minus federal funding not available until the NEA was founded in 1965), and would thus demonstrate the potential stability and permanence of such a system.

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[51] Letter from Oliver Rea to John Cowles, Jr. April 10, 1961, Administrative Files, 1961, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA; "Labor and management" is from a different letter concerning the makeup of the Board, from Oliver Rea to Roger Kennedy, January 3, 1962, Administrative Files, 1962, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA

[52] "Oak tree" is from Zeigler, *Regional Theatre: the Revolutionary Stage*, 65.

[53] On the development of the nonprofit arts sector see for instance Paul DiMaggio, *Nonprofit Enterprise in the Arts: Studies in Mission and Constraint* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); John Kreidler, "Leverage Lost: the Nonprofit Arts in the Post-Ford Era," in Gigi Bradford, Michael Gray, and Glenn Wallace, Ed. *The Politics of Culture: Policy Perspectives for Individuals, Institutions, and Communities* (New York: New Press, 2000)

This framework presented immediate challenges for those working inside the theater organization, first and foremost learning to appeal effectively to funding sources. Funders expected what they considered to be professional behavior from the Guthrie organization: business-like and timely production of budgets and reports, highly competent management of staff, and a polished, digestible presentation of organizational identity—in essence, branding. While it is hardly surprising that those handing out money would expect competent management, such demands placed new pressures on arts organizations to maintain careful control over their administrative management and divert significant energy toward that goal. Most obviously, responding to the demands of funders to present a business-like face required continually increasing numbers of staff. By its second season, the Guthrie listed 24 administrative staff members in its program, including unspecified administrative assistants as well as accounting, public relations, and box office personnel, but excluding Rea, Zeisler, Guthrie, and a production staff of 47.[54] These administrators were not locals looking eagerly for a way to be part of the Guthrie; they were, for the most part, carefully chosen, experienced professionals. Of their new Box Office Manager and general administrative assistant, Rea wrote: "For a while I had thought that this job could be handled by a local novice, trained on the spot, but it has been obvious for a considerable time that the proper administration of this company will need more than novices."[55] Despite considerable numbers, Guthrie staff members were overwhelmed by administrative duties in the first year; upon the theater's opening, the assistant administrative director managed "budgets, contracts, payrolls, timetables, the rent… and join[ed] everyone else in worrying about

[54] Guthrie Theater Scrapbook, Sept. 1963-May 17, 1964. Minneapolis Collection, Hennepin County Library, Minneapolis, MN.
[55] Letter from Oliver Rea to Roger Kennedy, April 4, 1962. Administrative Files, 1962, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA.

problems at both ends of the house."[56] Such tasks only increased as the Guthrie received more grants, resulting in the continual expansion of administrative staff.

The growth of theater administration as a significant professional sector was not the Guthrie's work alone, of course. As in the professionalization of other fields, institutions of higher education were crucial in legitimizing arts management, and organizations from major foundations to professional networks like the Theater Communications Group poured resources into developing arts management. In 1962 the Ford Foundation, with a constant eye on molding a theater Establishment, initiated a program of administrative internships in which young college graduates were assigned to arts organizations where they would learn the nuts and bolts of administration, thus ensuring a new generation of arts administrators. The Guthrie eagerly participated in this program, claiming two Ford interns during its second season.[57] Ford and other funders also insisted that regional theaters pour resources and finances into the administrative arms of their companies, believing that this would bolster their organizational stability. After a meeting with Robert July of the Rockefeller Foundation, Rea reported that "they think our budget 'too lavish' and suggest that we pare down the production end of the budget while at the same time adding to the administration section, which they think too sparse."[58] Making these changes, it was implied, would help the theater qualify for a grant from the Foundation.

Theater administrators did more than apply for grants and keep up with budgets. A professional arts organization necessitated a steady and reliable audience, in part to demonstrate

[56] Don Morrison, "Business Scene at Guthrie Has Own Cast," *Minneapolis Star,* April 3, 1963. Guthrie administrators touted diverse backgrounds; for instance the first staff accountant was a former accountant for the Hungarian government. Press Release on hiring of Bela Lazar as Staff Accountant. Administrative Files, 1962, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA.
[57] "Program for Administrative Interns," Ford Foundation Press Release, Administrative Files 1963, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA.
[58] Letter from Oliver Rea to Roger Kennedy, April 4, 1962, Administrative Files, 1962. Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA.

to funders that they were supported by their communities and thus worthy of support, and staffers were deeply involved in public relations and advertising campaigns. Apropos to its position as a model for the regional theater movement, administrators at the Guthrie were at the forefront of transferring methods of marketing segmentation and audience development to the arts, applying techniques of data gathering and analysis never before been used in the theater, as described in *In Search of an Audience: How an Audience Was Found for the Tyrone Guthrie Theater*, written by Guthrie administrators Bradley Morison and Kay Fliehr. Here Morison and Fliehr make clear the enormous time and energy devoted to the achievement of these goals. It was also in these audience development efforts that the Guthrie's desire to be a civic resource for the region, and to develop a community that would appreciate such a resource, was most practically put into action.

A primary aim of the Guthrie's early audience development efforts, as described in Morison and Fliehr's book, was to segment the population of the surrounding region into categories: those who would definitely attend the Guthrie (Yeses), those who might (Maybes), and those who never would (Noes). In order to achieve "maximum efficiency," the publicity department focused most of its energy and budget on achievable audiences.[59] While breaking potential audience members down in such a way, however, Morison and Fliehr continued to insist that the theater belonged to the whole community, a perception crucial to the Guthrie's early image and its potential to attract both audiences and funders. The narrative was backed up (repeatedly) by tales such as a Sunday school class from Mankato that sent the theater $6.37, and it was based in some truth, as the unborn theater received donations from over 7,000 people.[60]

[59] Bradley G. Morison and Kay Fliehr, *In Search of an Audience: How an Audience Was Found for the Tyrone Guthrie Theatre* (New York: Pitman Publishing Company, 1968) 23.
[60] Morison and Fliehr, *In Search of an Audience*, 8.

Some of the money raised came "from Virginia high school's senior class play, from civic clubs, from nearly a thousand families in the University of Minnesota community… from hundreds and hundreds of people in contributions of 50 cents to many, many dollars."[61] However, despite Guthrie's hope that the theater "be patronized by all walks of life," the idea that the Guthrie served the entire community was contradicted not only by Morison and Fliehr's targeted marketing tactics, but also by the statistics they gathered, which unsurprisingly revealed a largely wealthy and highly educated audience base.[62] Morison and Fliehr's statistics reveal that 84.8% of Guthrie's 1963 audiences listed their occupation as "professional," "housewife," "student," or "business." 3.1% were "blue collar," and 3.7% technical/engineering. The rest were clerical workers or retired.[63] Thus the practice of professional administration both aggravated and displayed a central flaw in the Guthrie's underlying mission. Morison, Fliehr, and their colleagues would ultimately rethink their approach to audience development, but by that time the theater's image and the socioeconomics of its audience were largely cemented.[64]

Morison and Fliehr's audience development techniques mirrored best business practices of the time; thus their approach to arts management was attractive to Board members and funders but less so to some artists, such as Douglas Campbell, long-time Assistant Director and later Artistic Director, and Tyrone Guthrie himself.[65] The time and effort the administrative staff invested in marketing techniques could be seen as problematic for an entity otherwise devoted to

[61] "The Tyrone Guthrie Theatre of Minnesota," promotional pamphlet, Administrative Files, 1962, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA
[62] Guthrie quote is from "The Tyrone Guthrie Theatre of Minnesota," promotional pamphlet, Administrative Files, 1962.
[63] Morison and Fliehr, *In Search of an Audience*, 38.
[64] Morison and Fliehr, *In Search of an Audience*, 23.
[65] "There were many strenuous but sincere objections during our tenure to efforts to run even one phase of the theatre's operations like a business." Morison and Fliehr, *In Search of an Audience,* 15. Morison and Fliehr devote a chapter to "the battle of research versus creative instinct," 41.

artistic creation, considering that increased staff time necessitated further financial support which necessitated further staff to apply for said support, and on and on in a snowballing fashion. "The larger and more complex the operation," explains Jack Poggi in his study of the economic aspects of theater, "the more likely a theater is to shift its major emphasis from putting on plays to insuring its growth and survival as an institution."[66] And although administrators made an effort to protect the integrity of the artistic team by separating administrative from artistic decision-making ("Peter [Zeisler] was my model for what the artists needed to be free for their art," recalled Ford Foundation administrative intern Ellen Kaplan Tarlow, "which included good food and drink"), the Guthrie's artistic personages could not be entirely isolated from the administrative activities of the theater.[67] Morison recounts one instance, for example, in which Douglas Campbell insisted that "asking people who come to the theater to fill out some kind of bloody form," as they did for the theater's surveys, was "outrageous."[68] Guthrie artistic leaders were continually involved in grant proposals and meetings with donors and foundation representatives.

In the meantime, as *the* major professional theater in the region, with intentions to become a true civic theater, a central public entity for the community, Guthrie administrators continued to insist that the theater could satisfy audiences with vastly different expectations, a promise that sometimes necessitated a kind of political dissimilation. "I would stress the commercial aspect of the theatre at the home of Mr. Ed Ruben and at the Kiwanis Club," advised administrator Lou Gelfand, "and the cultural gains when speaking at the out-of-town

[66] Jack Poggi, *Theater in America: the Impact of Economic Forces, 1870-1967.* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968) 235.
[67] Ellen Kaplow Tarlow, "Honeymoon Days," in Grose, *Guthrie Theater: the First 50 Years,* 25.
[68] Morison and Fliehr, *In Search of an Audience,* 26.

assemblages."[69] The language of business, increasingly ubiquitous within the theater's office and in appealing to board members and corporate sponsors, would be dialed down for audiences more sympathetic to the creative spirit of the enterprise. Thus while Paul DiMaggio has claimed that the "ascendancy of the managers…has marked a change in rhetoric, perhaps more marked than changes in practice," administrators actually manipulated their use of corporate lingo, restraining in the presence of certain audiences, and deploying it for others.[70] In addition to presenting the theater as alternately focused on either business or creativity, Morison, Fliehr, and others held onto the idea that theater could be simultaneously glamorous and democratic, classy and unpretentious, a tension that seemed to swing heartily toward glamour on opening nights. Their challenge was "to convince the Maybes that the Guthrie Theatre is *not* so highbrow, cultural, classic, intellectual and socially oriented that they cannot enjoy it, *without* destroying the highbrow, cultural, classic, intellectual and social appeal that is necessary to keep the Yeses in the fold."[71] Yet scenes of women in ball gowns were not easily forgotten. Morison and Fliehr understood this problem by the time they published *In Search of an Audience*, and the Guthrie staff later tried to reverse the image these opening nights displayed, thereby creating even more work for themselves by carefully weeding out publicity opportunities that would seem too glamorous.[72]

In designating the Guthrie the stalwart of Twin Cities theater, meant to fulfill the artistic needs of the community during the rapidly changing 1960s, leaders of the Guthrie slowly

[69] Letter from Lou Gelfand to Oliver Rea, October 26, 1960, Administrative Files, 1960, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA
[70] DiMaggio, *Nonprofit Enterprise in the Arts*, 5. Richard Schechner also pointed out that foundations like Ford and Rockefeller demanded organizations show substantial community support before committing funds to them, thus increasing administrative tasks. "Ford, Rockefeller, and Theater," *The Tulane Drama Review*, 10, No. 1 (Autumn, 1965), 23-49.
[71] Morison and Fliehr, *In Search of an Audience*, 54.
[72] Morison and Fliehr, *In Search of an Audience*, Chapter 14.

determined that they would need to incorporate elements of the increasingly inescapable avant-garde into their work in order to retain both audiences and legitimacy in the art world. While desiring the freedom to take risks in their production of classics, Guthrie leaders were not initially interested in experimental plays. But by the mid-1960s the Guthrie began to see the advantages of engaging in more cutting edge work. A 1963 internal Rockefeller Foundation memo revealed the perceived importance of experimental work to the longevity of a successful theater Establishment: "The support of experimental work will probably be slap-dash and ephemeral unless there is a Functioning Establishment in the field concerned. When such an Establishment exists or can be brought into being… we would probably save our own virtue and humor by devoting at least 5 percent of our art money for its subversion through experimental work."[73] Why shouldn't the Guthrie simply incorporate experimentalism into its own programming, and skip the need to nourish it elsewhere?

As early as 1964, the Guthrie began to work with the Office for Advanced Drama Research, a Rockefeller-funded program run through the University of Minnesota under the direction of popular theater professor Arthur Ballet, which matched new plays by emerging playwrights to area theaters to develop workshops or full productions. In its collaborations with the OADR, the Guthrie worked with such writers as Megan Terry, relatively unknown at the time but later a standard-bearer of leftist theater, and Rochelle Owens, with whom it helped develop *Futz,* a widely-banned work involving blood baths and bestiality. Commitment to the workshop series seemed relatively harmless, as the Guthrie neither promised nor delivered full productions, but its half-hearted policies caused trouble with both critics and artists.[74] The young

[73] "The RF and the Arts," Internal Memo, April 10, 1963, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RG 3.1, Series 911, Box 1, Folder 8, RAC.
[74] "Experimental Production of New Plays to Begin at Guthrie Theatre This Summer," Press Release, July 16, 1964, Guthrie Theater Scrapbooks, Minneapolis Collection, Hennepin County Library.

plays that received workshop productions were sometimes poorly reviewed. Don Morrison, of the *Minneapolis Star,* complained that they violated the professional standards of the Guthrie: "If professionals oversee and help bring these plays to life," Morrison continued, "why are not more severe professional criteria applied to the writing?"[75] And playwrights Terrency McNally, Arthur Kopit, and Rochelle Owens all ended their collaboration with OADR and the Guthrie bitterly, due to the lack of commitment, especially in the form of a full production, to their work.[76] In 1966 Rochelle Owens published an "Open Letter to the Minnesota Theatre Company" in the *Tulane Drama Review* (*TDR*), charging that the Guthrie did not consider the artistic implications of attaching a young McKnight fellow director to her play, although he was clearly artistically incompatible with the play. "I have the feeling we were put together because of an administrative formula," she wrote. "After two weeks of rehearsal, the end product was DISASTER."[77] In 1968, the Guthrie took a step further in its embrace of experimentalism by opening a second stage, The Other Place, to develop and produce riskier work, including the daring *The Hostage*, by Brendan Behan, and a series of improvisations entitled *Quirk.* Yet even this move betrayed ambiguity about experimentalism, cordoning it off in its own small, less prestigious space.

Rather than an ideal venue for the exploration of experimental work, where the Guthrie did seem to excel—and better satisfy audiences—was in large-scale productions of ambitious classical works, equally difficult to produce in the commercial theater or through a smaller entity

[75] Don Morrison, "Novice Needs Criticism, Not Incubator," *Minneapolis Star,* Nov. 29, 1966
[76] See for instance "U Censorship Is Charged in Play Tryouts," *Minneapolis Tribune*, January 13, 1964, and Rochelle Owens, "An Open Letter to the Minnesota Theatre Company," *Tulane Drama Review,* V10, No. 3 (Spring, 1966), 209-215.
[77] Owens, "An Open Letter to the Minnesota Theatre Company," *Tulane Drama Review,* 10, No. 3 (Spring, 1966), 211. Edward Payson Call ended up taking over direction of the workshop production, but also angered Owens by essentially apologizing for the play to the audience at its performance. "This self-incriminating little preface did not have the desired effect," Owens went on, "(to act as a shield for the good name of the company?)" Call apologized in a letter published in the same pages, but the sour feeling between the Guthrie and these playwrights remained.

with limited funding. In the Guthrie's early years, this kind of project was epitomized by the theater's three-hour production of Aeschylus' massive *Oresteia*, complete with accompanying symposia, lectures, and demonstrations to help audiences appreciate the work. The production took years of planning, which included the commissioning of a more accessible translation and intricate costume and scenic design. Initially imagined in 1963 and planned for 1965, the three-play cycle, renamed *The House of Atreus* and consolidated into one long evening, did not open until 1967. Perhaps what most ensured its success, at least in Minneapolis (before it ran into trouble in a New York tour) was that Tyrone Guthrie returned to direct the production. Still, it was a major effort by a large number of people working within the institution, and not Tyrone Guthrie's accomplishment alone.

The House of Atreus, it was noted with pride, presented an enormous challenge for the theater and the community, one it seemed best undertaken by professionals with skill, training, and expertise: "it will make great demands upon the energies of all concerned, whether as performers or audience," Guthrie claimed, heralding the regional theater's responsibility to present serious, even difficult work.[78] Made possible by an influx of resources from major funders, the investment on the part of artists both in conceptual development and rehearsal would take considerable time, time most likely impossible to accommodate in a commercial or even academic production. In the new situation of the nonprofit institution, however, "a professional production under experienced auspices in uniquely favorable economic conditions" was possible.[79] The Guthrie's ambitious endeavor—grandiose and expensive but hardly controversial—was very attractive to funders, and gained support from the Ford Foundation, the

[78] "Dr. Guthrie's Announcement to Board for Future Plans, Oresteia," Sept. 18, 1963, Administrative Files, 1963, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA3), PAA.
[79] Ibid.

National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities, and many smaller entities.[80] Acclaimed by audiences and critics, the production toured to New York and was revived in Minneapolis the next year. "In the production of *The House of Atreus*," wrote critic Don Morrison, "everything that the Guthrie troupe can do and be comes together in shining splendor. All the manifold resources of the company are mobilized for a stunning and powerful experience."[81]

Yet within other Guthrie productions institutionalism seemed to have a more insidious effect. Continual pressure to deliver polished productions with accomplished actors and perfected visual effects could sometimes manifest as a slickness, a cleanliness that seemed contrary to the expected depth and messiness of creative production, a problem even in the theater's edgier productions. While subsidized seasons were supposed to insulate the Guthrie from the market and the risks of a single failed production, continual pressure to appeal to funders, retain current funding levels, or increase funding in future years necessarily translated to caution not only in season selection, but also in rehearsal methods and production choices.

Playwrights, in particular, noted a lack of commitment to the untidy artistic process. In an excoriating 1966 article in the prestigious (and profession-legitimizing) journal *Tulane Drama Review*, James Lineberger recalled his experience as playwright-in-residence with the Guthrie, noting his admiration for the theater's Artistic Director, whose more exciting creative tendencies he saw as squashed by the machine-like operation of such a large and prestigious institution. The Guthrie's work was anemic, Lineberger thought, due to the theater's backwards prioritization, which emphasized that actors should capitulate wordlessly to the whims of the director and the

[80]In an announcement of the Foundation's matching grant of $45,000, the *Minneapolis Tribune* claimed that "it is estimated that the expense of presenting the trilogy will be about $90,000 in excess of the average cost of production of a play by the company." "Guthrie Players Get $45,000 Grant," *Minneapolis Tribune*, August 30, 1966
[81] Don Morrison, "Guthrie Troupe Mobilizes All Its Resources," *Minneapolis Star,* July 22, 1967

institution, and "to whom the highest values would appear to be health, happiness, family, good speech, and a fair income, in that approximate order; the constant jangle of 'work' which substitutes for 'art,' and the final sublimation of 'art' beneath a mask of 'culture.'"[82] In other words the Guthrie prioritized survival rather than art, and this was a compromise that artists within the organization profoundly felt. "I still know of no actor in that company who did not suffer from the most excruciating sense of isolation and loneliness, the feeling that he was exercising his art in an utter void," Lineberger wrote. "Much of this can be attributed to the institution itself, which seemed to run remarkably well without any form of communication," a standard critique of the impersonal nature of bureaucracy. Indeed after the 1965 season, almost half of the Guthrie ensemble members left the theater.

These dismal views were sometimes contradicted by gushing critical reviews, but some critics noticed a strange vacuity in the Guthrie's productions as well.[83] Of *The Glass Menagerie*, in the theater's second season, Don Morrison thought the actors "seemed to be reciting lines," and noted "the absence of spark and a sense of life" in the play as a whole.[84] The *Toronto Star* reported that 1965's *Richard III* was "medium-turned Guthrie. His heart doesn't seem to be really in it… It has storm and stress, but no soul-searching."[85] A critic from the *Times* of London even called the Guthrie's 1966 season "businesslike."[86] The Guthrie continued to attract

[82] James Lineberger, "Sir Tony and the American Dream," *Tulane Drama Review*, 10, No. 3 (1966), 182.
[83] Howard Taubman, "Regional Resource: Local Troupe Should be Intellectual Center," *New York Times,* May 24, 1964
[84] Don Morrison, "*Menagerie* at the Guthrie Just Isn't Moving," *Minneapolis Star,* June 2, 1964; Dan Sullivan also wondered whether the theater's production of the *Glass Menagerie* "isn't a bit too entertaining for its own good," with characters sometimes becoming caricatures. "Guthrie Gives *Menagerie* in Entertaining Version," *Minneapolis Tribune* June 2, 1964.
[85] Nathan Coen, "Storm and Stress Roam Wide of City's Famous Open Stage," *Toronto Daily Star*, reprinted in the *Minneapolis Tribune*, May 11, 1965
[86] "London Critic Views Season, Finds Guthrie Still the Best," Review from London *Times* reprinted in the *Minneapolis Star,* Nov. 1, 1966. By 1965, commentators were noting a trend of emptiness among regional theaters nationally: "the resident theatre is now facing stultification," as Theodore Hoffman put it in a conference, organized by the *Tulane Drama Review,* to discuss the "New Establishment" theater. "The New Establishment?" Fragments of

audiences, but neither its participants nor its audiences were entirely fulfilled. Fred Gaines, another playwright who occasionally worked with the Guthrie, summed up his experience: "The Guthrie is turning out to be about what I expected: a packaging house of enormous proportions. We turn out highly polished and very expensive products but that doesn't change the basic nature of our production line. This must be the most expensive theater in America and the least ambitious."[87]

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Despite such organizational and aesthetic challenges, the Guthrie quickly became a model and disseminator of the techniques of professional administration. The flurry of press attention that the Guthrie received on its opening established it as the standard-bearer of the growing regional theater movement. In its first decade the Guthrie received innumerable communications hoping for insight into how to build a professional organization. "I am writing to you in direct reference to following your example," penned one admirer. "I'm in the process of submitting a plan for a repertory theatre in one of our great cities. I hope you will allow me to 'pick your brain' and profit by your experience."[88] Such letters were answered by Zeisler, Rea, or other staff members with fatherly patience. Indeed, the Guthrie embraced its position,

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the TDR Theatre Conference, compiled by Richard Schechner, *The Tulane Drama Review*, 10, No. 4 (Summer, 1966), 110.

[87] Letter from Fred Gaines to Pat Drake, April 9, 1967. Box 3, Correspondence, Frederick Gaines papers, (PA 22), PAA. Gaines went on to call the actors at the Guthrie "so many automatons… There's nothing like excitement here. I'm almost convinced that the only way to find that excitement is to go back to an operation that is in some respects amateur."

[88] Letter to Rea from Frank M. Gero, May 10, 1963, Administrative Files, 1963, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA.

organizing conferences on audience development, seeking press coverage of its administrative prowess, and sending staff on missionary trips to other theater companies to share knowledge and skills. In his study of regional theater, Joseph Zeigler remembered that "throughout the middle 1960s, we all flocked to Minneapolis to study the brilliant management and production techniques of the Guthrie. The congenial staff there was virtually overrun by dozens of other theatre leaders coming to learn how things could be done when all conceivable resources were at one's disposal."[89]

With the theater's successful establishment and high profile, the city of Minneapolis also became a model for leaders of other cities who hoped to use the arts for urban reinvigoration. For instance in 1965 a group of business, civic, and cultural leaders from Kansas City, where the mayor had set up a "Professional Theater Planning Committee," traveled to Minneapolis to take in a production at the Guthrie. "Verbal reactions ran to superlative on the flight home," the local paper reported. "But there was equal evidence of awe when another matter was discussed—the task facing Kansas City itself in building a theater of similar magnitude."[90] Even some in Chicago looked on Minneapolis with envy: "We wish—oh how we wish!—for a professional resident repertory company, like other big American cities boast," wrote William Leonard of the *Chicago Tribune*. "The Minnesota Theater Company, which operates the Guthrie, is exhibiting this winter the kind of courage that Chicago could use."[91]

However the Guthrie's influence was felt most strongly by those closest to it: the other theaters and theater-hopefuls in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. From their earliest days in the

[89] Zeigler, *Regional Theatre: the Revolutionary Stage*, 74-5.
[90] Giles M. Fowler, "Guthrie Theater in a Word: Awesome," *Kansas City Times*, September 27, 1965
[91] William Leonard, "Courageous Theater in the Northlands," *Chicago Tribune*, January 7, 1967, reprinted in *Greenroom*, the backstage newsletter of the Minnesota Theatre Company, Winter Issue, 1967, Administrative Files, 1967, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA.

region, the Guthrie leaders, as a matter of strategy if not solely goodwill, courted the region's numerous amateur theater organizations. Guthrie himself held forth for community theater participants at various receptions, where he "talked Shakespeare," and inquired into the groups' philosophies. No one pretended that Guthrie and the locals were on an equal playing field. As an intimidated guest commented, "I didn't say a thing. He's so big"—and he was, literally and figuratively.[92] But most amateur groups welcomed Guthrie to the city, anticipating that his theater would serve as inspiration for their own work and build interest among those not yet enthusiastic about the theater.[93] And Guthrie made sure that the newcomers presented themselves as friendly collaborators rather than foreign conquerors; indeed that may have been their self-image despite the air of cultural colonialism which certain declarations conveyed.

The presence of the Guthrie, however, and the conversations about professionalism that it generated, sparked philosophical dissension within the ranks of the region's amateur groups about the fundamental function of their art form. Whereas many considered sociability and creative participation (as ends in themselves) central to the function and purpose of the amateur theater, such supposedly trivial aims began to be questioned in an atmosphere that increasingly valued professional excellence above all else. Should amateur theaters insist on professional production values and higher standards of artistry, or should they double down on theater's recreational, participatory characteristics—those values that distinguished amateurism from professionalism?

[92] Barbara Flanagan, "Guthrie Encourages Local Theater Groups," *Minneapolis Star*, March 31, 1961
[93] Most antagonism came from the Old Log Theatre, which believed it was doing a fine job of supplying the region with dramatic art, and doing so without charity from foundations, corporations, and without asking the public for extra money.

From one side, the entrance of serious professionalism into the Twin Cities region sparked an invigorated defense of amateurism. "We're not trying to compete with professional theatre, any more than our aim is to train people for the professional stage," one participant insisted in *8:30 theatre,* a magazine that popped up in this period as an organ for discussing the meaning and purpose of amateur theater. "Our aim is to provide an outlet for those who like to be in the theatre and be a part of it. We also aim to provide those who enjoy watching plays a chance to do so."[94] This approach did not indicate lack of desire or effort to develop a successful production, but it *did* mean they were "also in favor of the inept attempt, the embarrassingly bad, the good try, the brilliant failure, the dismal flop and the outright disaster—for out of them grows excellence and the communication between people that this world of tight little islands so desperately needs."[95]

Indeed the particular capacity of theater to pull together disparate groups of people, to encourage—and require—cooperation and collaborative work, and to do so for the purpose of pleasure or spiritual reward rather than financial gain or ego, was something amateur theater enthusiasts repeatedly emphasized in defense of their form. "It's the only medium that can pull people of all strata together for artistic endeavor—emotional and intellectual fulfillment that I think is vital in living," contended the director of Bloomington Civic Theater's *Pajama Game*.[96] Its recreational values were not something to ridicule but something to prize: "community theater is a means of emotional release—a wonderful hobby, a valuable way to make friends," another writer claimed. "It removes the dullness of day-to-day suburban housewifery."[97]

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[94] "What's Wrong with the Little Theatre" *8:30 theatre,* February 1961
[95] "A Good Question Sir," *8:30 theatre,* February 1961
[96] "Your Fun Is Goal of Civic Theater Chief," *Minneapolis Star*, June 15, 1961
[97] David Mazie, "All Twin City Area's a Stage as Community Theaters Thrive," *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune,* January 29, 1961

This last point, however, provided ballast for those on the other side of the argument. While amateurism had always been associated with femininity to some extent, its gendered aspects became at this time a powerful source of ridicule for those who believed professionalism to be serious, purposeful, and regimented, hence masculine, and amateurism to be frivolous, recreational, and lacking control, hence feminine. As amateurism had come to be associated with a lack of self-control, both emotional and physical, advocates of professionalization in the 1950s pointed to the participation of the "bored" or "harassed" housewife as proof of what they considered the dilettantish, self-indulgent nature of recreational theater.[98] "At its worst it is much as it began," wrote local critic Al McConagha of the region's amateur theater, "a refuge for the harassed housewife who finds exhilaration in a fat part—and getting away from home. The truth of the matter is that she peels potatoes twice as effectively as she will ever act. But the stage creates delusions, as germs transplant disease, and she thinks she is the new Elizabeth Taylor."[99] There was a sense that amateurism as recreation, even as individual spiritual fulfillment, was a self-indulgence, a fantasy, and an impracticality that only frivolous housewives or emasculated males could enjoy.[100]

Thus in the face of the denigration—and feminization—of amateurism, within some amateur theaters came increasingly forceful calls, at this time, to raise standards of production to match those of the professional theater. "Amateur theater is not an excuse for incompetence," local amateur director Gary Schulz told the *Minneapolis Tribune* in 1962. "People put out good

[98] On the connection between amateurism and effeminacy see Nick Salvato, "Out of Hand: Youtube Amateurs and Professionals," *TDR: the Drama Review* 53, No. 3 (Fall, 2009), 67-83.
[99] "Little Theater—a Look at First 25 Years," by Al McConagha, *Minneapolis Tribune*, Jan 2, 1966
[100] Such an utterly unimaginative and uncharitable understanding of the lives of women who stayed home with house and children may have arisen in part because the idea that women might not find full meaning and joy in their home lives was insulting and threatening to many men, including those involved in trying to legitimize theater. See Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War* (New York: Basic Books, 2008), chapter 1.

money to see it… The sophistication of the Twin Cities audience is much greater than it was, say, three years ago. It'll be even greater after the Guthrie Theater is established here…. As a matter of fact, if the Guthrie Theater puts two or three local theaters out of business, I don't think that would be a bad thing at all… Lazy people don't deserve to stay in business."[101] Amateur theaters, Schulz and others insisted, had a responsibility to produce high quality work, and not simply serve as outlets for recreation. "The community theater must… commit itself to a professional standard of production quality," wrote local director Gary Gisselman in no uncertain terms.[102] The entry of the Guthrie Theater into the community would be a good thing, many thought, in that it would pressure the amateurs to get serious: "the Guthrie group should put fear of technique" into them.[103] Audiences would become more discerning: "any producing organization able to create and maintain *quality* should be able to maintain audience," Kirkpatrick wrote in a different piece, but "failing to maintain quality, the organization will disappear."[104] Additionally, maybe local critics would become less "indulgent" of the obviously hammy.[105] "It's time for critics to stop praising community theaters for their effort," Schulz wrote. "It's achievement that counts."[106]

Nothing seemed to bother those determined to improve amateur theater productions more than the recreational aspects of the community theater. While some saw sociability to be central to the positive experience of participants in community theater, others increasingly

[101] Gary Schulz quoted in Dan Sullivan, "Whole Cast is the Star When Gary Schulz Directs Production," *Minneapolis Tribune,* March 3 1963
[102] Gary Gisselman, "Good Theater is Hard to Come By," *Minneapolis Tribune,* July 24, 1966
[103] "What's Wrong with Little Theatre," *8:30 theatre,* February 1961
[104] Mel Kirkpatrick in *8:30 theatre,* November, 1961
[105] "Reviewers in the Twin Cities are indulgent, wanting against better judgment to praise in order to support, rather than criticize in hopes of improving." "What's Wrong with Little Theatre?" *8:30 theatre,* February 1961
[106] Gary Schulz quoted in Dan Sullivan, "Whole Cast is the Star When Gary Schulz Directs Production," *Minneapolis Tribune,* March 3 1963

condemned it as a sign of feminine frivolity and lack of seriousness of approach. One worried reader of the new *8:30 theatre* wrote: "are you 'all for theatre,' any kind of theatre? Are you for another type of 'organized play'? Do you support the dilettante, or do you favor the development of theatrical excellence?"[107] This writer believed that support for these sub-par theatrical endeavors, particularly theater as recreation or theater for the joy of those involved rather than solely for the audience, would indicate the "spectral shape of 'group therapy' raising its ugly head."[108] Revealing that this indictment was one half of a debate rather than a general determination, the magazine took the opposite stance in its reply, writing that "we are, we guess, even in favor of 'group therapy'… we insist, however, that this group therapy be expanded to include the audience, whereupon it acquires a classic Greek name, 'catharsis,' and becomes quite respectable again."[109]

Among the organizations that expressed unreserved pleasure at the Guthrie's arrival, and decided to commit itself to artistic excellence over sociability, was Theatre St. Paul, an amateur group founded in 1956. Led by Rex Henriot, the theater had become quite popular by the late 1950s, with an audience of 15,000 for the 1959-60 season.[110] It originally presented itself as open to all, allowed anyone to audition for parts or serve as designers or stage managers, and claimed its origins in a group of non-theater people who were simply intrigued, for one reason or another, by drama. It was, according to its literature, "your community theatre."[111] In its early years, Theatre St. Paul boasted of its ability to produce with low costs: "We can give the people the worthwhile plays that won't succeed on Broadway, because of the cost factor involved… our

[107] Letter from H.O. Bloch, published in *8:30 theatre,* February 1961
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Mel Kirkpatrick, "The Little Theatres and How They Grew" *8:30 theatre,* February 1961
[111] Theatre St. Paul program, Box 1, Theatre St. Paul Collection (PA 83), PAA

shirts, theatrically speaking, are not very expensive, and we can take the chance."[112] Henriot conveyed a breezy, humorous air in his program notes, and the theater's seasons mixed serious drama and comedic fair, classics and lesser-known plays: Neil Simon's *Come Blow Your Horn* alongside Graham Greene's *The Potting Shed* and T.S. Eliot's *The Cocktail Party.*

This open, community-led approach began to change as early as 1960, with Guthrie's decision to set down roots in Minneapolis, and grew as the Guthrie advocated for high caliber professionalism and revealed a growing network of funding sources in the region. Writing to Oliver Rea in 1961, Henriot claimed that he had "no great desire to run a recreational friends and relatives type theatre," despite his previous apparent joy in doing just that.[113] Rea responded with enthusiasm, ensuring Henriot: "I agree with you that there is a definite place for 'recreational theatre' in every community. I do feel, however, that this form of theatre is just a stepping stone toward the professional."[114] Henriot quickly became fervent about this new commitment to professionalism, rejecting both community (by which he meant recreational amateur) and commercial theater in the process, community for focusing too much on the pleasure of participation and losing sight of production quality, leading audiences to false and often negative understandings of what constituted theater, and commercial for becoming a "gigantic speculation where personality, glitter, glamour, push, and star-worship have been wagered against a possible sudden gold strike and bankruptcy."[115] Backing away from his embrace of Theatre St. Paul as a place where locals could indulge their passion for theater, Henriot now believed that focusing on

[112] Charles F. Stutz, "Rex Henriot's Out to Put St. Paul on Theatrical Map," undated, unattributed article in Theatre St. Paul Collection (PA 83), PAA
[113] Letter to Oliver Rea from Rex Henriot, June 20, 1961. Administrative Files, 1961, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA.
[114] Letter to Rex Henriot from Oliver Rea, June 26, 1961. Administrative Files, 1961, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA
[115] Memo to the Board of Directors from Rex Henriot, April 27, 1961. Administrative Files, 1964, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA

participants rather than audiences was fundamentally selfish and potentially damaging. "Shows cannot be for the benefit of the cast," he claimed in 1965. Rather, the main purpose of theater was audience enlightenment: "a lawyer who grows up exposed to great and good Art, music, theatre, etc…. is a better lawyer."[116]

To Henriot, professionalism meant serious productions of worthwhile plays produced by talented artists for the pleasure and edification of audiences, and implied an organizational stability that was lacking in either amateur or commercial work. "The stability and success, the combination of Art and Fiscal Accomplishment is what we are after," Henriot explained in 1964.[117] In early 1963 Henriot received a grant from the Ford Foundation to visit professional theaters across the United States and observe their operations, and with advice from the Guthrie so easily available, professionalization began to seem feasible. Once the city of St. Paul launched a campaign to open a brand new center for arts and sciences, where Theatre St. Paul would have the opportunity to perform in a state-of-the-art theater, there appeared to be little other choice. By 1963, Henriot's program notes claimed that "the future of Theatre St. Paul rests in our goal of becoming St. Paul's Resident Professional Theater."[118]

Yet Henriot saw professionalization as a gradual process, during which the theater would continue to incorporate local talent as it accumulated financial and administrative prowess and developed and perfected its productions. By July 1964, Theatre St. Paul had developed a staff of 7, not counting Henriot himself nor the publicist he hoped to hire, and Henriot had traveled to New York to audition professional actors. Henriot anticipated a whirlwind season ticket

[116] Memo to the Board of Directors from Rex Henriot, November 15, 1965. Box 7, Frank Marzitelli Papers, MNHS
[117] Letter from Rex Henriot to Marvin Poones at Actors Equity Association, April 8, 1964. Administrative Files, 1964, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA.
[118] *Threepenny Opera* program, Theatre St. Paul Collection (PA 83), PAA.

campaign which would entail "150 coffee parties, 10,000 phone calls, 125,000 mailings, and 200 volunteer workers," and result in 5,800 season tickets sold.[119] He believed that the St. Paul community would eagerly line up behind his new venture, as they had for the Guthrie, but also understand that this was a grassroots effort, which would need time to reach the standards of professional production he himself had so loudly touted.

Henriot's optimism was not warranted. Growing slowly into a professional theater rather than starting out as a fully funded and conceived venture, like the Guthrie, was not easy. The theater could not possibly meet Actors Equity standards of hiring immediately, and while its appeals to the union for a modified contract met with some success, stagehands and other backstage personnel did not appreciate Theatre St. Paul's semi-unionized position and began to picket the theater. Nor was the theater embraced immediately or as enthusiastically as Rex Henriot had expected. "For a man who has spent his life in this sort of theatre it was the worst possible error for me to overestimate the immediate drawing power of a new theatrical operation without a name star or director," Henriot wrote regretfully.[120] Indeed, the theater had trouble attracting enough audience members to make up for increased expenses—which jumped from $40,000 as an amateur organization to $165,000 in its first year of professional operation—and scrambled to find ways to increase its audience base, from about 650 patrons per week, in the 1950s, to a goal of over 1,400.[121] By the end of 1964, Theatre St. Paul had borrowed $20,000 from the bank, and still faced potential financial disaster. Its limited staff was critically

[119] This ticket campaign was in part organized by Danny Newman, theater administrator extraordinaire, whom TCG, through the Ford Foundation, had hired to travel the country dispensing advice. Memo to the Board of Directors from Rex Henriot, July 1964, Administrative Files, 1964, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA.
[120] "A Request to the Hill Family Foundation," January 1965, Administrative Files, 1965, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA.
[121] Statistics from "A Request to the Hill Family Foundation," January 1965, Administrative Files, 1965, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA. Information on budget increase from "Guthrie Group Proposes to Run Theatre St. Paul," by Jim Shoop, *Minneapolis Star*, February 12, 1966.

overworked, and Henriot, under pressure, was considering eliminating even more of its workforce.[122]

Henriot appealed to the local Hill Family Foundation, noting that national audiences appreciated the theater more than local ones, a fact that should give it legitimacy in the eyes of critics and funders, but also claiming the theater's roots in the community as one of its main strengths—an argument not unlike that sometimes made by the Guthrie, which revealed the continuing ambiguity of the meaning of civic theater.[123] Henriot continued to believe strongly that the residents of St. Paul wanted a professional resident theater, but that they weren't yet in the theater-going habit. "Indications are that we just need time, patience, and a great deal of help to continue to work on a potential audience suddenly faced with more quality Art than any city outside of New York," he assured the Board.[124] Many St. Paulites may have already satiated their thirst for professional theater in Minneapolis, but the Hill Family Foundation bought his argument, and agreed to help the theater struggle to become a stable organization, granting it $41,000, but requesting that a portion of that money go toward hiring an audience development staff member.

Yet even with this help, the theater was forced to slash costs right and left, combining administrative jobs, dropping actors, engaging someone to design and execute costumes for an obscenely low rate, and living with picketing rather than pay union wages.[125] This was not the kind of stable, controlled situation in which a professional theater was supposed to find itself. By

[122] Memo to the Board of Directors from Rex Henriot, January 25, 1965. Administrative Files, 1965, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA
[123] "A Request to the Hill Family Foundation," January 1965, Administrative Files, 1965, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA
[124] Letter from Rex Henriot, January 31, 1965. Administrative Files, 1965, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA
[125] Theatre St. Paul Board of Director's Meeting Minutes, April 21, 1965. Administrative Files, 1965, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA

December, 1965, Theatre St. Paul had considered folding, but instead decided to finish out the season with board members agreeing to cover any debt.[126] In the meantime, Henriot continued to insist on the importance of Theatre St. Paul and plead for time to grow: "Artists of talent are available," he wrote of the theater's challenges, "but we cannot buy them as the Guthrie could. We must take longer and develop them. The theatre we started last year which grew from a theatre we developed 10 years ago will not reach maturity for another 10 years."[127] But the pressures of professionalism did not allow for this kind of slow growth. Organizations like the Ford Foundation refused to support the company until it could show substantial community support.[128] With the example of the Guthrie beside it, Theatre St. Paul had to prove its professional chops before it could possibly afford to do so. After Henriot's whole-hearted embrace of professionalism, the theater could not conceivably return to amateurism without becoming "not only a failure but a pathetic anachronism," according to Donald Hughes of the Hill Family Foundation.[129] Thus a successful amateur organization that had offered local residents an opportunity to engage actively with one another in creative pursuit had given up this central role in the local scene in order to pursue something unattainable.

In late winter and early spring of 1966, the St. Paul Council of Arts and Sciences, presumably fed up with Theatre St. Paul's inability to generate revenue, invited the Guthrie to produce its own season in the Crawford Livingston Theater. The Guthrie could bring heft and financial promise to a theater operation in St. Paul, with a direct line to McNeil Lowry at the

[126] Letter from R.N. Cardozo to Bayliss Griggs, Aetna Life Insurance, Box 7, Frank Marzitelli Papers, MNHS
[127] Memo to the Board of Directors from Rex Henriot, November 15, 1965. Box 7, Frank Marzitelli Papers, MNHS
[128] Board Meeting Minutes, 1965. Box 7, Frank Marzitelli Papers, MNHS. This is a problem that Richard Schechner pointed to in his *Tulane Drama Review* article "Ford, Rockefeller, and Theatre," in which he discusses the contradictions inherent in philanthropists insisting that theaters show community support while also considering them as presenting values and ideas outside of the mainstream.
[129] Letter from Donald H. Hughes to Robert Crawford, Rockefeller Foundation. Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RG 1.2, Series 200, Box 379, Folder 3330.69. RAC

Ford Foundation and the ability to expand an already established staff to accommodate the needs of programming in a new space. After some consideration, the Guthrie happily realized the advantages of this opportunity: "Possessing both a large and a small theatre will permit the Minnesota Theatre Company to produce virtually any conceivable play," Peter Zeisler claimed. "This scheme would make it possible for the Minnesota Theatre Company to be the first truly Twin City cultural organization."[130] The Guthrie anticipated financial deficits—major ones—as well, but unlike Theatre St. Paul, it could enlist powerful foundation support and the esteem of local leaders to ensure its ultimate financial soundness, and it promised the polish already apparent in its Minneapolis productions. Theatre St. Paul, the Guthrie, and the Council of Arts and Sciences worked out an agreement to hand over the St. Paul space in 1967, by which time Henriot had left the city to join the staff of an established professional theater in Syracuse.[131]

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While amateur theaters struggled with the pressure of professionalization, theaters devoted to experimentalism faced their own challenges in confronting the new framework of artistic production. In Minneapolis, the Firehouse Theater, an avant-garde group directed by Open Theater alumnus Sydney Walter, found itself in a tricky position by the mid-1960s.[132] Established as an amateur organization in 1963, and devoted to the production of bold, defiant,

[130] Letter from Peter Zeisler to Roger Kennedy, February 9, 1966. Administrative Files, 1966, Guthrie Theater Archives (PA 3), PAA

[131] The Guthrie operated in the Crawford Livingston Theater only for a few seasons, after which it concentrated on the Other Place and then Guthrie 2 as more amenable spaces for secondary productions, but it faced financial problems with all of these second stages and none were maintained for more than a few years.

[132] On taking the reins at the Firehouse, Walter said "I came here to the most bizarre collection of talents I'd seen. We had a hairdresser playing a villain, for instance… They promised me a fine crop of amateur actors and I got an assortment of freaks and misfits, so I stayed." Quoted in "Firehouse: Communal Living is Next," *Minneapolis Tribune*, June 15, 1969.

even radical theater—from absurdist playwrights like Ionesco and Beckett to much more risky collaboratively-created, non-text-based works—the group's leaders quickly determined that in order to effectively produce such challenging work, they needed to spend more time in rehearsal, hire more skilled artists, and expand their production season.[133] As the Guthrie Theater showed, nonprofit professionalism seemed the path to follow. Yet for members of the Firehouse, the problems of American society, which they pledged to resist through their work, were epitomized by the institutional Guthrie and the suited managerial class that financed it. As Jack Poggi put it in his analysis of theater economics, in trying to achieve professional standards, "the danger is that the rebels will become like their enemies."[134] To follow the structural model of the Guthrie and other major regional theaters, would members of the Firehouse have to abandon their philosophical principles?

For the Firehouse, the challenges of conforming to professional standards were intensified by the theater's stated intention to break down the barriers between theater and daily experience, to fulfill Artaud's plea to "protest against the idea of culture as distinct from life."[135] Members of the Firehouse believed that erasing these distinctions involved two steps: illuminating the connection between performers and audience in the theater, and ensuring that audiences carried the ideas of the performances with them into the rest of their lives, informing their social interactions and political, social, and economic choices. As many Firehouse plays were concerned with connection and interdependence, the two steps were correlated in that

[133] The Firehouse's decision to professionalize is described in a 1965 grant proposal, Box 1, Firehouse Theatre Papers (PA 70), PAA
[134] Poggi, *Theater in America*, 194.
[135] Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double* (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 10. Bridging art and life is a familiar goal of the avant-garde, shown to be highly problematic for instance in Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde,* trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minn Press, 1984).

emphasizing human relatedness in one realm would reveal the relationship between elements of life in all others. According to Firehouse Managing Director Marlow Hotchkiss, theater "is capable, if we are willing to commit ourselves to each other and to the moment, of changing people's perceptions, of radically altering the ways in which we see ourselves and each other."[136] The atmosphere of collective exploration created in the theater, the "sacrifice of… individual egos" involved in collaborative work, would remain with audiences when they left.[137] The Firehouse thus embraced audience participation—in Megan Terry's *Jack-Jack,* actors mingled with audience amid burning incense—and tried to erase the boundaries that began and ended performances. In *Rags,* the actors eventually faded off stage, with no house lights to indicate the end: "no one claps – there must be more…then someone reaches for his coat; another claps embarrassedly."[138]

The Firehouse also challenged the segmentation of life through "transformation theater," a newly popular technique pronounced in the work of Megan Terry and Jean-Claude van Itallie, in which actors moved fluidly between different characters, illuminating the unsolidified, inconsistent nature of human existence.[139] As Walter noted, "the character is approached entirely through his drives, rather than his characteristics. No attempt is made to achieve consistency…. The result is more like a collection of characters springing from one human being," or a number of beings inhabiting one character.[140] In the company's interpretation of *Antigone*, for instance,

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[136] *Firehouse Theater: a Spiritual History*, Box 3, Folder 36, Firehouse Theater Company Archives, D-064, Department of Special Collections, General Library, University of California, Davis, California (hereafter UCDavis).
[137] Sydney Walter, "Theater Today Must Stage Protest," *Minneapolis Tribune*, March 26, 1967
[138] Judy Galt, "'Rags' – Gripping Chaos," *Minnesota, an Independent Student Publication,* November 27, 1968. Vol. 71, No. 45. In Firehouse Theater Company Archives, Box 2, Folder 33, UC Davis.
[139] On transformation theater, see Kerstin Schmidt, *The Theater of Transformation: Postmodernism in American Drama* (New York: Rodopi, 2005); Robert Pasolli, *A Book on the Open Theatre* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1970)
[140] Addendum to Grant Proposal, "Notes on the Artistic Policy," 1965. Box 1, Firehouse Theatre Papers (PA 70), PAA

different actors assumed the title role at different times, illustrating varied perspectives on the character.[141] Through transformation theater, the Firehouse hoped to more deeply explore its belief in the flexibility of individuals, and the potential for continual change in all realms of life.

While able to demonstrate the principles of transformation on an aesthetic level, the Firehouse's decision to professionalize in 1965 curtailed its potential to embody this philosophy on an organizational level. Professionalism required accommodation to the strictures of nonprofit institutionalism, including appeals to foundation and government funders, and increased publicity to attract audiences.[142] To accomplish these tasks, the Firehouse would have to construct a coherent, legible identity for public consumption, rather than transform organically over time in the vein of the Open Theater, which Chaikin described as "a theatre in process."[143]

For a time, the Firehouse managed to present a cohesive identity by accepting its role as part of a long historical tradition. A Firehouse artistic statement claimed: "Every society that has not thoroughly stagnated spawns an artistic avant garde. It is this avant garde, with its new voice, that expresses the development of the society. Orthodox art affirms the continuing values; avant garde [art] celebrates or criticizes the new values."[144] The Firehouse had a clear role to play in the Twin Cities as the critical sister to the Guthrie's orthodoxy. Its relationship with the Guthrie was therefore not seriously confrontational but, in fact, complementary. Promising not to "concern itself primarily with direct criticisms of social institutions," the Firehouse would not

[141] Judy Galt, "'Antigone': Biting, Insightful & Innovative," *Minnesota Daily*, January 17, 1969
[142] Grant proposal in Box 1, Firehouse Theatre Papers (PA 70), PAA
[143] Chaiken quoted in Kermit Dunkelberg, "Grotowski and North American Theatre: Translation, Transmission, Dissemination," Unpublished Dissertation, NYU, 2008, 218. In fact, the Open Theater dissolved when it could no longer retain organizational flexibility: "As the structure called the Open Theatre we can no longer be transitional and in process without ourselves becoming an institution fixed in a single direction, so we are announcing a deliberate end to our work in this particular formation." Dunkelberg, 218.
[144] "Notes on the Artistic Policy," Appendix to grant proposal, 1965. Box 1, Firehouse Theater papers (PA 70), PAA.

upend the social order, but instead feed ideas into circulation.[145] "Of all the experimental theaters working in America today," Firehouse artist Nancy Walker assured the Rockefeller Foundation, "ours has one of the strongest possibilities of revitalizing the theater, of influencing through the back door the work of the Guthrie Theater."[146] For the Firehouse, accepting its role as the avant-garde corollary required not challenging or even "underhandedly undermin[ing] its foes," but ultimately bolstering the established theater, refreshing and renewing without cracking it.[147]

This kind of solidified organizational identity, as the historical avant-garde for its particular time and place, seemed to manifest itself in a certain predictability of production and homogenization of audience. By the late 1960s, observers noted that the Firehouse was becoming too reliable, with audiences attending not out of true interest in the theater's ideas, but to get their fill of a now faddish radicalism; they were becoming, it seemed, just another commodity. "It seems to me there is a rising percentage of obviously wealthy, slick, heavily made up establishment types," noted journalist John Fenn of the changing Firehouse audiences. "They come in dressed for slumming, flouncing their Edwardian shirts and $100 Dayton's mod apparel. You can see they think themselves ever so 'in' as they wait with obvious glee for the real live hippies to take off their pants."[148] The Firehouse artists desired a diverse audience that

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[145] Ibid.

[146] Letter from Nancy Walter to Norman Lloyd at the Rockefeller Foundation, June 19, 1968, Box 3 Folder 3, Firehouse Theater Company Archives, UCDavis. The theatrical techniques the Firehouse introduced to the region were indeed adopted by other companies, as Peter Altman explained in the *Minneapolis Star*: "almost everybody else in drama has been using the Firehouse's techniques of audience-involvement, mixed-media, and transformational theater." "Time Accentuates Creative Pace of Firehouse Troupe," Undated, but most likely October, 1968. Firehouse Theater Company Archives, Box 1, Folder 83, UC Davis.

[147] Laurence Senelick, "Text and Violence: Performance Practices of the Modernist Avant-Garde," from James M. Harding, Ed. *Contours of the Theatrical Avant-Garde: Performance and Textuality,* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 16.

[148] John Fenn, "Faustus at the Firehouse," *Twin Citian Magazine*, May 1969. Scholars have observed the mainstream popularization of early 1960s values; see for instance Frank, *The Conquest of Cool*. But it seems that the Firehouse was falling into a rut. "The past few Firehouse performances have become what I never thought they would, predictable," wrote Mike Steele. "There's the opening music, usually chanting, as the cast spends an interminable amount of time preparing the stage and warming up; there's the clash of chords as the play starts, the

would absorb and try to understand their shows, not those who came for a predictably audacious spectacle.[149] Nevertheless, as a semi-professional theater, reviewed in the city's major newspapers and supported by at least some foundation and government funding, the Firehouse already had too much cachet to disguise itself as a theater for the people, and yet too much of a leftist agenda to appeal to the most prestigious Twin Citians. Like its Board member Gordon Morris, who described himself as wracked by "schizo twins pulling on me," one in the direction of stable family life, and one toward exploration and experimentation, the Firehouse found itself teetering between two poles, and not particularly satisfied with the balance.[150]

In the end, this middling position, combined with the fundamental inconsistencies between the Firehouse's principles of uniting "art and the problems of society" and the bureaucratic, rationalized mechanisms of professionalism, stymied the Firehouse's efforts to develop organizationally.[151] In theory, Twin City leaders supported the Firehouse—Oliver Rea and Mayor Arthur Naftalin penned notes of support for the theater to use in its appeals to donors—it received minor grants from the McKnight Foundation, the Minnesota State Arts Council, the NEA, and several smaller foundations, and it retained a Board of Directors filled largely with academics.[152] Local critics were generally sympathetic, even when its endeavors did

racing about screaming words, the group grope, the confrontation of audiences, the quiet talk, then the self-conscious nudity—Walter himself this time plunging out into the snow—then the easy sarcasm and simple satire about the war, then the nervous ending as the event runs out of inertia." "Firehouse Introduces Its Own Version of *Antigone*," *Minneapolis Tribune*, January 11, 1969.

[149] In "Playwright Appeals for Varied Audience," Elizabeth Doolittle Johnson, working with the Firehouse, complained of the lack of diversity in the theater's audience: "I write as much for people who attend Doris Day-Rock Hudson movies as for those who attend theater regularly,' she said. 'The only problem is that a general audience doesn't come, for some reason.'" Unnamed and undated newspaper clipping, Box 6, Folder 1, Firehouse Theater Scrapbook: 1963-1968. UCDavis.

[150] Mike Steele, "'Gemini' Plays Two Roles,'" *Minneapolis Tribune*, February 2, 1969

[151] "Notes on the Artistic Policy," Appendix to grant proposal, 1965. Box 1, Firehouse Theater Archives (PA 70), PAA

[152] Letters of support from Oliver Rea and Arthur Naftalin to Marlow Hotchkiss, November 8, 1965 and undated, Firehouse Theater Archives (PA 70), PAA

not resonate: "Experiments are risky," critic Mike Steele explained. "Sometimes you find cures for ingrown toenails while looking for the cause of cancer, sometimes you conquer nuclear power while modestly seeking a dandruff remover, and sometimes you blow up the whole laboratory."[153] As a small theater committed to upending the status quo, however, in a period before funding community-based groups became widespread, the Firehouse could never gain whole-hearted or broad-based community support, and thus had difficulty fulfilling matching grants and proving community support to major funders. Despite years of reaching out to the Rockefeller Foundation, the Firehouse was never able to procure funding from it. And yet the Firehouse was not willing to give up on its mission. Unable to attain foundation support for an ambitious, outdoor production of Brecht's *A Man's a Man*, meant as a protest against the Vietnam War, the Firehouse's Nancy Walter told the Rockefeller Foundation: "we must do it, even if it means a salary cut or dipping into next year's money."[154]

At the end of 1969, the Firehouse was evicted from the building it had occupied since the early 60s and replaced by a furniture store, an indication of the fickle relationship between Twin Citians and their primary avant-garde theater. The Firehouse leaders, claiming they had been dissatisfied with Minneapolitan audiences for some time, took the eviction as an opportunity to leave the Midwest. They headed to San Francisco, where the theater promised a new approach, living communally—"a social experiment to complete the artistic experiment"—and trying to more directly engage audiences in a search for a new way of life.[155] Without funding or community support, however, and facing internal divisions, the Firehouse soon folded. It was not

[153] Mike Steele, "Firehouse Theater Introduces Its Own Version of 'Antigone,'" *Minneapolis Tribune*, January 11, 1969
[154] Letter from Nancy Walter to Norman Lloyd, Rockefeller Foundation, May 2, 1968. Box 3, Folder 3, Firehouse Theater Archives, UCDavis
[155] From *Firehouse Theater: a Spiritual History*, Box 3, Folder 36, Firehouse Theater Company Archives, UC Davis

alone in its frustrations. Across the country, avant-garde theater groups struggled to reconcile their missions to the mainstream financial support necessary for professionalization. The Open Theater decided to close rather than appeal to such entities, but the Living Theatre, upon losing Ford Foundation support, claimed it would become "a theatre not so dependent on fund-raising campaigns. I don't know how yet, or where," as if the idea of a theater company subsisting without foundation funding was almost impossible to imagine.[156]

The professionalism and institutional organization of the Guthrie Theater was thus inescapable for theaters in the Twin Cities in the 1960s, even those that had previously operated successfully in a different milieu. Aspirations toward professional excellence, the stigmatization of amateur involvement, new audience expectations, and new modes of operation and funding placed unprecedented pressure on these organizations to change their operations and sometimes their underlying principles. Yet the effects of professionalism did not stop here, with new and sometimes debilitating challenges. As described in the following chapter, the ramifications of the professional turn began, after a number of years, to have unexpected and ultimately more expansive effects on the kinds of theater organizations that arose in the late 1960s and 1970s.

[156] "Interviews with Judith Malina and Kenneth Brown," by Richard Schechner. *The Tulane Drama Review*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (Spring, 1964)

CHAPTER 5/CODA

RESPONSES TO AND DEVELOPMENTS FROM THE PROFESSIONAL CIVIC THEATER

With the Guthrie's early years behind it, it seemed by the mid-1960s that Minneapolis had put itself on the map as a lively, cultivated, even sophisticated center of culture and business with a well-off, educated population, on its way to becoming the "Creative City" that Mayor Arthur Naftalin, who served until 1969, hoped to build. In fact by the early 1970s Minnesota and Minneapolis in particular had acquired a kind of wholesome utopic identity in the national consciousness, reflected in the 1973 *Time magazine* cover story "Minnesota: a State That Works." This panegyric to the state painted a picture of a happy, non-corrupt, cultured, progressive place that "balanced city and country, had little traffic, good education, and few of the problems that plagued other states and cities."[1]

Yet culturally, the city was in flux during this period—in an era of transition, or adolescence, as the Guthrie Theater struggled to maintain its identity as a central civic entity, and local unrest and federal initiatives began to shift the charitable priorities of Twin City and national foundations, business leaders, and government figures toward support for more grassroots, community-based initiatives. Although social unrest was not as pronounced as in other cities, Minneapolis experienced its share of protests and sit-ins related to the Civil Rights movement and the Vietnam War, small scale race riots broke out in 1966 along Plymouth Avenue, and an assertive activist community was developing in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood. In 1969, Charles Stenvig was elected Mayor on a punishing "law and order"

[1] "Minnesota: a State that Works," *Time Magazine,* August 13, 1973

platform. The problems and possibilities of the 1960s were becoming visible even to those classicists who were absorbed in their work at the theater.

Indeed in 1970, John Lahr, who had previously served as literary consultant for the Guthrie, pointed to what seemed an increasing disconnect between the theater and the community: "The Guthrie management has no idea of how to lead the community because it has no idea of what's in the community," Lahr wrote. "Why hasn't it tried to develop local talent… or local directors who are probably more exciting and inventive than third-rate stars like Joseph Anthony or Philip Minor, who sound like experts but who stand for a theater that even Broadway finds old hat?"[2] Lahr put his finger on the root of the problem that had left the theater, with the departure of its charismatic leader Tyrone Guthrie, reeling, wracked with financial and existential insecurities. While it remained a high-profile and prestigious cultural institution, the theater was beginning to lose its path, as an expanding gap between its operations and the changing values of funders and some audiences became increasingly visible.

The Guthrie had introduced to the region intractable changes in how art would be produced, but by the late 1960s its self-proclaimed seat as Minnesota's civic theater was under intense scrutiny. At the same time, many artists were beginning to chafe under the strictures of the nonprofit professional form that the Guthrie represented, and rebel against institutional professionalism in the arts as they rebelled against the Establishment more generally. In Minneapolis, groups like the Brave New Workshop, producing satirical comedy skits, and Alive and Trucking Theater, which performed informally everywhere and anywhere, explicitly articulated their departure from the confining structures of professional institutionalism, and declared themselves of, by, and for the community in ways they believed the Guthrie never could

[2] Lahr quoted in Mike Steele, "Guthrie Theater, $190,000 in Debt, Looks to Its Public," *Minneapolis Tribune*, January 25 1970

be. By 1976, groups like Mixed Blood and Penumbra Theatre, which would shape the cultural environment of the Twin Cities to the present day, were able to utilize new funding priorities to connect with previously neglected segments of the population, and create a network of professional theaters that served a relatively diverse portion of the local population.

Yet the influence of the professional institution was everywhere. Even groups that developed out of rebellion against the Guthrie were in highly significant ways ensconced within the webs that theater had woven—webs that both offered opportunity and constrained methods of production and organization. Like the Firehouse, many of these groups found themselves in the awkward position of railing against the Establishment while trying to appeal to its most ingrained institutions for funding. And such theater companies also faced an audience which included a segment of the population with heightened expectations for what a "good" theater production should be. At the same time, however, the introduction of the major professional theater institution should not be seen as the end of experimentation in aesthetics, form, or structural organization, or discussion of what a civic theater might be, but as a new framework through which all new developments would take place.

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In 1966, Tyrone Guthrie left Minneapolis after serving his agreed-upon three years as Director. His departure hit the theater company harder than many expected. In its initial fundraising and publicity, the theater had boasted of Guthrie as its main source of inspiration; productions were driven by the director's vigor, his enthusiasm and unusual personality leant the enterprise character and verve, and actors and other theater artists were attracted to Minneapolis

to work with him. Built on the premise of attachment and belonging to community, the theater had become so tied up with the identity of its famous founder that after he left it had little clear direction of its own. By the end of the decade it was also struggling financially, as the Ford Foundation's initial grants ran out and season ticket sales dwindled. Guthrie leaders were frustrated by the slowness with which they perceived their audience to be growing. According to Donald Schoenbaum, who succeeded Zeisler as Managing Director in 1969 and led the theater through its period without artistic leadership: "We feel we're a community resource that should be used by the community, but after seven years I think we assumed too much. We aren't getting the kind of attention in the community that we should… We haven't instilled the theater habit in them yet."[3] Many locals claimed to be proud of the Guthrie, and saw it as a symbol of prestige for their area, but this did not necessarily translate into attendance at performances.[4]

At the same time, while the institutional mechanisms of the nonprofit professional theater remained sound, the values of funders on the national level were shifting in ways that the theater was somewhat slow to recognize. By the time Tyrone Guthrie left the theater to return to Ireland, Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programs were in full force, and work for the social good was increasingly directed toward inner city, low income, and minority populations, with the Community Action Program emphasizing active grassroots involvement in policy creation. From its first years, the National Endowment for the Arts had included educational programs like the Laboratory Theater Project and Poetry in Schools, which aimed at the artistic and humanistic enrichment of school children, and made a true effort to reach those with underprivileged

[3] Schoenbaum quoted in Mike Steele, "Guthrie Theater, $190,000 in Debt, Looks To Its Public," *Minneapolis Tribune*, January 25, 1970

[4] "Six of every 10 metropolitan area residents surveyed by *The Minneapolis Star* Metro-Poll take pride in the Guthrie Theater. But in the seven years of the theater's existence, only about half that number have attended a play there… 61% of residents in all areas surveyed (Minneapolis, St. Paul, Hennepin suburbs, and 'other suburbs') claimed to be proud of the Guthrie, 28% have attended, and 35% say they will attend this year." "6 of 10 proud of Guthrie, fewer have seen its plays," *Minneapolis Star*, June 18, 1970

backgrounds. Additionally, "we began," according to policy maker and later NEA Chairman Livingston Biddle, "to explore how the arts could best benefit minorities and the disadvantaged, ethnic cultures, and residents of rural communities," extending grants to the Institute of American Indian Arts in New Mexico, outreach programs at museums, and artist training programs for underprivileged youth in New York.[5] The NEA had from the first supported some experimental theaters and avant-garde art, but the emphasis on economic opportunity and improving the lives of the poor—as a responsibility of the arts and culture—accelerated toward the end of the 1960s and into the 1970s.

In particular, by the 1970s the arts came to be seen by foundations and other funders as "solutions" to problems rather than intrinsically beneficial in themselves, or beneficial for the quality of life of Americans as a whole. As David Rockefeller put it in 1969, "projects involving the arts are not just a kind of fluffy periphery of American life. They are an integral part of the solutions to the problems that face our country today."[6] Corporate supporters, in an effort to improve the communities in which they operated, were also directing more philanthropic money toward job creation and community-based programs, believing that a healthier populace would make for a more profitable company. Race riots in 1967 in Minneapolis catalyzed local businesspeople toward such social causes, most obviously through the creation of the Urban Coalition, chaired by the CEO of Honeywell, which had as its mission to address the problems of low income minority groups, but also through support for community-oriented work by arts institutions.[7] As Ralph Burgard wrote in 1968, in his survey of arts councils, "Ten years ago, few

[5] Biddle, *Our Government and the Arts*, 240
[6] David Rockefeller, "Forward" in Arnold Gingrich, *Business & the Arts: an Answer to Tomorrow* (New York: Paul Eriksson, Inc., 1969), xi.
[7] See Jon Pratt and Edson W. Spencer, "Dynamics of Corporate Philanthropy in Minnesota," *Daedalus*, 129, No. 3, "Minnesota: A Different America?" (Summer, 2000), 269-292.

arts organizations felt any obligation to serve people from low-income areas in the city. However, the cause of civil rights, the Peace Corps philosophy in domestic context, Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and a nationwide concern to alleviate poverty have inevitably changed this attitude."[8]

This perspective dismayed McNeil Lowry, who had always insisted that the arts be appreciated on their own merit, that funding be applied with the good of professional artists alone in mind. He wrote of government funding: "With one hand the National Endowment for the Arts attempts to help in the annual maintenance of professional groups or institutions. With the other it subordinates the professional to educational or community goals."[9] Lowry did defend the Foundation's responsibility to support artists from all walks of life, and the new and potentially innovative work they could produce, especially as the federal government and other funders began to take up the arts mantle, and there was more money to go around. He was proud of the Ford Foundation's support for diverse groups such as the Negro Ensemble Company, and "the theater workshops—often called off-off-Broadway—that have burgeoned in lofts, basements, and churches throughout lower Manhattan," because he believed that excellent work could emerge through unlikely avenues.[10] However he did not approve of the siphoning off of arts support toward education or economic revitalization, or its justification through these means. He would later reflect with worry on the fact that Frank Thomas, who became President of the Ford Foundation in 1979, believed that "the arts could be a tool for community development, as education had proved to be," and that "this could be most clearly proved in the social

[8] Ralph Burgard, *Arts in the City: Organizing and Programming Community Arts Councils.* (Associated Councils of the Arts, 1968), 61.
[9] "The American Revolution: A Continuing Commitment," in *The Arts in America: Evolution and Tradition,* Symposia on the American Revolution, May 6-7, 1976. W. McNeil Lowry papers, UI
[10] W. McNeil Lowry, "The Economic Crisis in the Arts: the Need for a National Policy," in *The Ford Foundation: Humanities and the Arts Program, 1968.* W. McNeil Lowry papers, UI

development of women and of racial minorities."[11] By this point Lowry was no longer steering the direction of arts funding in the country, but his initial influence, which directed money toward professional enterprises, had already paved the path upon which all other funding would be directed.

As leaders of the Guthrie began to acknowledge these high level changes, they also struggled to relate to growing activism in the local community, sometimes joining in social justice activities, and sometimes feeling pestered by them. In 1967, picketers, including up to 75 members of the Minnesota Clergy and Laymen Concerned about Vietnam, surrounded the theater before a performance of *House of Atreus*, begging leaders and audience members to heed what they considered the antiwar message of the play. In this case Guthrie artists, including Douglas Campbell and John Lewin, joined the spirit of the protest by signing a special plea to arts supporter Hubert Humphrey to attend the play and reflect on its message. [12] But other interruptions from the outside world were less welcome. In 1969, during a performance of *Uncle Vanya,* Vietnam War protestors interrupted the actors by pretending to spray the audience with machine gun fire. Then, according to one actor, "one of the people ran up on stage and said, 'We are interrupting you just as you have interrupted the lives of the Vietnam people.'" The response of the crowd—"they were yelling 'hang them!' and literally throwing programs from the balcony," at least in the recollection of the same actor—may have shown a deep gulf between the audience of the Guthrie and the currents of youth outside its doors, but the event also proved the impossibility of retaining an invincible wall.[13]

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[11] W. McNeil Lowry, "The State of the Arts Today," speech for the Great Lakes Assembly on the Future of the Performing Arts, Cleveland, Ohio, September 4, 1980, W. McNeil Lowry papers, UI
[12] "Antiwar Pickets at Guthrie Ask Humphrey to See Play," *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune* July 23, 1967
[13] David Kwiat quoted in Peg Guilfoyle, *The Guthrie Theater: Images, History, and Inside Story* (Minneapolis: Nodin Press, 2006), 61.

In early 1970, critic Mike Steele, a longtime chronicler of the Twin Cities arts scene, penned a series of three articles for the *Minneapolis Tribune* detailing the theater's problems. With titles that laid bare its precarious situation—"Guthrie Theater Has Its Troubles: Control by Non-Artists called Source of Woes" "Guthrie Theater, $190,000 in Debt, Looks to Its Public," and "Who's Stand-offish? Guthrie or Its Public?"—the articles detailed the many problems the establishment faced. Beyond its major deficit, Steele noted that both of the theater's most recent artistic directors, Edward Payson Call and Mel Shapiro, had resigned, and over half of the acting company (16 out of 30) planned not to return for the next season. "After seven years," wrote Steele, the theater "has no artistic direction, no artistic continuity, no broad base of community support and it's on the jittery end of increased sniping from critics and theater professionals throughout the country."[14]

The articles also provided a platform for disgruntled former employees to express their disappointment with the theater, which many had hoped would allow for sustained exploration of dramatic work, experimentation with material unfit for commercial stages, and the occasional heroic failure. Mel Shapiro complained that his production of *Mourning Becomes Electra* had its run shortened, "just like Broadway," when it received negative reviews.[15] Though the regional theater was supposed to provide opportunities for greater risk and for deeper artistic development, Shapiro attested that it had fallen into the same patterns and limitations as the commercial Broadway work it supposedly defined itself against, largely because business managers were in control of the institution. "You find yourself putting on shows to put on shows," Shapiro claimed. "Artistic control is in the hands of business managers and every

[14] Mike Steele, "Guthrie Theater Has Its Troubles: Control by non-artistic called source of woes," *Minneapolis Tribune,* January 17, 1970
[15] Mike Steele, "Guthrie Theater, $190,000 in Debt, Looks To Its Public," *Minneapolis Tribune,* January 25, 1970

business manager thinks he can do it better than the artist."[16] Dissatisfied actors and playwrights also complained of the business-like and impersonal management of the theater, and tied it to the theater's difficulty relating to the local community. According to one actor, the Guthrie was "trying to be too many things to too many people, and they are nothing to anyone.... There's no direction and no one grows. Then they blame the community for not supporting them."[17]

Steele's articles revealed growing awareness and agreement among both artists and audience members that the institutional professionalism of the Guthrie could be critiqued. The leaders and staff of the Guthrie also acknowledged the situation: the theater was "in a sense, community property," wrote Brad Morison and Kay Fliehr. "Our responsibility was more than just selling tickets. It was opening new doors to the theatrical experience for more people."[18] The theater had no intention of fundamentally changing its administrative organization to accomplish this goal, however. Rather it would try to accommodate both the new priorities of funders and the demands of a changing and self-consciously diverse local community within its institutional framework, developing new programs and ultimately adding education and outreach to its staff's administrative duties. Staff distributed study guides for the theater's 1965 season to public libraries throughout the state, hoping to speak to new patrons. To reach potential low income audiences, they launched a "Show Bus" that carried inner city residents to the Guthrie for shows, as well as school programs that reached students from disadvantaged backgrounds. These efforts were, in the end, limited in their effectiveness. In fact outreach efforts may actually have

[16] Mel Shapiro quoted in Mike Steele, "Guthrie Theater Has Its Troubles: Control by non-artistic called source of woes," *Minneapolis Tribune,* January 17, 1970. Another theater employee concluded: "A theater has to create an aura of excitement, so that even its failures are risky and exciting. A theater is a living thing, and the excitement in live theater is when humans take risks. The Guthrie failures have been boring." Steele, "Who's Stand-offish? Guthrie or Its Public?" *Minneapolis Tribune,* February 1, 1970

[17] Mike Steele, "Guthrie Theater, $190,000 in Debt, Looks To Its Public," *Minneapolis Tribune,* January 25, 1970

[18] Morison and Fliehr, *In Search of an Audience,* 121.

exacerbated perceptions of the arts organization as an elite bastion, conferring charity on the unfortunate other.[19]

To narrow the gap separating it from the larger community, the Guthrie also occasionally commissioned work meant to address local issues. For example John Lahr commissioned local playwright Frederick Gaines to write a play for the Other Place—the Guthrie's second, experimental stage—to engage the very active and visible Native American community in Minneapolis, where the American Indian Movement had begun in 1968.[20] Blending a telling of the Thomas White Hawk case, in which a South Dakotan Native American was accused of murdering a white couple, with a rendering of the Wounded Knee Massacre, Gaines' play *The Ghost Dancer* was written as an absurd farce, with a final scene that involved attorneys tap dancing over the body of the main Native American character. Mike Steele gave the play a strong, even impassioned, review in the *Minneapolis Tribune,* praising its use of metaphor and its style of "satirical burlesque based on popular cliché… cliché taken to the point of absurdity where our comfortable notions about Indians are clearly seen as a hypocritical attempt to ease our consciences."[21] Peter Altman, at the *Minneapolis Star,* was less enamored, believing the play to be in inception creative and promising, but in execution "sophomoric."[22] But Gaines himself was cynical about the production. While initially hopeful, he came to believe that the Guthrie

[19] This effect of outreach has been suggested by Julia Foulkes in "Streets and Stages: Urban Renewal and the Arts after World War II," *Journal of Social History* 44, No. 2 (Winter 2010): 413-444. Such outreach efforts were pursued in arts institutions across the country in this period, and may have been more effective in other milieus, particularly in museums. See for instance Neil Harris, *Capital Culture: J. Carter Brown, the National Gallery of Art, and the Reinvention of the Museum Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

[20] According to *Time*, the state's "23,000 Indians, most of them Chippewa, are clearly the most poverty-stricken residents. About half of them live in the Twin Cities, mainly in Minneapolis, in a tight ghetto that is the only really shabby area of town." "Minnesota: a State that Works," *Time,* August 13, 1973

[21] "The story of a single Indian youth's loss of identity and his eventual confusion becomes the story of the white man's attempt to crush all Indians making them 'obedient, meek, and housebroken." Mike Steele, "Ghost Dancer Shows Indian Plight," *Minneapolis Tribune*, October 21, 1969

[22] Peter Altman, "'Ghost Dancer' links massacre of Sioux, White Hawk Trial," *Minneapolis Star,* October 24, 1969

commissioned the play to incite controversy and gain publicity rather than genuinely speak to the real problems of marginalized members of the community. Calling it a "red minstrel" show, Gaines claimed that "the basic problem in this case is that the Guthrie has no feeling for community or, I suspect, for the individuals involved."[23] Leaders of the Native American community who attended did respond positively, asking for extra productions of the work, which Gaines attributed to Director Edward Payson Call's crafting the play into a "propaganda piece."[24] But the positive reception of *The Ghost Dancer* within the leadership ranks of the local Native American community did not transfer into general Native American attendance at the Guthrie, or wider community involvement.

The reach of *The Ghost Dancer* was also limited because it was produced at The Other Place, and thus did not receive the publicity or the audiences of productions like *Uncle Vanya* and *Julius Caesar*—produced that year as part of the Guthrie's mainstage season. But here the Guthrie also began to extend its reach. While performances at the second stage, which seated 200, were initially open only to subscribers, in 1970 new director Dan Bly opened the work to the public and organized a busy season of eight plays using the Guthrie's mainstage actors. "In addition to the workshop and training advantages," Bly told the *Minneapolis Star*, "the operation of a second theater by the Minnesota Theatre Company provides, I feel, an opportunity to relate professional theater and the community more closely."[25] Bly hoped to create a "livelier audience for theater" in the Twin Cities, and proposed including some theater artists from the University of Minnesota, Theatre in the Round, or other "community circles" in the work at TOP. His 1970

[23] Letter from Fred Gaines to Henry Hewes, September 27, 1969. Box 2, Correspondence 1966-1972, Frederick Gaines Papers (PA22), PAA.
[24] Letter from Fred Gaines to his agent, December 6, 1969. Box 2, Correspondence 1966-1972, Frederick Gaines Papers, (PA22), PAA.
[25] Edwin L. Bolton, "The Other Place's Dan Bly looks forward to Big Challenge," *Minneapolis Star*, June 16, 1970

season included two one-act Harold Pinter plays, works by Lanford Wilson and Garcia Lorca, another play by Fred Gaines, and Brecht's *Baal*, and was welcomed by local critics ("The Other Place is a joy this year," wrote one), with Gaines' play drawing controversy over its fictionalized depiction of the execution of Eddie Slovick during WWII.[26] "Within five days," wrote Mike Steele, "Dan Bly and his crew at The Other Place have introduced to us two of the zaniest playwrights seen around these parts," referring to the writers David Korr and Gladden Schrock.[27] But The Other Place, despite this critical success, fell victim to the larger financial and artistic struggles over the theater company, and closed the next season. The Guthrie did not operate a second space again until 1976, when Michael Langham, who became Artistic Director in 1971, opened Guthrie 2.

Thus although the Guthrie Theater did take on a limited amount of experimental work, it never truly engaged the alternative community of the Twin Cities, and in the tumultuous period of the late 1960s and early 1970s the theater was still working to determine what it meant to be a theater for the community. No matter the initiatives it took—busing audiences in, producing plays with subject matter Guthrie leaders thought would attract minority communities—the Guthrie had trouble convincing anyone that it was one with the people. Its mission had been to shape the pliable community, educating them through exposure to theater of "excellence," and to demonstrate the enduring significance of the classics, and new classics, to appreciative audiences. When this mission began to seem out of sync with the times, and when the community proved less pliable, or less appreciative, than expected, or when it was pointed out to Guthrie leaders that, as a civic resource, the theater needed to serve a more diverse audience than they currently were, the theater came up short of answers.

[26] Mike Steele, "2 One-Act Plays By Schrock Offered," *Minneapolis Tribune*, August 21, 1970
[27] Ibid.

Yet as a model of professional institutionalism, the Guthrie had effected profound changes in the way theater would be produced in the Twin Cities and nationally. Furthermore, with high profile successes such as *House of Atreus*, the Guthrie was, if not happily absorbed within the community, impossible to ignore. Thus while theater-makers in the area found themselves under the inescapable influence of the Guthrie's methods, they also began to thoroughly scrutinize its successes and failures, its administrative procedures, its social status, its rituals and its rules. The Guthrie, and the institutional professionalism it represented, inspired, out of emulation *and* rebellion, a great many new theater initiatives in the area. It became in this era a kind of sounding board, or point of comparison, for other performance groups—who spoke to parts of the community the Guthrie could not reach.

Alive and Trucking Theater was among those groups that self-consciously defined themselves as rejecting the values of the Guthrie. Founded in 1971 by "revolutionaries who also happen to love to act," to take up local causes through theatrical play and the development of new and relevant scripts, Alive and Trucking interrupted town meetings and performed satirical, often musical, spoofs in unorthodox spaces.[28] Inspired by the San Francisco Mime Troupe, the theater group called itself "a Minneapolis based left-wing group of would-be artists," proclaimed that "all art is political," and fervently rejected the institutional identity of the Guthrie, its traditional productions, and the elite professional class which Alive and Trucking believed they served.[29] "As a radical theatre group we challenge established theatre (a drug that makes obedient slaves) which perpetuates the class system of our society, concealing the people's true condition rather than moving people to recognize the need for change," the theater attested.[30]

[28] Hames Beniger, "Radical Theater Plays to Capacity House," *Minneapolis Star*, July 29, 1971
[29] Alive and Trucking newsletter, undated, Alive and Trucking Theater Company Records (PA88), PAA.
[30] Publicity pamphlet from Alive and Trucking Theatre Company, Alive and Trucking Theater Company Records (PA88), PAA.

Alive and Trucking held up its own work as an alternative to what it considered the Guthrie's highly developed, business-minded, capitalist-oriented methods of production and administration: "First, there is a kind of director/dictator that we all agree not to be," an Alive and Trucking member wrote in his director notes. "He is a product of industrialization, sees actors as objects to be manipulated and coerced into a role he has defined. To him the play is a product to be manufactured and then sold."[31]

Alive and Trucking Theater Company also defined itself against the Guthrie by engaging closely with underrepresented groups in its community, throwing itself into battles against urban renewal, for welfare and for women's rights. The group tried to ingratiate itself within a varied constituency, not necessarily just with those on the far left who might naturally be its audiences. "Do you ever have the feeling that the Twin Cities theater groups, from the Guthrie to Bloomington Players, aren't your theater group?" an advertisement queried. "Well, even if your politics aren't radical, the Alive and Trucking Theater Co. will give you the warm, certain feeling that this group is from here."[32] Members of the group pursued this goal through topical shows that would speak to Twin Citians invested in numerous local issues. Their show "The People are a River" presented an alternative reading of Minnesota's history, inspired by the work of Meridel Le Sueur. Told from the perspective of women and workers, the show cast James J. Hill, 19th century railroad titan, usually a local hero, as the central villain, and focused on the development of the women's movement as well as workers' strikes and unionization efforts. The theater toured the production across the state, performing for the Chicago Women's Liberation Union, organizations of welfare workers, labor groups, and others. Other topical shows included

[31] "Notes on directing," handwritten note by David O'F. Alive and Trucking Theater Company Records, (PA88) PAA.
[32] "People's Theater," *North Country Anvil*, undated. Alive and Trucking Theater Company Records, (PA88), PAA.

The Welfare Wizard of Ours, in which Dorothy followed the "red tape road," and *Battered Homes and Gardens*, which addressed urban renewal. Alive and Trucking worked with residents in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood to write a play expressing anger at the proposed development of their neighborhood by the University of Minnesota and other institutions, and developed short skits and playlets on childcare, education, freeway construction, and other topics.

Despite its best efforts, Alive and Trucking could not speak for all residents of the Twin Cities region. Instead the theater group primarily represented those who felt alienated from mainstream culture, did not have a strong voice in society, or who felt a diminishing connection to art as a mode of political expression, with the aim of helping them use theater as a means of exerting power through communal creation and communication. Alive and Trucking's message was populist and anti-establishmentarian, but it was also one that encouraged active involvement in creative expression as a way toward a better urban community. Similar to some of the amateur groups of the 1950s, for Alive and Trucking, theater was a way to harness control over one's leisure and develop a sense of active and enlightened community. "We are here," a press release asserted, "to awaken ourselves to the real world and take control of our lives."[33] Like the Firehouse, however, Alive and Trucking struggled to reconcile its mission with the need for money and the contemporary pathways for receiving it. After acknowledging that "theater cannot survive on what they take in from performances alone," an Alive and Trucking newsletter went on to claim: "We are in the process of applying for grants from various foundations but nearly all have political strings attached and none have come through as of yet."[34]

[33] Press Release, undated, but most likely September, 1973. Alive and Trucking Theater Company Records (PA88), PAA.
[34] Alive and Trucking newsletter, undated, Alive and Trucking Theater Company Records, (PA88), PAA.

Many of the alternative groups that came and went in the late 1960s and 1970s—and some that stayed—found initial support, largely space to rehearse, in an unlikely place. A Methodist congregation founded in 1886, the Walker Church, in Minneapolis' Powderhorn Park neighborhood, had become by the late 1960s a center for local countercultural life. Following a period of declining membership due largely to suburbanization, the church began to revitalize itself in the late 1960s as a mecca for art, activism, and iconoclastic religious practices under the leadership of youthful new pastor Bryan Peterson. In part to raise money for the financially troubled church, Peterson rented it out to low-budget, experimental theater groups like the Minnesota Ensemble Theater (from which the Palace Theater later broke off), which was founded in the late 1960s and inspired by the experimental physical methods of Jerzy Grotowski, and the Powderhorn Puppet Theater, later to become In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre. "We used to build puppets on the lawn," Sandra Spieler, later Artistic Director of In the Heart of the Beast, recalled of her days with the Powderhorn Puppet Theatre, "and we taught so many people to stilt-walk on the lawn… the neighborhood kids would work and then they would come into the basement."[35] With artists working outside, attracting participants and onlookers, Walker Church became a neighborhood gathering place; the theater groups helped revive the church and the church helped small theater groups survive by offering cheap space. Yet even the coop-based arts groups that were resident at the Walker Church felt the pull of professionalism. In the mid-1970s they formed a coalition called the Southside Neighborhood Arts Council (SNAC), for which the primary purpose "was to more effectively raise funds for budding professional arts organizations."[36]

[35] Peter Doughty, *Building the Beloved Community at Walker Church* (LifePath Histories: Minneapolis, Minnesota, 2003), 64.
[36] Doughty, *Building the Beloved Community*, 64.

Experimental theater groups were not the only alternatives to the Guthrie. The satirical comedy troupe Brave New Workshop also derived much of its energy from reaction to institutional professionalism. Although founded in 1958 as the Instant Theater Company, it blossomed in the age of the institutional theater, when its informality, irreverence, and incisive humor presented a deliberately bold alternative to the professionalism of the Guthrie. Eclipsed in renown by Chicago's Second City, both were part of a wider move toward improvisational, brash, satirical comedy that grew out of work by postwar cartoonists like Bill Mauldin, publications like *MAD magazine,* and nightclub comedians like Lenny Bruce.[37] These satirical comedians were, according to Stephen Kercher, born out of the postwar liberal state, and part of the "culture of dissent" of the time: young men and a very few women, like Elaine May, who had come of age under the New Deal and believed in left wing Democratic causes, but were highly critical of mainstream politics and the slick surface of modern American society.[38] Their aim, in Kercher's words, was to "deploy irony to criticize vice and raise awareness," cut through the veneer of political or social slickness, and reveal the underside of the status quo.[39] Bruce, especially, can be considered a forerunner to and inspiration for Second City and the Brave New Workshop, combining the spontaneity of the jazz age with a raucousness that chafed against the staid normality of the 1950s and a kind of daring laughter in the face of the censorship and reprimand.

Dudley Riggs, who founded the Brave New Workshop, evolved with the times: he began his career as a circus performer, moved in the early 1950s into nightclubs, and eventually

[37] According to Will Leonard, Brave New Workshop is "more bold and gamy than our Old Town troupe," referring to the Second City. Leonard, "On the Town," *Chicago Tribune*, 1966.
[38] Stephen E. Kercher, *Revel With a Cause: Liberal Satire in Postwar America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006). "Culture of dissent" is from Margot Henriksen, *Dr. Strangelove's America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).
[39] Stephen Kercher, *Revel with a Cause,* 1. Kercher sees humor as, in part, a release from or rebellion against the corporate order of the postwar world.

developed a touring company that performed skits and short comedy routines. He finally settled in Minneapolis, opening his theater within an espresso shop—chosen for its hipness but not its hippy-ness—to attract an educated young with-it crowd, but not a far left or beatnik one. The Brave New Workshop called its work "promiscuous comedy," or sometimes "promiscuous hostility," and took as its mission to poke fun at everyone and everything, especially anything with a local angle. The group "could assault anybody with gentle joshing, with anger and ridicule, cruelty, scorn, viciousness, chaos and anarchy, jibes and jibing, sarcasm, insecurity, mockery, divisiveness, brutality, malice, derision, snottiness, ruthlessness, contempt, disrespect, disdain, deadly irony, loathing, even lack of kindness. Pick one. Any one works," according to a self-description.[40] The group made fun not only of the rich or bigoted, but of local heroes of the left like DFL governor Karl Rolvaag and Hubert Humphrey, who performers mocked for his verbosity and clichés. They took particular aim however at right-wing mayor Charles Stenvig in a show called *Godly Mayor,* which ridiculed his overly aggressive law and order campaign. Their repertoire was inspired by local and national news and picked up on themes they knew would resonate with local audiences. "If we would do something on religion that would cause controversy," recalled Dudley Riggs. "So race, religion, politics have been recurring themes."[41] Shows included *Vietnam Follies, The Race Riot Revues,* and *The Almighty Revue*, in which Jesus came back to Earth in part to visit the Guthrie Theater. Whereas community groups in the 1950s tried to foster harmony with their communities, the Brave New Workshop deliberately worked to stir up controversy, to probe its audience, and to make fun of elements of its own community.

The Brave New Workshop was the antithesis of the Guthrie in more ways than one. Although its shows were scripted, for the most part, they were developed in a raucous,

[40] Irv Letofsky, Ed. *Promiscuous Comedy* (Minneapolis: CP Inc., 2007) 5.
[41] Interview with Dudley Riggs by Sheila Regan, *Twin City Daily Planet*, 2012. http://www.tcdailyplanet.net/68311/

freewheeling style, and adaptable to changing external conditions. Its methods of production eschewed the orderly professionalism of the major institution. Whimsy and disorganization in creative development and performance was a deliberate choice, a way of capturing spontaneity and lightness during a time that privileged efficiency and order. Recalled director Jim Wallace (who also acted in bit parts at the Guthrie):

> The chaos backstage was simply mind-altering. I wandered backstage one evening in the middle of the show to find Pat Proft in the top part of a tux with the pants in his hand looking at the line-up sheet on the back wall, furiously trying to determine what scene was next in the show, which prop he was supposed to pick up from the prop table, whether his costume was right, which of three revolving doors to use for his imminent entrance. He whispered, 'What's my first line?' I replied, 'I don't know! I don't have the script with me.' I panicked and began to tremble. His response, 'Don't worry, I'll think of something!' And he walked on stage pulling up his pants.[42]

Other actors and directors recalled last minute changes and a feeling of light-hearted chaos: Director and actor Dave Ode recalled the group's total lack of preparation for one particular production: "Opening night came and still nothing. Audience started showing up at the theater – and now we set about to panic," when at the last minute Dudley Riggs came up with a sheet of paper with some sort of scenario on it. Ode went on to recount how the audience loved the show, especially the mistakes that were made due to its thrown-together, shoddy aesthetic.[43] There were accidents involving three-legged tables and a burning draft card accidentally sliding off the table and landing in an audience member's lap. There were last minute changes and costume malfunctions. The chaos was part of the fun.[44]

The Brave New Workshop was also disorganized on the administrative level. Dudley Riggs was unpredictable in his payment methods. "Dudley's was a circus," remembered one actress. "I would follow him [Dudley] downstairs in order to get his check and I saw this sea of

[42] Jim Wallace quoted in *Promiscuous Comedy,* 62.
[43] Dave Ode quoted in *Promiscuous Comedy,* 66.
[44] Ibid.

scripts, books, cartons and actually a desk in there. I'm convinced the fire marshall never ventured down there." Actors could not afford to live only on the little (and inconsistent) money they made at the Workshop, and most held other jobs. But this, too, seemed only to confirm the fun, the excitement of the Workshop. "Yet," the actress continued, "there was a 'magic' about the place. Maybe everyone was afraid to change it for fear the magic would disappear. We were doing something different."[45]

In 1976, two theater companies opened in the Twin Cities that would define the region's theatrical community through the present day: Mixed Blood and Penumbra Theaters. Both derived from a desire to develop theater out of the grassroots community, to involve members of the Twin Cities populace that were not accommodated by the Guthrie or by other theater companies. Mixed Blood Theater was the creation of Jack Reuler, a Macalester graduate who, at 22, wanted to provide opportunities for theater artists of all races and ethnicities to participate and be compensated for theatrical activity, in a city where they had few opportunities to do so. The theater was established through the local Center for Community Action with funding from the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), meant to provide jobs and training for the unemployed or low income population, and thus was part of the higher level turn to supporting community-based, grassroots arts. Reuler's aim was to combat the idea of the "melting pot" and promote and demonstrate "successful pluralism," while also creating theater that would reach a standard of excellence, or "reach for the pinnacles."[46]

Mixed Blood has become one of the most successful theaters in the Twin Cities, both critically and popularly, and has endured, under Reuler's leadership, through the ups and downs

[45] Mary Sweitzer quoted in *Promiscuous Comedy,* 98.
[46] "Successful pluralism" is from Jack Reuler interview with *Minnesota Original* for Twin Cities PBS, November 4, 2012. "Reach for the pinnacles" is from Interview with Jack Reuler by Jane Biliter, "MN Voices: Jack Reuler and Mixed Blood Theater," *TC Daily Planet,* September 9, 2009

of local politics and federal funding. It is the kind of theater—with a specific mission and a somewhat adventurous, grassroots-inspired slate of plays— that may not have existed prior to the advent of the nonprofit professional institution, its new avenues for funding, and the changes in funding priorities brought about in the 1970s. Mixed Blood likely wouldn't have arisen or been able to find the local funding or support to continue, however, without the Guthrie—without a major mainstream organization at the center of local culture. "What's interesting is there really is a mainstream theater and then there's the margin," Reuler explained in a 2009 interview. "I think the margins are much more exciting, and I consider us our own industry… We have no interest in being the Guthrie, nor do we feel that they have the money or material or talent or facilities that we want."[47] Mixed Blood, according to Reuler, does not emphasize institutional longevity—rather "principles and purpose should precede survival,"—but yet it has endured, with plenty of subsidization.[48] Today it offers a program of "radical hospitality" which promises free tickets for any audience members who cannot pay, when there are seats available.

Penumbra Theater was also founded in 1976, by Lou Bellamy, initially through the Hallie Q. Brown Martin Luther King Center in St. Paul, and it has remained firmly embedded in its immediate neighborhood, a historically black community in which culture Bellamy believes its stories are most relevant.[49] Bellamy created the theater company as a professional outlet for African American artists, to produce ensemble-based work concerned with social justice and the African American experience, told "always from the black point of view."[50] "Theater is the way

[47] Interview with Jack Reuler by Jane Biliter, "MN Voices: Jack Reuler and Mixed Blood Theater," *TC Daily Planet*, September 9, 2009
[48] Ibid.
[49] "Penumbra remains an active member of the Selby/Dale neighborhood and surrounding community. By maintaining a strong physical link to our environment, Penumbra fulfills one of its main objectives: to serve as an educator, employer and inspirational model for the community whose stories we tell." "History," Penumbra Theatre website. https://penumbratheatre.org/history/
[50] Bellamy quoted in "Soul Survivor," Russell Smith, *Mpls St. Paul Magazine*, September 1995

I exercise my citizenship," Bellamy has explained; it is his public voice, and his contribution to the local and national conversation, in the tradition of black artists before him.[51] Penumbra has gained national prestige, in part for its approach and in part from the participation of prominent artists such as August Wilson, who was an early company member and in 1979 wrote *Jitney,* among other plays, while at the Penumbra.

Mixed Blood and Penumbra are now at the center of the Twin Cities arts community and considered models of the kind of theaters that can arise in an active cultural city. Both owe their existence in part to the ability to manipulate the levers of the nonprofit institution and in part to the change in high level priorities of the 1970s, in which CETA provided funding and the Hallie Q. Brown Community Center could feasibly support a young theater company that could then break off to establish a life of its own. In the wake of the Guthrie, these and others theaters found the Twin Cities a relatively hospitable place to set up shop, with enough potential audience members and local artists to keep their businesses going. Thus while it might seem that the Minneapolis cultural scene was moving in an entirely new direction in the 1970s, in fact its path was set by the establishment of the nonprofit professional institution in the 1960s.

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Much of this dissertation's narrative has been distinctly local, absorbed in details of the Guthrie Theater's operation and its ramifications for artists and audiences in Minneapolis, and concerned with national cultural policy in order to demonstrate its impact on this particular urban environment. Yet the dissertation has focused on theater in Minneapolis because such a story

[51] "An interview with Lou Bellamy, founder and artistic director of Penumbra Theatre in St. Paul, Minn.," Julie Berg-Raymond, *The Decorah Newspapers*, Decorah, Iowa, January 25, 2012

illustrates in a discreet and focused way, and with particularly strong impact, the effects of the new mode of nonprofit professional cultural production on artistic experience in the United States. The adoption of the professional institution as the ideal mode of high art production, particularly in the theater, was not an inevitable or natural development, but a deliberate move to satisfy the desires and interests of a variety of mid-century actors: to reinvigorate cities, build a national culture, satisfy a growing white collar population, and provide an arena for professional artists to make a living and practice their craft. In its realization this new mode of cultural production had numerous intended and unintended effects: it expanded access to productions while contributing to the continued sacralization and distancing of the art form, increased opportunities for artists to make a living while creating new gatekeepers to experimentation and artistic freedom, and opened up routes to funding and sustainability for arts organizations while constraining the pathways they would follow. Most significantly, the new professional institution emphasized the appreciation of expertise and excellence rather than participatory creative experience, heralding the work of professionals and the growth of appreciative audiences and devaluing active, imperfect participation. In doing so it established new expectations for and beliefs about what an experience at the theater should be, and profoundly affected the way Americans understood their relationship to artistic creation.

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Records of the National Endowment for the Arts
Records of the National Council on the Arts

Performing Arts Archives, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN:
Records of:
Guthrie Theater
Theatre in the Round
Firehouse Theater
Eastside Theatre
Fridley Footlighters
North Star Drama Guild
Stagecoach Players
Theatre in the Round Players
Theatre of Involvement Papers
Theatre St. Paul
Frederick Gaines Papers
Frederick William Hilgendorf Papers

The Rockefeller Archive Center, Tarrytown, NY:
Rockefeller Foundation Archives
Rockefeller Brothers Fund Archives

Special Collections, Shields Library, University of California, Davis, CA:
Firehouse Theater papers

Special Collections, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL:
W. McNeil Lowry papers

University Archives, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN:
Department of Theatre Arts Papers
A. Dale Riley Papers
Frank M. Whiting Papers

Periodicals:

8:30 theatre
Bloomington Suburbanite
Centre Aisle

Chicago Tribune
Kansas City Times
Midwest Review
Minnesota Daily (student paper of the University of Minnesota)
Minneapolis Spokesman
Minneapolis Star
Minneapolis Tribune
New York Times
St. Paul Dispatch
St. Paul Pioneer Press
St. Paul Recorder
Saint Paul Visitor
Sunday Suburban Life
Time Magazine
Twin City Guardian