THEATRE AND COMMUNITY:
CASE STUDIES OF FOUR COLWAY-STYLE PLAYS
PERFORMED IN CANADA

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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Abstract:

Focusing on the four Colway-style community plays produced between 1990-1995, this study documents the use of the Colway model in Canada and contributes to the analytical discussion of community-oriented forms of popular theatre by examining the practical problems and ideological issues raised by the Colway experience within specifically Canadian contexts. The sum of the individual case studies is used to evaluate the form's efficacy in terms of social, cultural, and political affirmation and intervention, while each of the case histories is focused on one particular area in this regard and includes an examination of the technical means selected (or not selected) to achieve project goals.

Material has been arranged in two parts. Following an introductory history of the Colway Theatre Trust, the first chapter establishes the social and theatrical traditions upon which the Colway style draws, and in terms of which its innovations, successes, and failures can be examined. The second chapter discusses the main aspects of the Colway form, and together this material comprises Part I. Part II consists of a brief introduction to community play practice in Canada, followed by the individual case studies. The study ends with a brief chapter of conclusions.
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INTRODUCTION:

The Canadian Popular Theatre Alliance (CPTA) describes the work of its members as theatre by, for, and about particular communities. The Colway-style community play, the model for the four Canadian productions documented here, is produced on a particularly large scale and engages with this criterion in a manner reminiscent of Medieval mystery cycles and traditions of modern English and American historical pageantry. Like these earlier forms, the Colway-style play involves a handful of professional theatre practitioners working with hundreds of residents in a particular area to create and perform theatre which is designed to celebrate and affirm the ideologies of its host community.

Colway plays, however, as the following case studies demonstrate, can also implicitly and explicitly challenge existing social and cultural structures, and affirmation of communities at a local level can also carry a potential for cultural intervention at higher regional or national levels. Colway’s commitment to community participation in localized expression, for example, challenges increasingly globalized approaches to culture in which products of universal significance are centrally produced for widespread consumption. This, together with the Colway form’s mixing of
amateur and professional participants, raises questions about the role and nature of theatre as "art" which reach to the core of contemporary popular theatre practice both in Canada and abroad. How should art and cultural expression be defined, evaluated, and funded? Who initiates it, and who controls its means of production? Who participates, and whose interests does it represent?

Since its inception in Britain in the late 1970's, the Colway play's large scale and high profile have given it a central and often controversial role in British community theatre practice, a movement which Baz Kershaw has recently characterized as "a relatively small part of massive, successive ideological formations which sought to change British society" (1992, 10). Varying perceptions of the nature of change advocated by the Colway style are at the centre of controversy about its value and social role. While Colway plays have demonstrated an ability to adapt to various socioeconomic and populist contexts, they have also been criticized as a form of artistic and cultural hegemony, particularly in light of the form's genesis in middle-class British culture.

Colway was the brainchild of Ann Jellicoe, a playwright and director whose early career was closely affiliated with Britain's Royal Court Theatre. Her first play, The Sport of My Mad Mother, was produced by the Court in 1956, the same year that George Devine became artistic director and
initiated what Peter Reynolds has described as an
"honourable tradition" of theatre offering a "radical
critique of contemporary society" (1992, 92). Jellicoe's
writing was less socially and politically radical than that
of many of her colleagues at the Court, however; it has been
classified as demonstrating
egalitarian sympathies [which] mostly take the form of
a liberated attitude to sexuality and an untheorized
feminism, both reminiscent of the 1960's counter-
culture. (Kershaw 1992, 186)

This kind of "soft" ideology in Jellicoe's writing would
later serve as a basis for the community play's search for
consensus, while other aspects of her work at the Court
would assist in the development of a more radical approach
to the processes and aesthetics of the Colway play.

Devine believed in the value of examining new work
within the context of an international repertoire of classic
and innovative drama, and Jellicoe participated in the
eclectic and experimental programming at the Royal Court,
both as a playwright and a director, throughout Devine's
tenure (1956-65) and on into that of William Gaskill (1965-
72). She belonged to an early writers group at the Court
which used mask and improvisational exercises to "explore
the nature of theatre" (Jellicoe 1981, 55). In her later
community-based work, Jellicoe would come to rely
extensively on these techniques as a means of animating non-
professional actors and discovering talents and aptitudes which could then be expressed in an eclectic variety of forms and styles.4

Non-professionals figured prominently in Jellicoe's *The Rising Generation*, staged in 1967 as part of the Court's "Sunday night productions without decor."5 Originally the piece was commissioned in 1960 by the Girl Guides Association to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the movement. The play required parts for some 400 Guides and was to be staged in the expanse of Empire Pool, Wembley. Jellicoe describes the play ironically as a "modest, unassuming, optimistic little piece" which showed all the older women in the world suppressing men and finally destroying the earth with an atomic bomb, the Empire Pool then turned into a space ship and flew away. (1987, 2)

Not surprisingly, the piece was turned down by the Guides Association!

The Court's Sunday Night production of the piece involved hundreds of children and drew heavily on pageant elements and techniques. Jellicoe considered the piece "a terrific success," and the experience anticipated not only the imaginative scale of her later community-based work, but also its generational scope. With *The Sport of My Mad Mother*, her first play in 1956, then with *The Knack* in 1961, Jellicoe had established a reputation for a potent theatre
of images and ritual with particular relevance for younger generations. The Rising Generation marked a further step along what would become a deeply committed intergenerational approach to theatre in her later community plays.⁶

In 1972, Jellicoe was appointed literary manager for the Royal Court, but by 1974 she had become dissatisfied with the closed circle of the London theatre scene and the way that theatre "seemed totally unimportant in most people's lives" (1987, 3). Accordingly, she resigned her position at the Royal Court and moved with her family to the rural community of Lyme Regis, Dorset, where, once her children had begun to attend the local school, she took this opportunity to pursue her interest in working with schoolchildren further. In the late 1970's, she approached the local headmaster with the idea of writing and producing a large-scale school play. The result, The Reckoning (1978), was destined to become the archetype for the Colway-style community play.

From its inception, Jellicoe's idea had been to base the Lyme Regis project on local history and include parents and other adults to play the mature roles. With the support of Medium Fair (a locally based professional community theatre company), the play began to spread beyond the school.⁷ The Mayor and the Town Council became involved, as did various community organizations, including the PTA, the local Amateur Dramatic Society, and the Yacht Club. Local
personalities such as the Vicar and the Town Crier agreed to portray their historical counterparts, and the University of Exeter Theatre Department provided lighting equipment and stage managers. As additional resources were solicited to meet increasingly complex production requirements, community interest grew, and it began to dawn on Jellicoe that, beyond staging a play, she was in the process of "involving people in the creation of a work of art" (1986, 3).

The final cast of The Reckoning numbered about 90, approximately one third of whom were children. Some 200 other community members participated in various aspects of administration, recruiting, promotion, and the building of sets, props, costumes and the like. The professional core consisted of Jellicoe herself as writer and director and Carmel Collins as designer, while Medium Fair provided facilitators and administrative support. Performances took place in a 50 by 80 foot school hall, where seating for approximately a third of the spectators was provided on three raised platforms. The rest of the audience promenaded while the play's action took place around and amongst them and on three small elevated stages. While the larger roles were all played by non-professionals, Jellicoe used members of Medium Fair as "leaders" to animate crowd scenes.

Jellicoe's reputation and connections ensured that The Reckoning received attention from the national press. The Guardian described the play as
a splendid piece of theatre. Dramatic, exciting, bloodthirsty, totally absorbing and above all maintaining an air of spontaneity . . . . (16 December 1978)

The play was also considered a huge success locally, and Jellicoe would later describe the project as art which touched everyone in the community to some degree and by means of which some people changed their attitudes and their lives. (1987, 9)"

She had succeeded in creating a community-based work that was "art" as measured by national criteria, and the continuing pursuit of this goal was to become a fundamental, though controversial, component of the Colway form.

The success of the Lyme Regis play led to invitations to do others, so in 1979 Jellicoe founded The Colway Theatre Trust (CTT), a limited company dedicated exclusively to the production of community plays. In its early stages, CTT consisted only of Jellicoe herself (the one person employed full-time and year-round), a part-time secretary, and a part-time book-keeper. The company’s charitable status allowed it to solicit public funding, and additional theatre administrators and practitioners were contracted on a project-by-project basis.

The company was predicated on Jellicoe’s belief that "communities need community events to continuously revitalize themselves," and that the theatre’s ability to
involve people of every age, background, and skill provides an ideal means to do this (1986, 3). Theatre was also ideal because it could elevate "a community event" into "a work of art," reflecting a central tenet of Jellicoe's artistic philosophy:

"Art can be a rehearsal for life. It can educate us in social and moral behavior. Art refines and strengthens and enriches: through enjoying and understanding art our eyes and ears can learn to distinguish the true from the meretricious, the strong from the inflated, the sensual from the lifeless." (1987, 46)

To accomplish these ends, CTT commissioned dramatists of national standing to create original scripts based on local histories. Between 1979 and 1985, CTT produced eleven such plays by writers as accomplished as Jellicoe herself, Howard Barker, and David Edgar.10

In commissioning these writers, Colway was seeking to create works of the "highest possible artistic standards," but Jellicoe also believed that if people "actually gave of themselves in order to help the creation, support it, belonged to it, then it would be theirs" (1986, 3). To this end, CTT's founding principles insisted that no one who expressed an interest in being involved in either performing or producing a community play should be excluded.

Jellicoe's process is documented in detail in her book, Community Plays: How to Put Them On (1987). The model is
hierarchical, with the greatest control vested in the artistic director (originally Jellicoe herself) and a community-appointed steering committee. At this level, the model corresponds to the structure of conventional professional theatre production in which a producer commissions a writer and a director, with the latter, in turn, recommending designers, production people, etc. The distinguishing feature of Colway's work, however, was that the ability of the professional core to produce a play depended entirely on the collaboration of large numbers of volunteer participants. Jellicoe's means of encouraging the vast commitment of time and energy this entailed relied on a system of high-profile patronage (she advises recruiting "a few titles" if possible). Such patrons, generally in name only, were then used as references in seeking corporate sponsorships and arts funding, as well as in soliciting support and commitment from local "shakers and movers," community leaders who could in turn generate involvement and interest from ever-increasing numbers.

This kind of approach to playwriting and playmaking also served to promote the Colway form itself. Professional theatre practitioners who had worked on Colway plays with Jellicoe began to initiate similar projects in other parts of Britain, and in 1981 the Bridport community play (written by Howard Barker) became the subject of a BBC-2 Arena documentary. Then, in 1984 Colway's profile received two
further boosts: John Fowles participated as researcher for the second Lyme Regis play, and Jellicoe was awarded The Order of the British Empire. By 1985 the company was considering opening a branch office in Devon, and the Colway play which David Edgar was writing for Dorchester was receiving national attention. By the end of 1987, the community play movement was burgeoning. Revised versions of two Colway-style plays, Nick Darke’s *The Earth Turned Inside Out* (1984) and Edgar’s *Entertaining Strangers* (1985), had transferred to the National Theatre,11 and in the same year, Jellicoe’s book was published in which she claimed:

Training schemes are being set up, invitations considered for future plays. All over the country community plays are being produced. Now they are beginning to be set up abroad. The movement is flourishing. (1987, 41)

But while the movement which Colway had initiated was flourishing, the company itself was encountering serious problems with public funding.

Britain’s regional system of arts funding had been suffering from financial shortages since about the time of Colway’s inception, and under these circumstances short-term project funding (as opposed to funding companies on an annual basis through revenue grants) gave the beleaguered Councils the greatest financial maneuverability. Without "revenue" status, however, Colway’s eighteen month to two-
year community development process could not be legitimately supported. Subsequently, while the Southwest Arts Council (SWA) provided Jellicoe with £790 towards the costs of *The Reckoning* and £1,000 towards her second play, for its first two years of operation the CTT depended primarily on one-time grants of "starter funding" from the Gulbenkian Foundation (£10,000) and the Carnegie Trust (£5,000).

Beginning in 1981, a series of SWA project grants became the company's main source of income with the result that Colway, technically at least, was put in the precarious position of having to produce at least one play within each funding period. The regularity with which these grants were awarded supports Jellicoe's claim that SWA acknowledged the innovative nature of Colway's extended period of development by repeatedly assuring her that, while officially CTT would retain project status, "unofficially" it would be treated as a revenue client (1987, 28-29). This arrangement is not altogether surprising given that Colway's goals appeared to be largely consistent with the British Art Council's policies of regionalization and accessibility, which stressed a need for "excellence" and a regional expansion of the arts economy by "increasing the accessibility of the arts to all sorts and conditions of men and women" (qtd. in Appleyard 1989, 308).

Colway's "unofficial" status, however, would continue to haunt the company throughout its relationship with the
regional council; first as changes in staff at SWA led to periodic disputes about the company’s obligations, and later as the council increasingly pressured all companies to increase their income from box office receipts and private sources in order to remain financially viable concerns in the Council’s estimation. Under this pressure, many established community companies (including Medium Fair) were forced to disband. The companies which survived tended to adopt strategies whereby they produced fewer and more specialized shows which focused on a narrower range of constituency in order to become viable enough to compete with other touring companies. Colway’s localized approach to scripts and the inclusive and participatory nature of its extended community development process made such options untenable. In spite of the obvious correspondences between the regionalist goals of the Art Council and the localist goals of Colway, the company was bucking the tide of Thatcherist "economic internationalism": a movement whose expression in the arts Bryan Appleyard has characterized as "a turning away from the obsessions of Little England and a desire to produce internationally comprehensible and acclaimed art" (1989, 314).

For CTT, the crunch came in 1985 with the appointment of a new Director of SWA. All future project grants to the company were cut by 50 per cent and, without revenue status, the cuts were effected almost immediately; in protest
Jellicoe resigned her position; and from January 1986, Jon Oram assumed artistic directorship of the CTT.14

Oram’s tenure saw less concern for "artistic" status and a sharpened concern with the socio-political implications of Colway's work. His appointment came as a direct result of the accelerated changes in British culture and society prompted by Thatcherism. With Tory reforms politicizing all areas of social life, a fundamental shift in the nature of Colway's work was probably inevitable. In the early eighties, amidst a climate of increasingly polarized debates about the role and value of "art" in British life, Jellicoe had insisted that "politics are divisive" to community plays (1987, 122). While she had commissioned playwrights known for radical and socialist persuasions, she constantly maintained that the Colway form was designed to "work within the system" (1987, 27) and that its plays must celebrate community first and foremost and avoid issues that might result in controversy.15

At the same time, in her book Jellicoe had insisted that the Colway model must remain dynamic, and had suggested that her readers could either "imitate its practice or create [their] own" (1987, xviii). As the community play movement grew, individuals and communities with little or no connection to Colway began to produce plays which relied heavily on the formula and artistic philosophy outlined in Jellicoe’s book. These plays tended to carry a static model
of the Colway play to an ever wider diversity of communities, with the result that Jellicoe’s stance was increasingly seen as a blatant refusal to engage the Colway form in political consciousness-raising. Graham Woodruff effectively summarized the left’s response to Colway’s "apolitical" approach in a 1989 article published in New Theatre Quarterly:

Ann Jellicoe appears to think that [Colway’s] formulation of community avoids politics. Of course, it does nothing of the kind, it reinforces an idealized notion of community as an unchanging unity [and] challenges none of the inequities which exist in a West Dorset town which by [Jellicoe’s] admission is "very right-wing, even feudal." (1989, 371)

As Peter Reynold would later express it:

[Jellicoe] knows that to alert individuals to the inherent economic and class contradictions and conflicts within their own communities would be to fragment the mythology of social cohesion that keeps such communities as those in the West Country relatively stable. (1992, 95)

Jellicoe’s apparently "apolitical" stance, however, should also be considered within the context of mounting pressure to commercialize the arts prompted by Thatcherist policies during the 1980’s. Overtly political groups were unlikely candidates for private sector sponsorship, and a number of
leading companies of this kind (7:84, Foco Novo, and Joint Stock) had suffered cuts to their grants during this period. In response to this climate, as Kershaw points out:

Most groups became more cautious about claiming even the mildest oppositional intent for their work. Radicalism usually retreated into highly coded forms, implicit in the total approach to performance rather than implicitly stated in individual shows. The contextuality of community theatre rendered it especially sensitive in this respect, as conservatism in local communities was legitimised by the wider socio-political climate, and grass-roots activity which challenged the dominant ethos had to tread carefully in a minefield of potential rejection. (1992, 182)

In 1992, Kershaw would conclude his evaluation of the interventionist potential of the Colway form in general and Howard Barker’s Bridport community play in particular by suggesting that:

The audacity that invites radical playwrights to work in conservative settings cannot be altogether neutral. It would seem that on occasion Ann Jellicoe’s approach to community plays has allowed the radical stokers into the boiler room by the back door while the conservatives are still on the doorstep admiring the portico. (1992, 205)

Controversy over the political nature of the Colway form
continued to persist during Oram's tenure, however, and faced at the same time by the need to increase box office receipts, Oram extended the company's geographical and socio-political base in order to produce eleven plays between 1987 and 1990.

Under Oram's direction, the success of the Basildon community play appeared to confirm Kershaw's contentions about the interventionist potential of the Colway form. In this instance, however, the context was a predominantly working-class community. Following Jellicoe's lead, Oram commissioned Arnold Wesker, a playwright well known for iconoclastic tendencies. Wesker's play, Beorthel's Hill (1989), exposed a history of xenophobia in Basildon and challenged the community to examine its own complicity in a legacy of oppression and exploitation.16

In order to develop further the dynamic potential of the form to respond to diverse social and cultural contexts, and to meet the company's fierce production schedule, Oram further "democratized" the Colway process. He devised strategies to increase access to community-appointed steering committees (thereby hoping to encourage a greater diversity of representation) and placed those committees more clearly at the apex of the Colway hierarchy. The intent of such changes was to increase community awareness and responsibility for the inherent politics of Colway projects while spreading the administrative load more
equally between CTT and locally appointed steering committees.

To this end Oram also entered the company into other co-production arrangements which further politicized the Colway form. *Crown vs Dennison of Dishwater* (1987), for example, was collaboratively produced with Welfare State International, a company well-known for combining a boldly imagistic style and a commitment to social action.17 By 1988 Oram was also negotiating to co-produce projects in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Rockwood, Ontario, and, as the following case study of the Eramosa project indicates, his experience with the first Colway-style play to be produced in Canada would come to have a direct and profound influence on his approach to the whole issue of politics in community plays.

By late 1989, Colway was having difficulty meeting its numerous commitments. Oram was increasingly occupied with the projects in Canada and the U.S., and back in Britain, under financial pressure to restructure the company’s operations, the board of CTT made a series of decisions which effectively cut the extended development period of some Colway plays almost in half and shifted the responsibility for animating projects almost entirely onto the communities themselves: changes to which Oram had objected strongly.18 Then, in early 1990, seeking to consolidate the company’s resources, the board decided to
withdraw from the Minneapolis play. Oram felt obliged to complete the project independently and resigned his position as artistic director of CTT to do so. He was retained, however, as an independent director to complete the Rockwood project. Colway appointed a third artistic director to fulfill its existing obligations in Britain, but in at least two cases, the results were plagued with serious administrative and artistic problems. In June 1990, the steering committee of the Bewsey and Dallam play in Warrington, after deciding that the community was not adequately empowered in its relationship with Colway, fired the company.19 By early 1991 the Worksop project in Nottinghamshire was also experiencing difficulties, and Colway was being criticized for unleashing projects which had a profound and often unexpected impact on communities while failing to provide adequate support or guidance either before or after the actual event. Oram, now serving on the Board of CTT, was asked to investigate the situation. Citing declining artistic standards and concern over the damage being sustained by Colway's reputation, Oram recommended that the company go "dark." Subsequently, in mid 1991, following the completion of the Worksop play, CTT suspended operations indefinitely. While the board remained in effect, CTT's archival materials and responsibility for the company's future were left primarily with Oram.

Since 1990, Oram has continued to direct plays based on
the Colway style and to develop the form independently. This work includes two of the Canadian projects to be discussed here, and a collaboration with Remould Theatre, which apart from Oram and Jellicoe, is Britain’s most experienced producer of Colway-style plays. Oram’s innovations to the Colway form, while increasingly expressed in "issue-based plays" (dealing with controversial aspects of particular communities), are fundamentally related to the different ways that Oram and Jellicoe envision the relationship between theatre and community, and between amateur and professional participants. In contradiction to Jellicoe’s assertion that politics are divisive, Oram claims that politics are central to community plays, and, as the case studies documented here indicate, this next generation of Colway-style plays has proven to be highly adaptable to diverse social and cultural contexts.

In spite of innovations to the Colway style by Oram and others, however, controversy over the form and the nature of its engagement with community continues to persist. The central issue remains whether a form which seeks its genesis in the status quo can escape being constrained by that status quo. Open Theatre’s November 1994 Interim Report (based on an evaluation study of several Colway-style plays produced between 1990 and 1993) lists responses ranging from evangelistic advocacy of the form as an innovative, truly democratic form of theatre with wide popular appeal and the
potential to create new audiences and high levels of community cohesion, to dismissals of the Colway model as a bastion of middle class values and interests.

In many instances, criticisms of the form reveal as much about the composition and operation of particular communities as they do about the Colway-style in itself. In this regard, the controversy surrounding Colway points to popular theatre's particular concern with the intersection of social, political, and cultural agendas; and the value of the Colway form as an object of study exists, in large part, in the insight it can provide into popular theatre in general and into the diversity of populist conceptions of the relationship between theatre and community.

In Britain, the community play movement is small but persistent. Information gathered for Open Theatre's report suggests that after a decline which began in the late 1980's in the number of community plays produced, there appears to be a slow but consistent resurgence of interest, with the Colway-style remaining the model most widely imitated. In 1995 a restructured CTT, again under Oram's direction, resumed operations to produce The Torbay Tempest in association with the Devon Shakespeare Company, a local community theatre group. Colway's immediate future appears secure; the company is working on a number of projects and, in June 1996, was awarded a £75,000 lottery grant to be applied to capital funding.
The use of the Colway-style play in Canada is a relatively recent phenomenon which nevertheless draws on long-standing traditions of popular theatre reflecting particularly Canadian cultural contexts, and Oram's contact with Canadian practitioners has resulted in a considerable degree of cultural cross-pollination. Critical response to the community play and to related forms remains sparse, however, and only a handful of articles on community plays or the Colway model have been published to date in either Britain or Canada.

The purpose of this present work is therefore twofold. It is concerned both with documenting the use of the Colway form in Canada (referring back to CTT experience in the U.K. only for parallels or contrast), and with taking the analytical discussion of community-oriented forms of theatre a stage further by examining the practical problems and ideological issues raised by the experience of the Colway form within specifically Canadian contexts.

To these ends, the first chapter of this work is concerned with establishing the social and theatrical traditions upon which the Colway style draws, and in terms of which its innovations, successes, and failures can be examined. This material, followed by a discussion of the main aspects of the Colway form, comprises the two chapters of Part I. Part II consists of a brief introduction to community play practice in Canada (which includes a brief
discussion of some of the more relevant related forms), then four "case studies" of individual Colway-style productions. The study ends with a brief chapter of conclusions.
Notes:

1. This statement of principles was affirmed by the CPTA at an annual meeting held in conjunction with the first National Symposium on Community Plays (Fort Qu’Appelle, Saskatchewan, 1994). An elaboration of these aims as articulated by the Ontario Popular Theatre Alliance can be found in Salverson 1996a: Appendix, 91-93.

2. The tradition of modern English pageantry is generally acknowledged to have begun with Louis Napoleon Parker’s Sherbourne Pageant in 1906. For a detailed account of English pageantry see Withington; accounts of American historical pageantry can be found in Glassberg, and Prevots.

3. Devine committed the Court and its resident English Stage Company to producing leftwing noncommercial plays. Beginning with John Osborne’s Look Back in Anger, the theatre premiered the work of a range of socialist and political playwrights that included John Arden, Arnold Wesker, Edward Bond, and Wole Soyinka.

4. In addition to Jellicoe, this early group of writers included Arden, Wesker, Soyinka, Bond, and David Cregan; Wesker and Cregan would later write community plays for Colway. Improvisation sessions for the group were guided by Keith Johnstone, a detailed description of whose work, plus a brief assessment of its impact by Irving Wardle, can be found in Johnstone’s book.

5. Devine had initiated a special Sunday Night series
in 1956 in order to encourage new and innovative work and avoid the censorship of the Lord Chamberlain’s office, which retained its power over the theatre until 1968. Following a two-week rehearsal period, plays in the series were given a single performance with only "indications" of costumes and scenery, so that Sunday Night plays could be produced for as little as two percent of the cost of a regular three week run. Because the series was produced under the auspices of the English Stage Society (a group of Royal Court supporters which functioned as a private club) audiences attended as members and performances were outside the jurisdiction of the Lord Chamberlain’s office.

6. See Michael Kustow’s review of The Knack in Marowitz 220-223. Jellicoe discusses her use of image and ritual in The Sport of My Mad Mother in the preface to the 1964 edition and expands this in her 1987 publication on community plays. Two of Jellicoe’s plays for schoolchildren were also produced by the Royal Court Young People’s Theatre Scheme at the Theatre Upstairs in January of 1974. The published texts of these can be found in Jellicoe 1975.

7. Baz Kershaw was a member of Medium Fair at this time and his long-standing interest in Jellicoe’s work stems from this direct experience of the Colway form.

8. The efficacy of this method of working with amateurs and "extras" had been long established by the work of such earlier practitioners as Charles Kean and the Duke of Saxe
Meiningen. Jellicoe, however, would later dispense with the use of professional actors altogether because she felt that non-professionals tended to be inhibited by their professional counterparts. Jellicoe retained mixed feelings about this exclusion, however, and the issue continues to be a subject of debate in community play practice.

9. Peter Reynolds claims that some 50 per cent of the total population of the small market town of Lyme Regis was in some way involved in The Reckoning (1992, 89).

10. A complete list of Colway plays produced in Britain and Canada can be found in Appendix A.

11. Based on the Colway style, The Earth Turned Inside Out was produced and directed by Jon Oram in his capacity as Theatre Animator for South West Arts in Cornwall. See Appendix A. Darke and Edgar’s plays will be discussed in greater detail in Part I, Chapter 2.

12. Jellicoe estimates that regular project funding, together with contributions from the Arts Council of Great Britain, averaged about £12,000 a year. An account of CTT’s funding can be found in Jellicoe 1987.

13. An account of these factors can be found in Kershaw 181-182.

14. Oram studied mime with Marcel Marceau and has background training in Drama in Education and Community Arts. He had worked with Colway on the Sherbourne play in 1982 and the Dorchester play in 1985. In his capacity as
Southwest Arts Council's Theatre Animator in Cornwall, he directed and organized various kinds of arts projects including independent community plays in Restormel in 1984, and Gainsborough in 1985. He also cites exposure to the theatrical techniques of Joan Littlewood and Keith Johnstone's approach to improvisation as important influences in his community play work. A complete list of Oram's Colway-style projects is included in Appendix A.

15. See Jellicoe 1987, 27, 122. The play which Howard Barker wrote for Bridport, for example, focused on the town's historic rope-making industry. Jellicoe recollects that Barker had noted "with some glee that Bridport rope had been used to hang criminals from all over the British Empire," and she describes the difficulties she had trying to convince Barker not to write a political play based on this fact (1987, 17).

16. Wesker's script will be considered in greater detail in Part I, Chapter 2.

17. The play was written and directed by a team consisting of Oram and Welfare State's Boris Howarth. Welfare State's work was seen in Canada in 1981 when the company co-produced Tempest on Snake Island with the residents of the Toronto islands. A comprehensive account of Welfare State's work can be found in Coult and Kershaw.

18. According to Oram, Colway's administrator, in seeking solutions to the company's ongoing financial
problems, had been pressuring the board for some time to take steps to demonstrate to the British Arts Council that the company could be a viable competitor for "incentive funding." The incentive scheme was predicated on a "more product, more income" approach to operations and involved a five-year "business program" to be developed by an advisor who would be paid for and appointed by the Council. By mid 1991, however, Colway had become administratively "top heavy," employing one full-time administrator, a full-time secretary, and a full-time development officer with a mandate to seek out or respond to communities wanting to do projects, to explore training programs and outreach strategies for the form, and to generally concern herself with ethical issues surrounding the use of the form. In addition, the company retained two play officers to take up residence in communities where projects were underway as early as possible in order to facilitate Colway's extended development process. While these positions were financed for the most part by the individual projects, they also contributed to Colway's administrative load.

19. An account of CTT's relationship with this project is contained in "The Creative Drive," an interim report evaluating five community plays based on the Colway model and released by Open Theatre Company in November 1994. The Company was originally formed to produce plays based on the Colway style in London but has redefined its mandate to
focus exclusively on evaluation, training, and research into the community play form. The report was prepared by Richard Hayhow and can be found in the recently established Community Play Archives at DeMontfort University.
PART I:

Chapter One

The Culture of Community Plays

The essentially class-centred controversy over the nature and use of the Colway model can be contextualized in terms of an ongoing debate which gained a certain urgency in Britain roughly around the time of the SWA cuts to CTT in the mid-1980's. The specific debate is useful in that it provides a common language for evaluating Colway's position regarding the ownership and control of cultural production, and describes two competing, but not necessarily mutually exclusive, visions of the relationship between art, culture, and community which are at the heart of popular theatre theory and practice both in Canada and abroad.¹

On one side of the debate was Roy Shaw, retired Secretary General of the British Arts Council. Shaw, a primary exponent of the "democratization of culture," advocated wider public access to the "high arts" through education and various policies of touring, regional funding, and networking. In Shaw's view, "art" should transcend such differences as class by appealing to "our common humanity." The sophistication of "high art," however, means that in order to "inherit culture, you have to make an effort, sometimes a considerable one," so education must be "the
prime factor in facilitating greater access to the arts" (qtd. in Kershaw 1992, 184).

In contrast to Shaw's position, Owen Kelly's vision of "cultural democracy" calls for "direct participation in the production of a living culture" (1984, 100). Kelly, a London-based community artist and past chair of the Greater London Council's Community Arts Panel, distrusts Shaw's scheme for democratization of culture as a potentially hegemonic system for "the popularisation of an already decided cultural agenda." In Kelly's view, this will mean that "the values of one particularly powerful group" are imposed on the larger society through the consumption of a "centrally co-ordinated cultural package, more usually referred to as 'serious art'" which masks its intent to legitimize an "agreed hierarchy of values" by making them "appear as neutral, or natural" (1984, 99-101). For Kelly, "cultural democracy" is a means of resisting such hegemony:

[It is] an idea which revolves around the notion of plurality, and around equality of access to the means of cultural production and distribution. It assumes that cultural production happens in the context of wider social discourses, and that where the cultural production arises out of, and feeds back into, these wider discourses, it will produce not only pleasure but knowledge . . . [which] will accrue to the primary understanding of community. (1984, 101)
Kelly's position, while not denying the contributions of art made exclusively for "consumption," is fundamentally oppositional. Shaw takes a liberal stance which, while favouring the democratization of culture, does not exclude the possibility of co-existing expressions of cultural democracy, which he describes as:

- working from the grass-roots upwards rather than from the top downwards. It involves encouraging working people to develop their own creativity, preferably by collective action rather than individual action. (qtd. in Kershaw 1992, 184-5)

However, while Shaw acknowledges the essentially communal nature of cultural democracy, his evaluation of its processes and achievements suggests criteria based on traditional Western notions of "art" as primarily an enterprise and product of liberal individualism.²

Shaw concludes that cultural democracy tends to "underestimate the difficulty and exaggerate the value of self-expression in the arts," resulting in an aesthetic in which "relevance" becomes more important than "quality" (qtd. in Kershaw 1992, 185). Shaw's remarks ignore the degree to which relevance may be seen as a precondition for the creation and appreciation of all "quality" art, and he implies a binary separation of quality and relevance which can be projected onto a comparative hierarchy of values thus:
Shaw implies that the two sets of values can co-exist, but only as expressed in separate practices. Kelly points out that they must co-exist in that they are central values informing the processes of "production" and the products of "consumption" respectively. The oppositional nature of the debate (in essence one of process versus product), by reinforcing a binary set of values, tends to obscure the degree to which the products of past cultural expression contribute to the creation of conventional notions of art and quality which, in turn, inform cultural democracy at the fundamental level of the individual participant.

Paradoxically, both the essence of the Colway play's adaptability and popularity and the root of its controversial use and reception result from the fact that, in several respects, the form straddles the camps of cultural democracy and democratization of culture. It depends on grass-roots community participation to produce, within the conventional narrative structures of a "play" and in cooperation with professional artists, a representation of community informed by potentially conflicting philosophies, ranging from "art" as a means of localized
cultural expression and empowerment to "art" as a universally humanist "civilizing" influence."

To the extent that Colway plays in particular and cultural democracy in general privilege "relevance," however, their goals can be seen to correspond to John McGrath's summary of the "paranational" aims common to alternative and community theatre:

Firstly it can contribute to a definition, a revaluation of the cultural identity of a people or a section of society, can add to the richness and diversity of that identity. Secondly, it can assert, draw attention to, give voice to threatened communities, can, by allowing them to speak, help them to survive. Thirdly, it can mount an attack on the standardisation of culture and consciousness which is a function of late industrial/early technological "consumerist" societies everywhere. Fourthly, it can be and often is linked to a wider political struggle for the right of a people or a section of a society to control its own destiny, to "self-determination."
Fifthly, it can make a challenge to the values imposed on it from a dominant group--it can help to stop ruling class, or ruling race, or male, or multi-national capitalist values being "universalised" as common sense, or self-evident truth: as such, it presents a challenge also to the state's cultural engineers, in
Ministries of Culture, Arts Councils, universities, schools, and the media. (1990, 142)
McGrath's list is more manifesto than description and the efficacy of the type of theatre he is advocating often depends extensively on collective participation in ritualized and localized forms of expression.

Defining and giving voice to communities, for example, is accomplished largely through what Julian Hilton refers to as "rites of intensification" (1979, 60). In the Colway play, these involve the representation, celebration, and thus reification of a concept of community that demonstrates its worth both as the creator/producer of the play and as the object of dramatic representation. To the extent that community defines itself partly by what it excludes, however, this kind of celebration can also engender an unhealthy kind of xenophobia and an entrenched conservatism.

Counteracting this tendency so as to challenge dominant values engages the community in what Hilton calls "rites of passage" (1979, 60). These rites have less to do with affirmation of the community as it is currently constituted or understood, and more to do with social change, cultural intervention, or community advocacy in the face of a threatening or dominant "other." Hilton's concept suggests a communal approach informed by conventional Marxist views in which individual personality is determined by environmental conditions, and social change is necessary in
order to effect alteration in individual consciousness.4

The complex relationship between affirming and
interventionist forces can be more clearly seen in the case
of advocacy, where theatre is used to insist that a
marginalized community represented in a play gain voice and
agency within larger social structures. As Tony Howard puts
it, theatre in such cases is being positioned as a
"mouthpiece, dramatizing local issues" in a struggle for
self-determination (1980, 43). This assumes that a
calculated emphasis on the affirming capabilities of rites
of intensification at a local level can then be used as a
tool for intervention in regional or even national social,
political, or legislative structures.5

But while Colway plays may become regionally
interventionist, their primary concern, like that of
cultural democracy in general, is always with notions of
community that exist at a local level. This "localism,"
described as "the expression of issues relevant to a
particular community" (Filewod 1987a, 22), is the foundation
of all the "paranational" aims listed by McGrath.6 Especially
in performance, where the experience of localism is
heightened by local knowledge, by engagement with existing
social structures, and by the full sensory experience of
participation, localism can be seen as fundamentally
oppositional to any "universalised" or "standardised"
notions of culture and cultural production.7
In general terms then, the social action of a Colway play proceeds by drawing on a range of approaches to cultural production which can be at times competing or complementary, to engage in a process of local expression which occurs along a continuum between social and cultural affirmation (the essentially conservative solidification of community identity and values) and social and cultural intervention (the activist initiation of change). Evaluating the complex interplay between affirmation and intervention in Colway plays, however, requires an understanding of the general and particular conceptions of "community" in which, and with which these projects "play." Raymond Williams suggests that communities and other forms of association are "the necessary mediating element between individuals and larger Society" (1965, 95). Williams' implied action can move in either direction: helping individuals to express themselves, and helping the community to communicate its values to individuals. In this regard, the nature of "community" to which Williams refers can be considered in either "territorial" or "relational" terms.

"Territorial" communities, as Derek Phillips points out, are defined geographically and politically. Their geopolitical boundaries include a heterogeneous membership of all those who reside within. "Relational" communities, on the other hand, are defined by the nature and quality of inter-relationships among a membership with shared interests
(Phillips 1993, 12). These communities may be bound by common interest (including class), or by common ethnic or racial bond. They exist, in varying degrees, within and across territorial divisions.

Differences between co-existing territorial and relational notions of community are an important factor in determining the predisposition of Colway plays as a site for negotiation between culturally affirmative "rites of intensification" and interventionistic "rites of passage." Initially at any rate, Colway plays define themselves territorially: this is the essence of the form's approach to "inclusivity." Territorial communities, in turn, are defined through the received values of shared history inherent in the conception of community as place-over-time.

Relational communities, on the other hand, at least those that are not racially, ethnically, or otherwise prescribed, are more likely to be determined by voluntary participation in a process of constituting an active and intentionally evolving community identity. While also concerned with histories and values, they are more likely to be concerned with issues of common interest such as shared activity, empowerment, recognition, and social change. And, just as both aspects of community co-exist, both in Colway plays and in the larger community, both aspects reflect their own continuum of affirmation/intervention by the extent to which they define themselves by what and whom they
Tensions between territorial and relational notions of community have other implications for the Colway play as well. Because power in Western democratic societies is often territorially defined (through land ownership, municipal and regional governments, and so on), the mechanisms which convey the ideologies of territorial constructions are deeply entrenched. Yet apart from moving out or moving in, membership in territorial communities is non-voluntary. As Phillips points out, both membership and values are often "inherited" in the sense that many members become implicated in the traditions and practices of their communities "before they are able to explicitly recognize and reflect on what they have in common" (1993, 14). While the same observation holds for relational communities of common bond, it has particular relevance for a theatre form which draws upon a town's history as the primary material from which to construct a definition of community.

Colway plays assume that a strong territorial focus is essential to community building. On a practical level, this works to set aside the potential rivalry of relational communities and helps to ensure that the play's representation of the community remains non-controversial. Territorial communities, however, can exert considerable rhetorical force. The essence of their power in this regard lies in their ability to engender solidarity and the
continuance of inherited values through retelling [a particular community's] story, its constitutive narrative, and in so doing...offer[ing] examples of the men and women who have embodied and exemplified the meaning of the community (Bellah et al. 1985, 153).

Bellah et al refer to these stories as the "community of memory," and the constituting narratives of Colway scripts operate within similar parameters. On a fundamentally conservative pedagogical level, established narratives offer the Colway play and related forms readymade, strongly affirmative local resources.

The inherent hegemonic tendencies of this unquestioned and unquestionable "inheritance," however, must also be considered in light of the fact that territorial communities inevitably include a much more heterogeneous membership than is usually the case for more voluntary forms of association. The continuing "inclusivity" of individual Colway plays depends, in large part, on the degree to which they mystify or demystify their use of territorial concepts to construct the relational communities defined by the projects themselves. In this regard, if community is seen as the necessary mediating element between the individual and the larger society, then the "model" community projected by the Colway play itself assumes a mediating role between the territorial "community of memory" (as expressed in the
status quo) and a potentially re-evaluated relational notion of community based on varying degrees of individual and collective involvement.

To this end, the Colway play is concerned not only with remembering a community's stories, but also with constructing a collective past which, by emphasizing continuity, reinforces and builds what Benedict Anderson terms an "imagined community." Anderson's concern is primarily with the ways in which ideas of nationhood and nationalisms have been "imagined" since the 18th century and his work demonstrates the immense hegemonic capacity of these constructions. To the extent that the "constituting narratives" of national identity depend on prescribed roles for the individual and her/his community, Anderson's concept suggests the potential of similar "imaginings" at the micro level as well. Of particular relevance to the Colway play's creation and authentication of historical narratives is Anderson's conclusion that powerful illusions of continuity are often constructed through the "remembering" of ostensibly "forgotten" histories.

The constituting narratives of Colway plays, while often making extensive use of "official" and documented sources, tend to embrace a more self-conscious historical approach which privileges combinations of social, oral, revisionist, and conjectural histories. The specific nature of historical elements in Colway plays, then, rather than
being exclusively inherited, is also subject to a process of selection, negotiation, and "imagining" within primarily relational contexts. This process is facilitated by another powerful manifestation of continuity assured through a "progressivist" approach to history. The basic assumption of progressivism is that the key to future social and economic development lies in understanding and using the lessons of the past as a guide: a philosophy readily recognizable in Colway plays.

An apparent commitment to progressivism, however, can also conceal a primarily reactionary intent. As David Glassberg points out in his study of American historical pageantry (a form with striking and extensive similarities to the Colway play in form, content, and aims), progressivism contains an inherently reactionary "antimodernist" desire to "reject the present in favor of an idealized past," using tradition as a "bulwark against modernity."10

The degree to which individual participants in Colway plays are able to contribute to the processes of affirming, intervening in, constructing, or re-evaluating notions of history is predetermined in large part by the general conception of community which these plays embrace. In both process and product, the Colway-style play closely corresponds to the "communitarian ideal," a traditional concept which, according to Phillips, depends on four
central characteristics:
* a common geographical territory or locale
* a common history and shared values
* widespread political participation [accomplished through collective activity]
* a high degree of moral solidarity

(1993, 10, 14)

The first two characteristics, because of their relationship to "inherited" elements of community, largely determine the conceptual elements of the Colway play as expressed in the goals of the project and in the form and content of the play. Because these conceptual elements play a crucial role in establishing an initial rallying point for community participation and consensus, they are a particular concern of the relatively small group that is involved in the initiation of the community play process. To the extent that the members of this group are appointed/elected or otherwise empowered to "represent" the interests of their community (which includes selecting the members of the professional core), the principal elements which Colway plays use to draw people together include shared territory, shared history and shared values (including established residency and a quasi-electoral sense of representation). In such ways territory, history, and artistic philosophy are all poised to present an initial image of community in largely preconceived terms.
Phillips' second two characteristics--widespread participation in collective activity and a high degree of moral solidarity--are realized through participation in the "results-producing" aspects of the Colway play's creative and communal process. By emphasizing the importance of these aspects, the Colway play moderates the tendency of territory and history to control the definition of "shared values" and solidarity; collective cultural expression and creative play are also affirmed as exemplary behaviour in the "model" community represented in the project's process.

Results-producing activities, however, are primarily directed towards realizing the play's conceptual elements, and ultimately it is the play's focus on the highest possible artistic achievement or "what best serves the play" (Oram nd.) which fosters the two elements which Phillips sees as constitutive of "solidarity": a sense of social interdependence, and a sense of belonging. Such solidarity, to the extent that it engages with relational aspects of the community, provides the possibility for reconfiguration across class and other lines as it encourages the development of networks, communication and shared cultural skills, provides an experience of working toward common goals in groupings that may transgress the community's implicit social boundaries, and celebrates both personal creativity within a cultural process and pride in shared accomplishments.
Assessing the degree to which involvement in these activities can be seen to offer widespread political participation, however, is more problematic. In Williams' terms, the Colway play, as a communal "form of association," through its relatively vast size, protracted two-year process, and emphasis on empowerment-through-participation has the potential to situate its participants both as active mediators or as passive recipients in the process of publicly defining the community to be celebrated and perhaps changed. In this regard, individual empowerment in a Colway project is also contingent on the degree to which intersections between results-producing discourse and those concerned primarily with other conceptual elements of the project (including the nature of its use of history and its artistic realization) are demystified or mystified, and otherwise made accessible or inaccessible.1

The role of the professional core in this process evokes the essential paradox of the Colway form in its approach to cultural production. Colway plays depend heavily on what Richard Hayhow has described as "prime movers," individuals whose energy, commitment, and ability to facilitate the negotiation and communication of particular visions of community provide the "creative drive" which sustains a project's ability to attract and maintain voluntary participation. As often occurs, such prime movers may also be theatre practitioners who assume positions
within the professional core. Subsequently, the degree to which members of the core are willing, able, or obligated to contextualize the vision and artistic philosophy of the prime movers exerts a considerable influence on the nature of a project's empowerment in both collective and individual terms.  

Finally then, by mixing amateur and professional participants in a quest for individual and collective empowerment, Colway plays construct a complex social paradigm with a radical potential to recognize and deny individual differences simultaneously within pre-and co-existing heterogeneous and homogeneous notions of community. The concern of Colway plays with relational notions of community insofar as they exist within geo-political boundaries, defines a project's "community" of participants, both in their role as mediators and through their participation in the various structures and processes of Colway production, as presenting for their larger, territorially defined society, not only a play which demonstrates behaviour and ideals that are construed as exemplary, but also a model community structure in the form of the communitarian ideal.  

The use and impact of these structures in specific projects needs to be assessed relative to the particular social and cultural contexts of their host communities. To this end, a closer examination of the kind of relationships
between organization, performance, and texts advocated by the Colway model will clarify the ideological nature of its strategies for interacting with its host communities, while the case studies themselves will provide insight into the overall efficacy and impact of the form in action.
Notes:

1. Public interest in this debate was fueled by the fact that its competing positions were represented in practice by the British Arts Council on one hand, and the Greater London Arts Association on the other. The debate is reproduced succinctly in Kershaw 183-85.

2. As Kelly points out, Shaw’s argument contains an inherent assumption that "the centralised cultural package" of the democratization of culture "arises ‘naturally’, and without prompting" (1984, 99). In this regard, I am using the term "liberal individualism" to suggest not only the tradition of the (apparently) autonomous professional artist, but also the material conditions of the political philosophy in which individualism (and "serious art") manifests itself.

3. Peter Reynolds, for example, has suggested that Jellicoe’s philosophy stems from Arnoldian notions of "art as a civilizing force in society" and that in her journey from London to the provincial life of Lyme Regis she carried with her "a luggage of classicising discourse" (1992, 93-3).

4. Hilton’s notions of community theatre can be usefully contrasted with the theatre of the American avant garde which, heavily informed by traditions of liberal individualism, tended to reverse this process by using rites of passage to separate and disorient individuals (often through sensory deprivation) and then re-integrate them into
new groupings. Richard Schechner discusses this use of ritual in his notes to the Performance Group's production of *Dionysus in 69*. For an expanded discussion of the use of ritual and rites of passage in the theatre of the American Avant Garde in general and *Dionysus in 69* in particular see Innes, especially pp. 174-6.

5. This use of a Colway play will be considered in greater detail in case studies two and four.

6. In his analysis of collectively created documentary drama in Canada, Pilewod suggests that localism and regionalism "are closely related attempts to define the contours of an indigenous Canadian culture."

7. The implications of the Colway play’s eclectic approach to form in this regard will be taken up in detail in case study one.

8. See especially chapter eleven, "Memory and Forgetting," 87-206. The specific ways in which the Colway play implements these ideas will be taken up in greater detail in the following chapter.

9. In contrast, other models of community play, for example, those based on the approach of Peter Cheeseman at Victoria on Trent, insist that plays use only documented history. This is the approach taken by British community play groups such as the Living Archives Project and Stantonbury Campus which are based in Milton Keynes and its suburb of Stony Stratford.
10. Glassberg 4-5. Glassberg's use of the terms "progressivism" and "antimodernism" reflects the historical positioning of American historical pageantry in what has been termed the American "progressive era." Glassberg contends that the demise of the American pageant movement occurred because the form was unable to accommodate factors such as racial and ethnic difference. Furthermore, the mobilization of the form to support the First World War resulted in a subsequent emphasis on the form's reactionary or "antimodernist" tendencies. The form survives today mainly as a tourist attraction in Virginia's Lost Colony. An expanded discussion of American historical pageantry can be found in Prevots.

11. The operation of these discourses within the Colway model will be considered in detail in case study three.

12. Consider the criticism of Jellicoe's philosophy, for example, as discussed in note three above. The advantages and disadvantages of varying approaches to the creation of scripts, and the potential role, obligations, and requirements of the Colway professional core will be considered in greater detail in the following chapter.
PART I.

Chapter Two
Organizational Structures and Practices

Overview:

Colway plays, then, can be seen to embrace a complex ideal: the identification and creation of a sense of community that is both celebratory and a source of change. In varying degrees, projects attempt to construct an implicit and explicit public discourse about what community is, should be, or could be, and participants consistently affirm the social and cultural rewards of the form in terms of mutual support, self-discovery, solidarity, and renewal of community feeling (often expressed as the experience of a new sense of extended family).

In Britain, Baz Kershaw has characterized the Colway form as belonging to a genre of alternate and community theatre, generally what is termed "popular theatre" in Canada. Kershaw suggests that a basic aim of such forms is to attempt to change not just the future action of . . . audiences, but also the structure of the audience’s community and the nature of the audience’s culture. (1992, 1)

To these ends, popular theatre places sociological considerations such as relevance, inclusivity, and participation in all aspects of production on a par with more purely aesthetic concerns such as style, form, and
content in the theatrical product alone. Colway plays, like popular forms in general, tend to celebrate "process" itself as a virtue, and continue to do so in spite of an economic and cultural climate in which this is increasingly seen as a liability. In performance, because the sociological concerns of popular theatre are commonly expressed through ritualized participation and very localized expression, their full aesthetic impact can be difficult to perceive by the uninitiated.²

Furthermore, to the extent that Colway plays manifest a belief that theatre can be part of a process of social change, they draw upon traditions of popular and political theatre which view politics and style as inseparable. In this regard, while Colway plays employ a variety of "mainstream" theatrical techniques to ensure that projects "maintain their integrity in the arts" through the pursuit of "the highest possible artistic standards," the form tends to eschew the kind of unifying aesthetic exemplified by Wagner's concept of a Gesamtkunstwerk, and substitute instead a more Brechtian aesthetic in which the individual constitutive arts retain a sense of independence, and in consequence, are able to comment on one another. In addition, like its agitprop and documentary relations, the Colway play borrows eclectically from theatrical, as well as non-theatrical forms in order to entertain and communicate.³

To these ends, the Colway form has continually
maintained that its projects must remain responsive and adaptable to their particular host communities. All Colway plays, however, can also be seen to conform to consistent criteria. The following description of organizational structures and practices corresponds to what Richard Hayhow has termed the "next generation" of Colway-style plays. To the extent that such plays embrace the communitarian ideal, these criteria can be considered as an organizational and practical means to a common philosophical end. The degree to which this "end" is recognized and acknowledged as an "ideal" is thus one measure of a project’s individual and collective empowerment.

The following case studies demonstrate a high degree of cross-pollination between Oram and Canadian practitioners of the form, and the projects represented in these studies have not only incorporated the basic structures and philosophies outlined below, but have also, to varying degrees, developed them. As a result, in emphasizing the social and political evolution of the Colway form, Oram and affiliated practitioners of Everyone’s Theatre Company (ETC) now refer to Colway-style plays as collaborative community plays (CCPs). This practice will subsequently be adopted here.

Organization and Practice:

The organizational structures and practices of CCPs can all be seen to serve the following aims and principles:

*the creation of a largescale, participatory theatrical
event of the highest possible artistic standard: "a work of art in terms of a community";

*an eighteen-month to two-year production and community development process undertaken with the guidance of a core group of professional theatre practitioners;

*democratization leading to empowerment through community participation in all aspects of decision making, problem solving, and creative thinking for the production;

*the creation of a play which:
  -depends on widespread participation and representation based on notions of an inclusive territorially defined community,
  -celebrates both its local community and the creativity of individual members of that community,
  -includes a role for the audience in performance,
  -is relevant to and informs the community about itself both through historical research and contemporary observation,
  -morally implicates the audience in events depicted in the play;
*embraces a process which assumes a commitment to develop further activities after the play is over.

* * *

To these ends, CCPs offer members of the community various opportunities for contributing to both creative and decision making processes through public meetings, community
events, theatre skills workshops, and direct participation in the committee and subcommittee structure of the production. The willingness to participate and the degree to which a community play is "inclusive," however, can vary greatly from project to project, depending on the nature of the particular community and on the various ways in which inclusivity and "democratization" are interpreted and implemented. From an ideological perspective, inclusivity is largely defined and limited by the conceptual notions of community which are presented at the project's inception. In this regard, tracing the general chronological sequence for implementing the structures and techniques of CCPs clarifies their ideological implications and efficacy.

Until recently, the preferred method of initiating Colway plays was in response to unsolicited invitations from individuals within the communities themselves. As Oram points out, however, invitations tended to come from relatively "healthy communities" seeking social and creative expression, rather than from the kind of community that might most benefit from a CCP. Accordingly, Oram and other practitioners now tend to "seed" plays in communities which they perceive to be "in crisis" by initiating discussions about the potential merits of a project with residents who may be able to advance such projects.

This movement towards more direct intervention in communities has led to changes in the ways in which the
original Colway concepts of "democratization" and "inclusivity" are perceived and implemented. As noted, in principle Colway plays were designed to operate along the lines of a representative democracy (with the steering committee serving as the core of community representation). In practice, however, the selection (as opposed to election) of the initial representatives of a project in its most rudimentary stages was more problematic. While ideally, the protracted time frame of Colway-style plays served to ensure ample opportunity for widespread participation and input in the project, the extended two-year process also provided opportunities for conservative forces--the status quo of community power, privilege, and stability--to organize and exercise traditional leadership skills, and thereby exclude those members of the community who have been historically marginalized and silent. To counter this tendency, and in recognition of the fact that the initiation of projects has profound implications for individual and community empowerment in terms of cultural production, practitioners of CCPs have been concerned increasingly with developing techniques which emphasize a more pro-active approach to "inclusivity": seeking not only to exclude no-one who wishes to participate, but also "to draw in as broad a cultural cross section" as possible. Since 1990, in an effort to ensure that projects are not overly controlled by the agendas of established "shakers and movers" or by a
professional core working in concert with such forces, Oram has been advocating a system whereby a team of local "initiators" is formed to undertake a feasibility study to assess potential support or resistance to the project. This team then organizes a public meeting at which the results of the study are presented and the fate of the proposed project is debated and decided.  

This feasibility study attempts to ascertain, among other things, the degree of community interest in a CCP, the validity of timing for a project, and the nature of potential financial and in-kind support. Questionnaires which include a brief description of the idea of a CCP and why it might be significant for the community are distributed through the local press and other means. Residents are then asked to comment on what they consider would be the positive and negative impact of a CCP and to identify potential areas of interest, participation, or resistance. The feasibility study is also used to publicize the public meeting where the decision to proceed with or abandon the project is put to public vote.

While ostensibly subject to a "no" vote, in which case the project is immediately terminated, these meetings, like all aspects of a CCP, are assumed to be celebratory. They usually include visual presentations and testimonials from past CCP participants, and tend to be conducted amidst an atmosphere of "fun" and excitement. Assuming a "yes" vote,
they invariably involve a lot of recruiting and culminate in a dance or party with music supplied by local musicians. A "yes" vote results in the project being formally "launched." This involves a literal and ceremonial passing of ownership and control of the project to the community at large. At this point, the initiating team announces its intention to disband immediately following the election or appointment of a central steering committee. Volunteers and nominations for the steering committee and its subcommittees are then sought from the floor. Generally, members of the initiating team are free to stand for re-appointment. While, ostensibly, this process encourages greater inclusivity and public input into a more democratically "elected" steering committee, the actual results in this regard depend heavily on the nature and degree of preliminary contacts and networking undertaken by the initiating team.

The committee/subcommittee structure is designed, in part, to encourage a sense of groundswell activity. One of its primary goals is to spread the organizational and practical load of the project as quickly as possible while encouraging the broadest possible range of participation. A principal strategy in this regard is to solicit support from existing community groups, schools, clubs, and organizations which are then in turn encouraged to seek participation from their memberships. Subcommittee or "team" members are also encouraged to solicit additional support and membership
among their friends. Additional subcommittees can be struck in response to particular problems or challenges, and theoretically, the number and size of secondary, results-producing subcommittees is limited only by the community's willingness to participate.

One of the first tasks of the steering committee is to articulate and circulate a mandate or statement of objectives for the project. Communication, in this and other regards, is facilitated as the principal teams (usually fundraising, publicity, volunteer co-ordination, and research) are each chaired by a member of the steering committee. In addition, all participants in the project are brought together on Team Workshop Days, largely social events which facilitate introductions among the various teams and encourage an understanding of their respective roles in the overall process. This sense of "a personal touch" is emphasized further in all committee processes as teams keep extensive lists of names, skills, talents, and resources, and "thank-yous" in the form of follow-up calls, letters, or even visits are routine for any contribution. Networking and communication skills are developed and implemented through "phone trees," newsletters, and public fundraising events such as dances, benefit performances, auctions of donated goods and services, talent nights, etc. Phone trees are often used as a means of directly contacting and informing residents who are not directly participating
in the project, while newsletters containing project development, requests, community stories, memories, introductions of new participants, etc. are more usually directed to those already actively engaged in some aspect of production, although in smaller committees they may be distributed to every household.

A series of public training workshops in acting, design, and other theatre skills, conducted by selected members of the professional core, further contributes to a sense of groundswell and serves to draw in potential participants, to introduce members of the core to the community (and allow them to assess and develop existing theatre skills), and, most importantly, to initiate a sense of communal celebration of individual creativity and accomplishments.

The research team, in keeping with the aim of CCPs to help inform the community about itself from both historical and contemporary perspectives, is charged with carrying out a comprehensive survey of local history of the area, finding past and present stories and noting community issues to be passed on to the writer. Oram recommends that the team split into groups in order to approach this research from perspectives such as documented history, oral history, the history of minority groups within the community, and women's stories. Oram especially stresses the importance of the latter:
It's vitally important that a deliberate and concentrated effort is made to find women's stories. Women run communities, more women will come forward to be in the play. The play must have a woman's theme running through it. For each subject researched this group looks at the role women played or how they were affected. This group balances the way history, with its male focus, has been written.

This inclusion of oral histories and women's perspectives is a primary means of mixing local social and popular histories with the traditional, "official," and national histories discussed earlier. 8

To identify contemporary issues, the research team is encouraged to use techniques such as informal public meetings, reminiscence sessions, and "soundings": public forums structured to encourage participants to identify and express commonly held beliefs and feelings about their communities.9

In coordinating and overseeing the project, the steering committee is charged not only with policy making and administration, but also with contracting a core team of professional community arts and theatre practitioners. For the most part, the professional core is solicited from outside the community and commits to a full time residency period ranging from eight to twelve weeks. This core usually includes (at minimum) a director, playwright,
designers, music director, technical director, and stage manager, plus a "play officer" or project co-ordinator whose job is largely to establish residency in the host community several months prior to the production and serve as "animator" and liaison between the community and the professional core.

In all cases the role of a professional is emphasized as that of guide or facilitator. In the interests of community autonomy and empowerment, CCP policy is that members of the professional core should not exercise voting privileges on the steering committee although artistic directors and play co-ordinators generally attend in an advisory capacity. In spite of such precautions, however, CCPs often experience varying degrees of what Jellicoe termed "the siege mentality": a sense of rivalry between professional and non-professional participants.¹⁰

The role of the playwright is especially delicate in this regard. Working in conjunction with the research team and steering committee, the writer is charged with participating in "the process of informing the community about itself" through the creation of a play which stresses relevance to contemporary times, is suitable for all ages, and includes roles for a cast of 60 to 200 as well as for an audience participating through a performance style such as promenade. While open to all subjects and styles (historical, musical, etc.), plays must remain primarily
celebratory. As Oram puts it:

whilst capable of being politically tough, [and]
offering the community very real and hard challenges,
[CCPs] should equally become an honest, shared act of
celebration.

Widespread community input into the nature of this
celebration is encouraged through a "Public Reading" of the
first draft of the script. This usually takes place around
eleven weeks prior to performance and its primary purpose is
to assess reactions to the script from participants and the
community at large. Following the reading, the community is
invited to comment, offer suggestions, and otherwise become
involved. In order to facilitate continued public input,
printed copies of the script are usually made available in
public venues such as local libraries.

A successful public reading is also an opportunity for
a final push to recruit the hundreds of community members
required to perform, serve as production assistants,
builders, and technicians, and undertake the various other
voluntary tasks associated with the project. In all these
aspects, but especially in casting, rehearsals, and the
physical building of productions, the CCP process assumes
that individual creativity, if not evident, is latent and
waiting to be released. Casting (as opposed to traditional
auditioning) is non-competitive: anyone who shows up is
guaranteed a role, and close attention is paid to the
information collected concerning personal schedules and commitments, the degree of involvement requested, talents and interests, and friendships and relationships within the cast. Photographs are taken and the professional core is encouraged to make the considerable effort to match names and faces of 60 to 200 actors as early as possible. Early rehearsals make extensive use of communal techniques such as collectively generated soundscapes, non-verbal physical improvisations, etc. which emphasize the ensemble while serving to establish a non-threatening atmosphere in which to encourage and celebrate personal creative risk and achievement.

Production workshops offer other opportunities for creative expression and public recognition of pre-existing talents as residents contribute to the design and construction of masks and costumes, theatrical machinery and effects, and props such as giant puppets. Especially in the case of rural communities, where the ratio of participants to total population may reach 30 to 50% or higher, the excitement generated by this extensive collective activity can be powerful, especially as final preparations are undertaken and full cast rehearsals increasingly incorporate music, design, and technical elements. As Oram puts it, a principal aim of the CCP process is:

- to enable people, in an atmosphere of safety and supportiveness to reach their fullest potential so they
are surprised by what they achieve.
In the ten to twelve performances which are standard for CCPs, as the initial excitement of accomplishment is made more profound by a sense of communicating something meaningful to a large percentage of the community, the form depends on this sense of "surprise" in personal and collective accomplishments developing into an almost euphoric state which is sustainable for the relatively brief run of the play.

The use of the promenade style of performance seeks to feed and sustain this euphoric, highly animated state among participants and transfer it to spectators by immersing them in an interactive theatrical image of their community corresponding to the communitarian ideal. This animation of participants and spectators alike is a central element contributing to the affective power and thus the rhetorical efficacy of CCPs, and its operation can be traced in the formal structures of both performance and text. First, however, it will be helpful to define "animation" more clearly within a paradigm of theatrical strategies of sociological interaction.

Bim Mason, in his analysis of street theatre and outdoor performance, defines four categories of performers whose socio-political goals can be usefully adapted to an analysis of rhetorical strategies in the performance and playtexts of CCPs. Mason's first two categories,
entertainers and animators, are heavily implicated in the promenade style of performance:

"entertainers" try to be acceptable to the widest possible tastes, they tend to be fairly deferential to the status quo and confirm widely held assumptions and beliefs. (1992, 31).

Humour and the demonstration of physical skills are common strategies of such entertainers.

"Animators," on the other hand, are principally concerned with removing barriers between individual members of the audience, encouraging them to "loosen up," and engaging audience participation. Animation can assume various types and degrees of engagement. On an intellectual level, it might seek to empower the audience by posing a problem for them to solve; on a more emotional or visceral level, it can invite the audience to partake in various types of journeys, or even function in a role harking back to that of the shaman in releasing "self-destructive forces (demons) from the body" (1992, 40). Mason cites in this regard the example of traditional forms of dance which seek "to change the consciousness of the dancers" through a focus on "the enjoyment of movement", in order to promote a subsequent loss of individualism and a "diminishing of the ego by merging into the same rhythm as a large group," leading to the final "cathartic release that has been lost in nearly all western theatre" (1992, 40-41). In the case
of CCPs, animation begins with the "prime movers" and professional core, is then passed on to participants, who then serve in turn as animators for the audience.

Mason's final two categories, "provocateurs" and "communicators," tend to be more overtly interventionist. Because they depend extensively on conceptual notions as expressed in the playtexts, their functions will be considered in greater detail in conjunction with a discussion of CCP scripts. A brief consideration of their respective approaches and goals, however, suggests the ways in which the affirming and celebratory structures which are inherent in the CCP form itself can be used to predispose participants and spectators alike towards an acceptance of the ideological agendas forwarded by particular projects.11

Provocateurs are the most overtly interventionist group. Their concern is with "loosening up society as a whole" (1992, 52). They exist within the traditions of the Fool, Carnival, and the Feast of Fools. At times "they ask questions of society by going to the limits of conventionally acceptable behaviour" and they occasionally "confront the spectators with their own taboos" (1992, 52). In CCPs, satire, because of its potentially ambiguous relationship to humour as entertainment, is the most common form of provocation.

Communicators seek to "criticise certain aspects of the wider society" (1992, 67). They engage directly with the
ideological nature of issues and use theatre "as an educational tool" to promote ideas, as opposed to the debunking strategy of the provocateur. Communicator theatre may be used to reinforce and affirm, or to challenge and intervene in existing beliefs and ideologies. Because its practice is particularly manifest in agitprop, documentary drama, and Epic theatrical forms, it is particularly relevant to CCPs.

The Rhetorical Efficacy of Promenade:

CCPs often draw heavily upon traditions of pageantry, especially in their staging of parades and use of giant images where spectators are asked to assume a fixed position or perspective as the action passes before them. Whereas a pageant audience is positioned as passive witness to the action, however, often with sites of historic or civic significance serving merely as a backdrop, promenade audiences are more often required to engage with the action actively by being positioned within sites which also include workplaces, gathering spots, or sites of environmental importance, so that spectators contribute more directly to the aesthetic impact of such socially significant venues. In this and other regards, the promenade style of performance, especially as developed and practiced in CCPs, is both a highly celebratory and a highly participatory form of staging which challenges and reconfigures many of the distinctions between audience and performer which have
become common since the advent of realism's fourth wall. By incorporating the social milieu of the audience into the performance itself, promenade insists that conventional notions of mise en scène (the living presence of the actor in relationship to all aspects of setting and content) be redefined to include and emphasize, not just the indirect impact of an audience's response, but more basically the contributions of the spectator as actual participant. The awareness of spectators that is commonly experienced in thrust or in-the-round arrangements of staging is thus expanded to include a more socially significant role for the audience as performers in a series of events and tableaux vivants which variously represent the inhabitants and actions of the historical, the contemporary, or the "imagined" future community.

The end result functions rather like the locus and platea of medieval mystery cycles, where loci, or scene-specific symbolic platforms, were elevated above the crowd and reserved for the use of actors, while the platea, or public playing area, was shared between audience and performer. With casts anywhere from 60 to 200, the platea of a CCP is rarely empty of actors. And while spectators (and actors) are often directly addressed from the loci, thereby engaging them as imagined witnesses to the unfolding action of the play, they are generally free to mill about in the platea where they are often implicated in the action as
it erupts among them, spills down upon them from the elevated staging, or otherwise enlists their involvement as they are invited to participate in songs, dances, processions, ceremonies, and other inclusive events.¹²

The CCP's use of promenade staging is highly experiential in other aspects as well. As noted, spectators are often immersed in theatrical landscapes of particular significance to the community, and the "gathering phase" of CCPs (the assembling of spectators prior to the play itself) usually includes some sort of formal procession to these sites. Here, and at the main venue itself, the immediacy of the theatrical experience can be heightened by weather, shifting conditions of light, and the ambient soundscapes produced by birds, rivers, streams and the like. Cast members interspersed among the audience can also generate strikingly realistic evocations of things like rain, wind, and fire. A sense of common humanity and the intergenerational nature of the form is experienced in such moments as the playful "swarming" of spectators by children costumed as bees, chickens, mosquitos, or bats. These can erupt into the platea, displace spectators as they race about enthusiastically, and potentially destabilize and reconfigure social groupings within the audience. Promenade also insists that a standing spectator, denied the guarantee of personal space afforded by an assigned seat, must constantly negotiate and renegotiate his or her space within
the social environment of performance. Promenade also exploits the kind of subliminal physiological responses and loss of individually that Mason refers to, as standing auditors, by nature prone to shift position constantly, become particularly susceptible to the ambient rhythms and moods of performance which are projected and manipulated through music, song, and dance.

The sharing of the platea facilitates direct participation in these and other events as spectators are often invited to join in things like fairs, auctions, and various kinds of ceremonies. Many of these are employed to encourage a sense of comfort and ownership of the theatrical event by evoking nontheatrical social conventions which are familiar to community members who might not normally attend theatre, or, for those that do, by presenting more relaxed and informal "popular" alternatives to traditional theatre practice. Fairs featuring music and the sale of food and local crafts, for example, have been a standard feature since Jellicoe's early work. They invariably precede the play itself, and together with parades and processions to the site, they are an integral part of the gathering phase of CCPs. They provide additional opportunities for broadly based participation and fund-raising, and provide a smooth transition into the play itself by helping to ensure that spectators both understand and are comfortable with the conventions of participation which are to follow. Such
events depend on audiences responding to familiar "horizons of expectations" to assure them that participation on their part will be non-threatening and voluntary.\textsuperscript{13}

Other events such as mimetic representations of weddings and funerals, the commemoration of historical events, or invented ceremonies such as the "namings" of local landmarks or exemplary ancestors attempt a more formal sense of ritualistic communion between those spectators who participate to varying degrees as "initiates," and those members of the community who perform, stage, or model the event. Selecting such events to be performed within a participatory context invests them with a degree of communal significance, and to the extent that these and other events focus on the elevation and emotional affirmation of the "constituting narratives" or values of the "imagined" communities, they are also engaged in ritualizing history and its associated values.

Participation in these activities is mediated by the animating function of the cast. In a ratio of about one cast member for every three spectators, the responses of the cast alone can exert a considerable force on the assembled crowd. At times performers stand side by side with members of the audience to assume the role of a "model" audience, animating and prompting a desired response. They also act as hosts, welcoming and directing the audience in order to ensure comfort and safety, or in order to prepare spectators
for a particular sensation, or to confirm their implication in the dramatic events being depicted. Promenade affords opportunities for spectators and actors to be choreographed to engage with the rhythms and moods of the play directly. Here again, the high cast-to-audience ratio of a CCP offers considerable flexibility as actors can be directed to flood into the platea to create a sense of climactic compression or to dissipate in order to allow spectators to regain a sense of individuality and personal space. Spectators can also be rushed toward new and urgent action over distance, or they can be subtly shifted and reconfigured in preparation for surprises and changes in rhythm, mood, and focus.

The cast’s ability to shift spectator focus quickly and efficiently within the vast and open spaces of promenade is critical to a production’s rhythm and timing. As one scene is being played on the elevated staging surrounding the audience, another is being "set," and a previous scene is being "struck": cast members are carefully rehearsed to distract and engage spectators’ focus appropriately. In keeping with the mood of the play, spectators are at times gently guided or at other times more harshly marshalled by groups of actors called "sweepers" in order to clear spaces for spectacular entertainment such as parades or riots, large pieces of mobile scenery, giant puppets, live horses, bicycles, carts, or even automobiles. Oram now prefers to
work with at least one stage which begins at ground level in the **platea** and is "raked" upwards in semblance of a hill or ramp. Because this stage encourages spectators to climb it to gain a better vantage point when it is not in use, sweepers can help to blur the distinction between **locus** and **platea** by containing spectators onstage as part of the action, or enforce the separation by "sweeping" the stages to accommodate a rush of actors.

The construction and transformation of scenery and giant props in the midst of the **platea** in full view of spectators is also a common occurrence, and, considering that many of the spectators will have loaned or helped to create props, costumes, sets and special effects, such displays further encourage a shared sense of ownership and pride in the play's artistic and aesthetic accomplishments. Likewise, the eclectic mix of styles common to community plays easily incorporates practised or pre-existing talents or performance skills which can be either "showcased" in scenes analogous to vaudeville or music hall "turns," or performed ensemble as in the case of the performed "soundscapes."

Such spectacle, exhibited within the powerful context of imaginative theatrical presentation and transformation, encourages community solidarity by celebrating a sense of collective accomplishment extending to cast and audience alike.
Promenade also encourages solidarity in its choice of acting style. Engaging with spectators in a presentational style, especially within familiar paratheatrical conventions, encourages a more relaxed, "non-acting" approach to performance. This in turn nourishes a relationship between audience and performer which, rather than resisting the identification of actors as neighbours, friends, and family, foregrounds the social significance of the theatrical event by drawing on such real life relationships to increase the sense of solidarity and ownership, and thus the impact of the theatrically constructed "model" community. This style of "non-acting" can be seen as analogous to a Brechtian approach whereby role is "demonstrated" as opposed to "inhabited" and the actor as individual always remains highly visible. In terms of "entertainment's" deference to the status quo, however, especially in instances of generational or occupational casting (in which descendents play the roles of their ancestors, or community leaders or workers portray their historical counterparts) the ideological and political implications of representing these social relationships can be less important than their ability to animate and encourage solidarity.15

Ultimately, the relationship of animation to empowerment in this and other regards can only be considered in the context of the individual case studies. Overall,
however, promenade’s capacity to entertain and animate is an important factor in facilitating the construction of a powerful sense of community among cast and spectator alike. To the extent that this implicates participants in an ostensibly consensual process of representing exemplary community beliefs and behaviour, CCPs are essentially a moralistic genre. And in this regard, the degree to which the celebratory performance texts produced by CCPs tend to be prescriptive, "communicative," or "provocative," depends not only on the content, but also on the inherent rhetorical structures of CCP playtexts themselves.

Playtexts and the Structures of Rhetorical Efficacy:

CCP playtexts employ a number of formal strategies to facilitate promenade’s capacity for animating participants of all ages. In order to accommodate the large number of performers, roles are conceived in "baskets," up to eight central characters generating eight to ten additional roles each for familial or other connections. Baskets are easily cast to encourage support groups among friends and family or to balance levels of experience and confidence among performers. Additional roles are accommodated in "corps de mimes" or "clone groups." These generally function as allegorical choruses which look, move, or speak alike in order to represent an existing community opinion, attitude, or belief.

Overall, scripts tend to limit the scope and
requirements of individual roles and emphasize instead ensemble. They employ shorter scenes than conventional plays do, with less demand for sustained dramatic action, complicated character development or shifts of attitude; and they support scenes with music and visual elements. In the tradition of pageantry, CCPs often employ large images and tableaux vivants as evocative historical icons that function as conservative, stabilizing forces in the production of value and meaning. These iconic moments are often framed by lyrical ballads, marches, anthems, and choruses which reinforce a communal sense of shared past and present purpose, and evoke a familiar resonance of civic boosterism and local pride. In all respects, scripts are created with the collective and individual performance strengths and skills of the community in mind. Narrated history and story-telling, for example, situate non-professional actors within accessible and familiar modes of performance. Scripted "testimonials" about community experience carry an implicit authenticity which facilitates engagement and identification between actor and spectator. Similarly, recognizably documentary based text dealing with local history tends to carry an inherent authority which eases the burden of authentication on the performer.

These narrative strategies reflect the three basic approaches to history which are commonly combined in varying degrees by all CCPs: a straightforward, documentary style of
authentication of received and reproduced history; a more complex representation of these "official" histories which includes direct or indirect editorial commentary; and independent and revisionist presentations of a community's "constitutive narrative," especially through the incorporation of oral histories and the women's perspective on events. While in many respects drawing on the iconic potential of pageantry both in terms of spectacle and editorial commentary, CCPs tend to favour the narrative strategies of conventional playtexts. Jellicoe's articulation of the essential differences between the two forms suggests the latter's potential in terms of the rhetorical efficacy of CCPs:

A pageant is a series of loosely connected scenes which usually have no formal link with each other beyond a sequence of events from the history of the town, [and] frequently, different sections and scenes are rehearsed by different groups of the community . . . . What this means is that a pageant is a very cool form: the emotional temperature cannot rise because there is no build up.

A play on the other hand, has character and plot which are related in an organic whole. We identify with the heros and heroines and are swept along by the story, by the switchback of the play and the building and release of tension to the climax. (1987, 119-
This strategy, working within the parameters of Mason's idea of "communicator theatre," is at the heart of the form's ability to engage the community in meaningful acts of either intervention or affirmation.

The playwright's relationship to the creation of a project's script is therefore a particular concern of CCPs. The 1994 Community Plays Conference/Training School held at the Bedford campus of DeMontford University, England, identified and discussed three principal approaches to the creation of community play texts: playwright as autonomous artist; the engagement of the playwright in a more dramaturgical function; and various degrees of collective creation (British practitioners call these "devised plays"). The latter two approaches, combining more pronounced documentary and collaborative approaches, have been common in recent Canadian practice and will be considered in greater detail in the individual case studies and conclusions. British practice, however, continues to favour the autonomous playwright situation advocated by Jellicoe, and the accomplishments of this approach are instructive in terms of the form's potential for provoking social and cultural intervention.

A closer look at Wesker's Beorhtel's Hill is useful because the playtext conveys a particularly interventionist intent. In fulfilling his commission to write the 1989
Basildon play, Wesker engaged both the community and the
Colway forms in a self-conscious debate not only about the
complicity of the working class in their own oppression, but
also about the hegemonic tendencies of communal affirmation
to coopt and contain intervention.

Beorhtel’s Hill refers to the ancient Saxon settlement
which occupied Basildon New Town’s current site, which was
created in 1949 as part of a massive government strategy to
house families whose homes were destroyed during World War
II. Prior to this, the area was occupied by a marshy
"plotland community": small freeholds held by working class
families seeking respite from the crowding of London and a
place to cultivate staples such as vegetables and poultry.
Basildon was founded on socialist ideals, and in order to
secure the site, amidst protest from the plotlanders, the
government not only appropriated the existing freeholds but
also retained ownership of all the land, in order to
establish a community in which "Doctors would live next to
dustmen." Basildon was to become a key seat in Britain’s
1979 General election, and ironically it voted Conservative,
largely in response to that party’s promise to privatize
home ownership.

Wesker’s history of the town challenged binary
constructions of oppressor/oppressed by focussing not only
on the exploitation and oppression of Basildon’s working
class members, but also on their own complicity in that
oppression and exploitation. The play’s narrator describes Basildon as:

... A town of working-class strangers taking over from plotlanders who were themselves working-class strangers. Basildon! A town built for the disinherited, the slum dwellers, the bombed out! Basildon! A phoenix from the ashes! A town of pity and dreams! (1989, 43)

The Narrator also plays the town drunk and is a mouthpiece for the author’s interventionist agenda. At one point he proclaims, "If the world had piles, it would be here" (1989, 40). The fictional position of the Narrator as both community member and "Other" implicitly challenges the Colway-style play’s concept of inclusivity and exposes many of the potential hypocrisies inherent in affirming territorial over relational notions of community. Xenophobia is directly addressed by revisiting the community’s hostility towards five families of British-Asian descent who were to be relocated in Basildon as part of the Home Secretary’s plan for the repatriation of Ugandan refugees after they were expelled by the regime of Idi Amin.

Ultimately, however, Wesker’s vision of Basildon projects a delicate poetic essence of the community, an essence which embraces hope by confronting ignorance and intolerance. Throughout the play, ambiguous images of generations of children chasing rainbows suggests both the
inherent idealism of youth and the potential for disillusion. The play begins with a series of images opening out to expose a single rose and a loaf of bread. The play’s final images are contained within a contracting focus which shrinks in around the town drunk and then collapses into the same rose held in his hand: the poetic essence of Basildon.

Beorhtel’s Hill demonstrates the interventionist potential of revisionist and social approaches to history as well as the advantages of contracting an autonomous playwright from outside of the community. Interestingly, Wesker insisted that the play not be staged in the promenade style (one of the very few Colway-style productions or CCPs not staged in this manner). Wesker argued that promenade would inhibit the audience’s ability to engage with the play intellectually, suggesting, in other words, that animation might constitute an impediment to provocation or communication.20

Also within the context of the autonomous playwright, a consideration of the two Colway-style plays which were revised and transferred to Britain’s National Theatre in 1987 is useful for demonstrating some of the tensions and essential differences between localist/communal and universal/individualist approaches to playmaking as well as the cultural values inherent in their respective means of production.

Ting Tang Mine, the revised version of Nick Darke’s
1984 Restormel community play, was originally titled *The Earth Turned Inside Out*, while David Edgar's *Entertaining Strangers* began as the Dorchester community play of the same name in 1985. The changes to the two plays for performance at the National clearly demonstrate a conflict between the sociological quest for local animation and empowerment on the one hand, and a universalist desire for a more analogous or metaphorical engagement on the other.  

*The Earth Turned Inside Out* was written with over 100 speaking parts, and involved 1,500 locals in the production of 12 performances in a school hall. *Ting Tang Mine* was reduced to a cast of 22 (13 men, 9 women) in 26 roles. In cutting and reworking the text for the National, Darke cut two entire choruses of women and substituted a tone of parable for the aesthetic of promenade and community participation. Where the original focussed on issues of individual and communal pride, xenophobia, and stratification of community, the National production stressed the more universal theme of capitalist oppression through a depiction of generalized historical factors, thus portraying a binary opposition of oppressor and oppressed. Individual psychological characterization was sharpened and narrowed in order to present fewer ambiguities and contradictions and to focus on character objectives and through lines which illuminated the parable; the focus on economic history was emphasized at the expense of social
history; and action was compressed by the introduction of narrative ballads sung by individuals (no other form of song was called for). As parable, Ting Tang Mine evoked a static portrayal of community, one designed to evoke an individual and intellectual engagement, rather than a communal and pragmatic one.

The revised version of Entertaining Strangers premiered at the National in October, 1987. The production was directed by Peter Hall and starred Judi Dench and Tim Pigott-Smith. In his introduction to the published edition of the revised version, Edgar wrote of being less constrained by the historical record than in the 1985 Colway production, and (in keeping with traditions of psychological realism and liberal individualism) of having been able in the National production to "develop and . . . deepen the relationships of the central characters." Something of the visual essence of the community play was retained in many of the large scenes, but in shifting away from the participatory impact of the promenade style of staging and its sense of ownership, Edgar wrote of the need to:

create some kind of metaphorical surrogate for the sheer power of Dorchester's numbers (and the emotional strength of the fact that the play was performed in a church established by one of the central characters, within a stone's throw of a brewery founded by the other). (1986, Introduction)
Edgar’s solution was to interpose fragments from a mummers’ play throughout the text. At times the mummers were represented as actually presenting their play, more often they appeared only as "a snatch or echo" in the minds of the central characters. Edgar insisted that, in keeping with tradition, the "mummers" were to have their faces masked or "hidden" and were to play "with a seriousness, if not a solemnity, appropriate to [the form’s] ancient significance." Edgar’s explanation of the specific application of this significance is worth quoting at length:

Entertaining Strangers is about the attempt to impose two eminently Victorian values on an English country town in the process of transformation from an essentially rural to an urban society. Both sets of beliefs are found wanting, in face of the older and more basic realities which emerge to challenge them during the course of the play. These realities—and the ancient mysteries that both acknowledge and confront them—are represented in the new version by fragments from a mummers’ play. (1986, Introduction)

The realities which Edgar is referring to are life, death, and the need for community. He has chosen as his "surrogate" an ancient folk tradition which is in essence both primal and communal, and which, as part of enduring mythic and iconic tradition, can evoke a deeply resonant community of memory. Edgar’s "solemn" use of this tradition within the
context of a "community play" staged at the National Theatre evokes both the mystery and the validation of the essentially sociological agenda of the mummers and all community-oriented forms.²³

Theatre reviewer Michael Billington, in comparing his experiences of the Dorchester and National versions of Entertaining Strangers, claims that when he saw the former he was "moved"; while in the case of the latter he was "impressed." Billington's remarks suggest that the inherent tensions between communitarianism and liberal individualism in the CCP form can be successfully organized and exploited to promote either ideological end. But while capable of intellectually "impressing" through artistic achievement, CCPs in their community context appear to depend heavily on implicating spectators (and participants) by "moving" them emotionally.

This agitational use of theatre to create a form of "art" aimed at effecting social change raises a number of questions about the nature and quality of "empowerment" achieved by individual projects. What is the balance struck between the interests of the community relative to those of the individual, for example? What role does the professional core play in this regard? And to what extent is the use of such techniques as animation, communication, and provocation consciously and inclusively in the hands of the producing community? The final principle of CCPs is
that they should embrace a process which assumes a commitment by the community participants to develop future activities after the play is over, and any assessment of individual projects must take into account the nature and extent of these activities. To address these questions more fully we need now to turn to the detailed case studies of Part II.
Notes:

1. For a detailed definition of "popular theatre" in Canada see Introduction note 1 above. The British use of this term usually refers to a work's general appeal without concern for the political aspects of cultural production concerned with issues of ownership and empowerment. Both Canadian and British definitions embrace a sense of a common "popular" aesthetic, however, in describing a shared tendency toward a robust and presentational style of performance. J.L. Styan's description of the popular and "flexible Elizabethan mode of performance," for example, "playing to the house, stepping in and out of character, generating a stage action allegorical and symbolic, making no pretense at the trappings of realism, encourag[ing] a verbally acute, sensory and participatory, multi-levelled and fully aware mode of experience for an audience" (1977, Introductory 5) is an equally applicable aesthetic description of a Colway-style play.

2. The implications of the Colway play's aesthetic impact will be taken up in greater detail in case studies one and three.

3. All Colway-style plays draw on a wide range of production styles. Plays mix representational and presentational approaches, employ music, song, dance, and giant imagery, and include styles and techniques drawn from ritual, ceremony, carnival, fair, variety shows, chautauqua,
melodrama, agit prop, realism, expressionism, and
documentary. Their eclectic mix of traditional and popular
styles demonstrates their debt to the theatrical practices
of, among others, Piscator, Brecht, Littlewood, Cheeseman,
and Boal. All this directly implicates Colway plays in the
long-standing debate about the use of "class specific" forms
in popular and political theatre practice. A concise
explication of the early terms of this debate in social
drama can be found in McDermott 1968. A more contemporary
perspective can be found in McGrath 1981.

4. ETC was founded in 1994 and is an information and
idea-based affiliation of theorists and practitioners who
are experienced in the CCP form. Its membership includes
Oram and representatives from all of the Canadian projects
listed in these case studies. The following definition of
CCPs draws heavily on discussions held by this group and on
an unpublished manuscript by Oram which is the basis of a
forthcoming book on CCPs. All quotations in the following
section discussing the organizational structures and aims of
CCPs which are not otherwise noted are from this source.

5. As noted above, in Jellicoe's original conception
the initial recruits for a Colway play, generally
established and influential community leaders with
significant vested interests in the community and some
history of community representation, formed the Steering
committee for the duration of the project.
6. This innovation by the CCP to the Colway form, the presentation of findings by a considered study, is also designed to counter what were sometimes taken to be manipulative tendencies in the celebratory aspects of early projects. In Jellicoe's book, for example, she advocated creating a specious sense of excitement and groundswell in these meetings by first setting out only a modest number of chairs, then, as people arrived and waited, having volunteers set out extra chairs for the "unexpected" turnout (1987, 103-107).

7. Other teams might include a subcommittee for hospitality concerns or for organizing a fair (or similar event) to precede the play proper.

8. As noted above, this approach distinguishes the CCP from the more prescriptive or rigidly documentary approaches pioneered by Peter Cheeseman at the Victoria Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, which are the foundation of such documentary community plays as those produced by The Living Archives Project.

9. The term "sounding" refers to the nautical system of mapping and testing waters for conditions and unseen hazards. The use of soundings as a public forum was developed by the Ontario Rural Learning Association and first used in conjunction with a community play during the Eramosa project. Its use and efficacy in terms of CCPs will be considered in detail in case study three. Oram also
advocates the use of techniques adapted from Augusto Boal's Forum Theatre.

10. The extent and impact of this "siege mentality," especially as it relates to Reynolds' criticism of Jellicoe's philosophy of art as a "civilizing influence," will be considered within the context of the individual case studies.

11. Issues concerning relative degrees of community access to the celebratory and interventionistic agendas of CCP projects will be taken up in detail in the third case study.


13. This notion of "horizons of expectations" draws on Susan Bennett's application to theatre audiences of Jauss' ideas regarding the historically positioned set of cultural, literary, and ethical expectations which inform a reader's reception of text. While Bennett's concern is with the operation of horizons of expectations on audiences in "the gathering phase," CCPs can be seen to draw on these expectations throughout the course of the theatrical event.

14. The role of these "sweepers" corresponds to that of the "stytlers" of Medieval mystery cycles.

15. A specific example of this will be considered in
case study three.

16. The moralistic nature of CCPs will be considered in detail in case study one.

17. This approach can be usefully compared to the exclusive use of documentary in Cheeseman's work, and the addition and development of various forms of editorial commentary as expressed in forms such as the "Living Newspaper" in the United States, Britain, and Russia, the work of practitioners such as Piscator, Brecht, and Littlewood in Europe, and George Luscombe and the early work of Theatre Passe Muraille in Canada.

18. Jellicoe insisted that Colway plays be seen as distinct from pageants and suggested that the closest related form to her work was the Medieval mystery play as performed at Oberammergau. See 1987, 8 and 119-121.

19. A previous Community Play Conference was held in England in 1992. Two such meetings have been held in Canada to date: Momentum, a Community Play Symposium, held in Eden Mills, Ontario, September 11-13, 1992, and The Qu'Appelle Gathering: The First National Symposium on Community Plays held at Fort Qu’Appelle, Saskatchewan, August 24-28, 1994.

20. Wesker's approach is similar to Alan Sinfield's concept in which theatre companies that are in, but not entirely of, the community, serve as shifting fissures or "faultlines" around which social change can be negotiated. To a lesser extent, the professional core is charged with
this role in CCPs. In the case of the Basildon play, Oram claims that the project's impact reached as far as the Houses of Parliament where one Conservative member labelled it "a waste of money and time."


22. Jellicoe was passed over as director, and Reynolds argues that it is possible to see in the National Theatre's decision to produce independently, which removed these plays from their original context, "a cynical attempt to expropriate and therefore regulate this new form of theatrical activity by attempting to absorb it; and, in doing so, to take away its radical potential" (1992, 90).

23. For a collection of annotated mumming texts, see Chambers.

24. Often, following the close of the plays, skilfully crafted items are retained by the community as historical artifacts, exemplars of local pride, and literal testimony to the community play's creation and construction of history. Less durable materials are usually burned to prevent their decay from serving as a symbolic diminishment of the CCP's accomplishments. Welfare State and increasingly
Oram himself advocate the use of this kind of final ritual burning to emphasize the temporal nature of the material aspects of projects, as distinct from the more enduring nature of their human accomplishment. Thus, Oram suggests that such burnings can serve as an act of mourning and reflection, marking a rite of communal passage.
PART II:
Introduction

The Constitution of Community

All the plays included in this study illustrate the CCP's essential concern with the "constitution" of community. As the range of political, cultural, and social interventions attempted by the projects demonstrates, however, "constitution" should be understood to include both the expression of fundamental principles as well as the form's essential concern with the process of constructing or negotiating those principles. As a communal form of theatre, CCPs belong to an essentially moralistic genre, but as Michael Foucault has pointed out, the main object of "prescriptive" texts is only "to suggest rules of conduct" (my emphasis). Such texts, to the extent that they are "practical," are also "objects of a 'practice,'" and designed to be learned, "reflected upon, and tested out." Foucault's point is that such texts also serve to enable individuals "to question their own conduct" and to "shape themselves as ethical subjects." Because the various agencies concerned with morality (family, church, educational institutions, etc.) often produce alternative or even contradictory codes, the ethical subject has relative freedom to pick and choose between competing texts (1986, 12-13).”

The CCP's eclectic mix of form and content, which is in
turn mediated by the processes of inclusive and participatory production, can be seen to create theatrical versions of these competing codes. These texts, and especially their contradictions, can be examined to determine the extent to which particular projects seek to affirm or disrupt representations of values or moral codes as prescriptive or intractable. A particular project’s inclusion and treatment of such codes, authenticated by testimony, documentation, and present and past community experience, and editorialized or otherwise mediated through theatrical production, is, by transformation into "art," translated into the complex of images and metaphors which constitute a project’s "aesthetic morality." If a CCP may be seen as constructing a site for reflection and debate about the constitution of community, then a project’s aesthetic morality represents a consensus of sorts regarding the provisional terms and conditions in effect at the time of negotiation. The degree of ambiguity in a project’s representations acts as a measure of the play’s ability to engage large numbers of participants in a meaningful discourse about their own community. In this regard, as in Boal’s Forum Theatre, CCPs are positioned to work as a kind of "rehearsal" for change. They function not so much as vehicles to change people’s minds, but rather as opportunities for them to change their roles.

The first two case studies are concerned primarily with
"reading" CCPs: the ways which these plays function and create meaning as popular and communal texts. Case Study One focuses on aspects of the aesthetic experience of The Blyth and District Community Play which are, to varying degrees, common to all CCPs. The project is the only Canadian example of a Colway-style or CCP to have been produced in conjunction with a resident professional theatre company, and the study examines the way that relationships between this theatre company, the community at large, and the CCP form produced the project's particular "aesthetic morality."

Case Study Two considers the ways in which the Calling Lakes Community Play used and adapted the CCP form to stage both European and Aboriginal racial and cultural perspectives on a history of racism in Saskatchewan's Qu'Appelle Valley. The study furthers the discussion of the CCP form's aesthetic impact through a discussion of the contributions of promenade staging in the production of alternate or revisionist historical narratives designed to foster cross-cultural awareness and interaction.

The second two case studies are concerned more with issues of ethics and overall efficacy in the practices of the CCP form. Case Study Three examines the Eramosa Community Play produced in Rockwood, Ontario. The Eramosa project is notable for two reasons: it marks the first time the CCP form was used in Canada and the first attempted use
of the form anywhere to further an overtly political agenda. The study focuses on the tension this created between celebration and intervention by examining the project’s use of the conceptual and organizational elements of CCPs to recruit and construct a "democratized" theatrical response to suburbanization and "exploitative" land development in Eramosa township.

The final case study considers the first Canadian use of the CCP form within the context of an inner-urban environment. The study of Regina’s North Central Community play focuses on the challenges of defining and constructing an inclusive notion of community within an economically depressed neighbourhood characterized by extreme racial, cultural, and socio-economic divisions. This final study focuses more closely on the direct impact of projects on participants and considers the potential efficacy of the CCP both as a means of celebrating difference as well as similarity, and as a form of advocacy for groups who are perceived to be marginalized within larger social structures.

The sum of the individual studies provides a means of considering CCP’s efficacy in terms of social, cultural, and political affirmation/intervention. Each of the case studies concentrates on one particular area in this regard and includes an examination of the technical means selected (or not selected) to achieve project goals. Key elements which
are common to all Colway-style plays are not discussed in
detail in each case study, but rather left to the specific
studies which best demonstrate their use and efficacy.

All of the projects considered here were produced
between 1990 and 1995, but because the case studies have
been arranged to reflect a social science, rather than a
strictly historical approach, their order of discussion does
not strictly reflect their chronological production. This
tends to obscure the progressive and interdependent nature
of CCP production in Canada. The Eramosa play (1990), for
example, was initiated by local playwright Dale Hamilton who
served as writer and play co-ordinator for the project. Jon
Oram directed. Hamilton was also the impetus behind
Momentum, the first Canadian community play symposium which
was held in Eden Mills, Ontario, September 11-13, 1992.
Peter Smith, artistic director for the Blyth Festival
Theatre, attended the conference and subsequently
commissioned Hamilton and Oram to write and direct the Blyth
plays were initiated and co-produced by Common Weal
Community Plays Inc., a Regina-based organization with a
mandate to "facilitate the promotion and production of
community plays." Common Weal was the brainchild of Rachael
Van Fossen who was introduced to the CCP form when she
served as assistant director on the Eramosa play. Common
Weal began operations in 1992, and was officially registered
as a non-profit organization in March, 1993. It functions in partnership with the Saskatchewan Cultural Exchange Society and has been a major innovator of the CCP form. Common Weal also co-produced a "mini community play" in the remote Dene community of Wollaston Lake in July of 1994, and organized The National Symposium on Community Plays, held in the Qu’Apelle Valley in August of the same year. Common Weal’s board of directors includes Van Fossen and Ruth Howard, the props and costumes designer for the Eramosa, Blyth, and Fort Qu’Appelle projects.

Finally, Howard, Oram, Van Fossen, and Hamilton are all founding members of Everybody’s Theatre Company, the information and idea-based affiliation of practitioners which was founded in 1994 to promote the CCP form. To this end, both Hamilton and Van Fossen have worked with Oram on European productions and Oram has been a central figure at the two Canadian conferences on community plays, while Van Fossen and Howard in their turn participated in the 1994 National Community Plays Weekend Training School in Bedford, England. More recently, Howard designed costumes for the Torbay community play which Oram directed in Southwest England in the summer of 1995.

This close collaboration between practitioners, together with the relatively small number of CCP artists working in Canada and the small number of plays produced to date, makes it difficult to assess fully the degree to which
recurring philosophical themes in the Canadian projects truly represent cultural and community priorities or are simply locally endorsed as appropriate means to serve other ends. The high degree to which the CCPs in these case studies have focused on "the land" and embraced an "ecofeminist" privileging of the childbearing, biological role of women within a paradigm of ecological and environmental concerns, for example, appears to be a distinguishing feature of Canadian, as opposed to British, practice.³ For this reason, this study makes little attempt to analyse such recurring philosophical tropes within an overall Canadian cultural context, but rather focuses on the ways in which the particular community contexts and expressions of these ideological concerns shed light on the CCP form in general.
Notes:

1. Foucault’s concern is with a wide variety of texts written for the "purpose of offering rules, opinions, and advice on how to behave as one should," specifically as they apply to the use of sexuality. For his discussion of the inherent ambiguity of morality, see pp. 25-26.

In my characterization of CCPs as moralistic, I am also indebted to Alan Filewod’s discussion of differences between Canadian and European traditions of documentary drama and collective creation. Filewod suggests that Canadian collectively created documentary dramas are ultimately moralistic in their "preference for community affirmation over [political] ideology" (1987a, 183).

2. See Part I, Chapter Two, endnote four.

3. For a succinct discussion of the principles of ecofeminism and references to further reading see Perry, 13. A discussion of ecofeminism within the general context of ecology and theatre can be found in the 1994 Spring/Summer edition of Theatre. See Sheila Rabillard’s article in particular.
CASE STUDY ONE
Aesthetic Morality
in the Blyth and District Community Play

A Festival hosts a Celebration

*Many Hands*, the opening production of the 1993 Blyth Festival season, was billed as a co-production between the Blyth Festival Theatre and "The Local People of Blyth and District."¹ The idea of producing a CCP had originated with the Festival’s Artistic Director, Peter Smith, and in many respects the theatre appeared well suited to produce such a venture. Founded in 1975, the Festival has always taken pride in the strength of its connection to the local community, and in its early years many Blyth residents volunteered skills and labour, occasionally even participating as actors, writers, and technicians. The Festival also has had a strong tradition of artistic and community support from its Board of Directors and its numerous volunteer committees, and the theatre continues to employ as many artistic directors, actors, and writers with local connections or sensibilities as possible. Producing theatre which is "suitable for the whole family" has also been an important consideration in the Festival’s programming, and such factors as the theatre’s rural location, the lack of a local cinema, affordable admissions, and innovative youth programs have contributed to a high
level of attendance at and participation in the Festival by local youth. Perhaps most significantly, the theatre's mandate has always been to produce plays which "reflect the heritage and life styles of south-western Ontario" (Patterson, 1976).

In other respects, however, the theatre's involvement in producing Many Hands was made problematic by the Festival's highly vested interests in affirming its own position within the community. Smith had been appointed AD for the 1991 season at a time when the Festival's popularity in the township was at a low ebb, and the theatre's intimate past relationship to the community appeared to be in jeopardy. During the tenure of Smith's predecessor, Katherine Kaszas (1985-90), the Board's decision to build "a National profile" through touring and capital expansion projects had resulted in a precedent-setting deficit and increased ticket prices. The growing presence of the theatre had also exacerbated the discomfort already experienced by a number of residents with the cosmopolitan lifestyles and values of visiting artists, while others had complained about the worsening of seasonal inconveniences such as increased traffic and parking problems, and insensitivity to local customs on the part of tourists visiting the theatre. The Board at the time was composed of a high percentage of members from the environs (as distinct from the village of Blyth itself) and many perceived the theatre to be losing
its ability to remain either accessible or responsive to the immediate community. Finally, the risks that Smith had taken in his first two seasons as artistic director to produce theatre that was "a little more urban, a little more on the edge" (Algie 1990) had met with only limited success, and the nature of pressure from the Board prior to the 1993 season can be inferred from the results of a poll taken during a dinner hosted for long-standing patrons of the Festival. Supporters were asked to voice their "artistic requests" for 1993, with the result that Smith was asked to include "something lighter," a comedy and a musical.3

Smith seized on the idea of a CCP as an innovative way to help revitalize his theatre’s community ties and reduce tensions between the Festival and the township at large. He described the idea of the CCP as "a community looking at itself by creating its own story" (cited in King 1993, 110). The end result of Smith’s initiative, the story of Blyth as told in Many Hands, represents a particularly strong example of the way in which all CCPs, through their direct engagement with ethical and moral issues concerning past, present, and future perceptions of their host communities, stage a kind of "aesthetic morality." Notably, the Blyth play tended to avoid in depth discussions of the tensions between the Festival and the local community, and, relative to the other projects considered in these case studies, Many Hands is the most morally prescriptive text, suggesting that
its analysis of community may have been constrained or limited in some way by the Festival’s financial and ideological investment. In order to determine more fully the impact of the professional theatre on the relationship between the "people of Blyth and district" and the CCP form, however, we need to consider first the interplay between ideologies which are inherent in the CCP form itself, those which were particular to the Blyth project, and the manner in which the Festival’s interests were represented and served in both the text and processes of Many Hands.

The Festival’s role as co-producer was to provide administrative and technical support for the project, and for the most part this was reflected in a play which positioned the Festival as only a small part of the larger social experience of community. In an unexpected development, however, the project attracted a majority of participants from the local farms and small land holdings surrounding Blyth, rather than from the village itself. As a consequence, the plight of the family farm became an central part of the project’s representation, as did a focus on youth when members of the Festival’s Young Company and a number of theatre students from a high school in the neighbouring community of Seaforth became involved. As is common with CCPs, the project also attracted a large number of families. In response, Many Hands exploited the feeling of extended family commonly generated by CCPs to sharpen its
thematic focus on the value of family as a means of reconciling the various points of view of its participants. These "family values" were generally presented as non-threatening and universal, whereas differences (when recognized at all) were presented as merely superficial rather than ideological and serious.

Tricks and Tropes: The Experience of Many Hands.

For the spectator and participant alike, most aspects of CCPs are structured to emphasize the social and communal significance of the theatrical event. In performance, intervals such as the gathering and dispersal phases and intermissions receive special attention. The gathering phase (the assembly of spectators prior to the play proper) is crucial to the establishment of a relaxed, non-threatening participatory social context, and CCPs routinely draw upon familiar, extra-theatrical situations. This aspect of Many Hands, for example, demonstrated the form's debt to the traditions and values of 19th century civic celebrations. The play's prologue consisted of four parts: a ceremony which symbolically reclaimed the main building of the Festival theatre as a Memorial Hall built to honour the dead of WWI; a "Parade of Promises," representing a history of the area from glaciation to the present day (complete with tableaux vivants celebrating events such as European emigration, pioneering, the advent of the railways, early political life and suffrage); a procession past "stations of
life" (which, in emphasizing common humanity, affirmed
traditional values of marriage, child rearing, and duty to
the nation); and a giant puppet-play parable in which a
Holstein and a Jersey learn that through "Cow-operation"
they can both get their hay and eat it too.

Prior to the ceremony, spectators, cast, and crew of
all ages were invited to assemble in front of the Festival
Theatre on the town's main street. Here, live music,
wandering vendors in period costumes hawking food and
souvenirs, and tables displaying public-service information
provided a celebratory atmosphere for socializing and
renewing acquaintances. Posters and cutouts of "many hands"
filled the windows of merchant's shops, and bunting adorned
the balcony of The Blyth Inn across the street. "The
Ceremony" was introduced by bagpipes and featured a choral
catechism structured as the "Roll Call of War Dead." Many
costumes had a skeleton motif: a momento mori image which
would recur throughout the play, serving as a reminder both
of the past and of human fragility amidst vibrant images of
contemporary life. The parade functioned as a kind of
"trailer" for the show's contemporary themes in a manner
reminiscent of traditions of Medieval drama and itinerant
players, while the Cow-operation sequence was evocative of
the kind of short vignettes which characterize traditional
pageantry, and was strikingly similar to one of the "Co-op
Quickies" in Paper Wheat, a Canadian documentary drama about
agriculture of 1977 which drew heavily on the same pageant form.

Early in the Prologue the play’s (and the form’s) progressivist philosophy and concern with contemporary life was demonstrated by a scene of "everyday life" briefly interrupting the community’s "ceremonial life." This short piece of Street Theatre focused attention on "Red," a young man dressed in contemporary clothes and heading towards the Blyth Inn. The dialogue implied that a lack of respect for history among young people constituted a community problem and that involvement with the play could function as a corrective for this, while the disjunctive nature of the sequence suggested the Forum Theatre techniques popularized by Augusto Boal in which "spect-actors" intervene in enactments in order to suggest solutions to specific problems and to test the ethics and efficacy of their proposed actions.

Following the parade, spectators were invited to join the procession to the site of the play itself. Those likely to find the walk difficult were encouraged to ride on parade floats or buses. The rest of the crowd, after the symbolic reclamation of Memorial Hall, was prompted to turn its collective back on the professional theatre and march to a local rutabaga factory, the site of the re-visioned grassroots community theatre of Many Hands. Along the route, "rutabaga people," actors in expressively rotund and
mouthless neutral masks, emphasized both the universal and local significance of the project. These "Life Cycle Stations" consisted of **tableaux vivants** staged on the porches of houses, in front of a church, at the historic railway station, and amidst the grave markers of an early cemetery.

The venue itself, the seasonally idle Hubbard rutabaga plant, was fitted out with lighting and with stages of varying heights lining both sides and one end of a rectangular barn. Limited seating was available onstage, and the central space was reserved for promenade. As the audience entered, they found sets, props, and even cast members covered by dust covers while a cast-generated soundscape of wind soughings evoked a sense of cold and barren emptiness. Once established, however, this mood was immediately banished by the "Work Ethic Prelude," a brightly lit musical number using a reggae beat to extoll the virtues of the play's theme of cooperation.

One area of staging was set up to process rutabagas, and here, working on the "line," was "Red Root" (the young man met in front of the Blyth Inn). Working alongside him was "Nancy" (a Native woman with a love of traditional stories), "Theresa," (a young woman just arrived from Jamaica and starting her first day on the job), and "Sharon ... the boss's daughter." As "Sharon" (in an exemplary use of ancestral and occupational casting) immediately pointed
out to "Theresa" and any member of the audience who might not already know, as a member of the Hubbard family, she actually was the boss's daughter in real life.

The central conceit of Act I revolved around stories swapped by the Rutabaga workers and two other characters, "Maggie Pollock" (a respected clairvoyant in the district) and her cynical and antisocial foil, "William Smillie Junior" (the son of a depression-era tramp who inhabited the local swamps). Maggie and Smillie provided comic relief while voicing conflicting progressivist and isolationist perspectives. Maggie (whose business is the future) embraced a kind of liberal humanism which combined optimism and faith in history with an ultimately romantic, intuitive notion of humanity. As she explained first to a figure of censorious adult authority and later to fearful teenagers:

I know that you're afraid of the unknown, afraid of that buried part of yourself that I have unburied and exposed, that part of everyone that is as mysterious and unpredictable as the weather.

Oh, I keep track. No magic in that. I just read the newspapers and keep my ear to the ground.6

Willie, on the other hand (metaphorically and literally, a recent evolutionary product of the swamps), advocated an isolationist stance in which television and technology replaced human contact and creative interaction.7

The various elements of the play itself (part drama,
part variety show, part chautauqua) were held together by a central narrative which emphasized Blyth’s European ancestry and positioned Red, his parents, and ultimately Red’s future wife and children as a kind of "everyfamily." Conflict within the allegorical Root family contained the essence of the play’s moral debate: Red, only son of Gordon and Hazel, is torn between a sense of duty and responsibility to the farm which his parents cannot manage without him and a desire to escape the boredom of his provincial life. Red’s "prodigal journey" (his discontents, his escape, his maturing, his return, and his eventual recognition of the value of his "roots") dramatized (and mythologized) a restless pioneer spirit torn between love of family and an equally deeply "rooted" need to explore new ground and create new opportunities.

Through the stories of Act I, Red (and the audience) were shown various historical perspectives on their community’s history. The moral response proffered by the script was presented in an eclectic range of styles. The stories told by Nancy, for example, taught Red respect for the historic values of local Natives and emphasized European and Aboriginal kinship through the common oppression experienced at the hands of a Colonial Government. Respect and a hint of the exotic were stylistically conveyed through the use of poetry, storytelling, and abstract dance to represent Native mythology and environmental beliefs.
Sequences dealing with oppression combined naturalistic dramatizations and a choral declamation based on historical research that told the story of a Native woman and her English husband dispossessed of their land. The kinship implied by miscegenation was emphasized further by an emblematic representation of Queen Victoria as the common enemy. The colonial subjugation to British Imperial authority experienced by Native and European Canadians alike was thus affirmed by a parodic portrayal of a Queen who expressed in rhyme her policy of decapitation while a cortege of identically dressed "little Queenies" and a complement of "little boy guards" stood in attendance. At the scene's end, Victoria's entourage scattered through the promenade crying "Finders Keepers Loosers [sic] Weepers" in a manner characteristic of the CCP form's use of children to animate the promenade (18).

Melodrama and sentimentalism were the keynotes as Red learned of the European settlement of Blyth and the great hardships suffered by his ancestors as they emigrated from the British Isles in the 1830's. Building to a full-scale production number, characteristic of CCPs in its use of pageantry, spectacle, and celebration of creative human endeavour, the sequence began at "dockside" set up at one end of the hall. Here, cast members scattered among the audience onstage orchestrated the crush of the promenade and transferred the rhythms and atmosphere of longshoremen,
sailors, and emigrants to spectators. Onstage, John Root, his wife, and their 13 year old daughter, Jenny, bade an emotional farewell to family members. Softly, underneath the scene, the cast began to sing a mournful and sentimental ballad. "Sweepers" dressed as sailors folded back the front two corners of the "pier" to reveal a ship's bow and the promenade was transformed into a bobbing "sea" of humanity as actors carrying aloft the sails, masts, and pennants which were to be affixed to the ship passed among, and displaced the crowd. After the positioning of a girl with flowing brown hair as "bowsprit," the ship set out into the crowd. As it made its way through the promenade, the offstage cast initiated a wind and storm soundscape which climaxed in a crescendo of thunder and lightning effects. By storm's end young Jenny had perished. During the "burial at sea," Jenny's body was "floated" shoulder high across the promenade on the hands of cast members. Through a combination of creative human endeavor and sentimentality, the immigrant myth was affirmed.

Other scenes, such as "The Begetting Men Song" used a catchy ditty about complementary gender roles (expressed as blue and pink) to affirm the family values of Red and his forebears. The song evoked Blyth's pioneer life while celebrating traditional male values, including physical strength and virility, and female identity as mother and bearer of children. The scene's ending, a parade of
miniature models of the town’s buildings perched atop poles carried by local children, suggested the efficacy of such maternal/paternal relations.

"The Train of Heroes" involved a parade of actors impersonating prominent men in the area’s history who moved across the stages around the factory’s perimeter chanting the names of local landmarks and destinations. These "Namings" were further formalized by the use of signs and banners to represent the traditional trappings of municipal authority. At destination Blyth, a gaggle of Reeves played by young boys were given chocolate cigars by the "Heroes." In many ways the sequence served to reinforce traditional political and social hierarchies within the context of Red’s "lesson" about the area’s official history: its first train, its settlement, and its early political life. The conclusion of the sequence in a scene called "The Other Side of the Tracks," however, emphasized the often forgotten human cost of history. The story (a sentimental and characteristic example of the CCP’s use of social history) was initiated by Maggie Pollock and told of the death of young Glen Turvey, crushed by the train while attempting to follow his grandfather (13).

History and documentary were used in the course of the play to demonstrate to Red that in wishing to escape his parent’s farm he was not alone: there had always been those who tried to pursue their dreams outside of Blyth. George
Reid, for example, the celebrated Ontario landscape painter, was also the son of a Blyth-area farmer who could not understand his son's sensibilities and ambitions. In an imaginative yet simple metaphoric image characteristic of CCPs, the ambitious and rebellious child Georgie was carried the length of the promenade on the back of the powerful and mature George, an accomplished and celebrated painter at the height of his career. The scene's literal and emblematic significance was that George Reid may not have returned to live in Blyth but, as he pointed out while striding through the promenade carrying both his easel and his earlier self, "you can never really leave" (46).

Through the saga of the Sage sisters Red also learned that his community was not always a welcoming place. The story used techniques from Melodrama and variety show "turns" to tell of how a single mother and her daughters, proprietors of a small and struggling Inn, had been driven from their home by temperance factions, a departure that also meant the loss of their celebrated musical talents. In a characteristic use of local talent, young "Annie Sage" played the violin while the rest of the family accompanied her by tapping spoons on partly filled whiskey glasses. Annie's explanation of the development of the "magical musical glasses" stated a basic tenet of the project's (and community's) work ethic:

I was determined to do more with my life than serve
booze to travellers at a crossroads in the wilderness.

I hated like Hades cleaning glasses, so I decided to find some music in the task. (42)

The value of accepting one's lot in life and finding a creative response to oppressive circumstance was also suggested in a highly theatrical account of how the Sage sisters fled into the swamp to escape a Fenian raid. As a large, backlit scrim unfurled to a piano accompaniment evocative of the silent film era, a shadow play featuring human actors as "puppets" depicted the attack and defeat of giant spiders by an heroic mother and her hat pin. As the fight came to its climax a giant spider with ten-foot tentacles slowly descended over the heads of the audience.

Near the end of Act I, the number and pace of stories was accelerated by the conceit of telephone party lines spreading local gossip. The tale of Doc Purdue and his dancing bear gave opportunity for a Tango by the show's choreographer outfitted in a bear costume. In another episode, the importance to farmers of the contribution of Billy Thuel, the man who brought electric power to Blyth, was reverently illustrated by a parade of illuminated lanterns in the shape of barns moving through the darkened promenade and casting a dance of shadows on the walls and ceiling of the barn like factory.

As historical stories converged towards presentday experience, various story tellers drew parts of the audience
to them to speak briefly of "Whispers": simultaneous and overlapping tales of prohibition and speakeasies, of improprieties in civic government, of the infamous Steven Truscott case (a local teenager accused and convicted of rape and murder), and of such contemporary problems as wife abuse and suicide by bankrupt local farmers.

Following the hiss of these "Whispers," Red seized his opportunity to leave the past and his hometown behind—and thus conclude the first act—by hitching a ride on "the mother of all trucks," a battered and smoking farm vehicle which rumbled and sputtered into the far end of the promenade. There was then a fifteen minute intermission.

Act II, subtitled "The Family Picture," emphasized the play's pedagogic agenda by applying the historical values of Act I to local and specific contemporary experiences. Red, now played by a visibly older actor, had returned to Blyth, married his adolescent sweetheart Joy, and was raising two teen-aged children, Michael and Jenny. In a situation reflecting and affirming contemporary community experience, the young couple lived with Red's parents: Red drove trucks and Joy helped out on the Root farm as the couple saved to build their own home on a "severance" (a legal term for the subdivision of a parcel of farmland, generally for the purposes of building a second family residence).

In the course of the act, three generations of Root family encountered three central and controversial issues
relating to the present day Blyth community: xenophobia, especially against the intrusiveness of the Blyth Theatre itself; the threat of large scale agribusiness to the survival of family farms; and disagreement among the generations about appropriate behavior and attitudes for young people in the 1990’s. Generally, these scenes were treated naturalistically. "The Theatre People" briefly staged an excerpt from the work of one of the Festival’s most produced and popular playwrights: Ted Johns’ Festival script He Won’t Come in From the Barn was complete with the requisite live cow on stage and an "intermission" during which snippets of conversation reflected local complaints about the "bad language" used in the theatre, as well as some common misconceptions about the indecent behavior of "theatre people." The essence of the scene served to demonstrate that, in spite of superficial differences in such things as dress or late versus early working hours, actors and community residents shared common values and concerns.6

Xenophobia was also explored in two other episodes. "Newcomers," set in the Blyth Inn (the "Rubber Boot" in local parlance), presented an idealized, intergenerational exchange of ideas which included the testimony of a husband and wife about their struggle to learn English and "fit in" after emigrating from Holland, and the story of a East Indian man who recently bought a thriving local business and
popular hangout only to find himself isolated and his business failing.

Two other scenes, "Nothin' to do" (an exchange between young people at the Rubber Boot) and "The Tragedy Doll," dealt specifically with issues of youth, providing roles for a number of young performers from the community. The first sequence debated the relative importance of sport and culture, and in defending the performance of a musical number by the Festival's Young People's Company implicitly advocated involvement in theatre as a panacea for the boredom of youth. The second sequence demonstrated the value of history for young people as Red's daughter, Jenny, learned the history of the ancient doll which her ill-fated namesake had carried in the 1830's on the Root ancestors' voyage to the new world.

Fear of change was explored in a debate about the pros and cons of agribusiness as practiced by the local branch of the international Agracrop Corporation, contextualized within familiar progressivist rhetoric by comparing points of correspondence between the company's philosophy of shared resources and the values of cooperation espoused by the influential CBC Farm Radio Forums of the 1940's and 50's.

Other scenes such as the "Circus of Merchants and Councillors" transparently used simple illusions of levitation, magic tricks, and clowning to entertain, with cameo appearances by local politicians and business owners
who supported the Festival and the Blyth project. "A Day in the Life" used a pair of slide projectors to present a series of images of past and present farm life which emphasized the enduring and universal nature of the problems faced by farmers, and by extension, by the entire community. Occupational casting in these sequences served to enhance the project's sense of inclusivity and endorsement while the sequences themselves emphasized community interdependence.

Through the stories of Act I and the dramatized experiences of Act II, Red was represented as coming to understand more fully the restless pioneer spirit which characterized both young and old members of his family and community, with his anagnorisis occurring during "The Bucket Brigade," a staged fire calling for audience participation. Recognizing the value of co-operation, Red and his father agreed to a compromise whereby Red would divide his time between his driving job and farming.

As the play ended, the wisdom of the Root family's resolve was demonstrated as the big rock which generations of Roots had ineffectually attempted to move with levers, horses, and dynamite was finally shifted with the help of cast, crew, and audience. These "Big Rock" sequences (drawing on the techniques of Boal's Forum and the content of Brecht's Lehrstück) served as prologue to a demonstration of community action characteristic of CCP agitprop. As the play moved to its finale, a "Ghost Village" sequence evoked
poetic memories of a small local hamlet, today the site only of lilac bushes and a graveyard. This sentimental affirmation of the transient nature of life set the scene for a vision of the future demanding present action. The Epilogue, staged simultaneously at opposite ends of the hall, presented two conflicting visions of the community's future: one an apocalyptic depiction of conflict, isolation, and environmental degradation; the other a visual fantasy of community stressing cooperation and communication. The need for immediate social action was underlined as the two images were drawn toward the present. In a sequence manifesting the essential characteristics of agitprop's call to action, the cast, dropping the semblance of roles to become both a literal and emblematic community, began to chant the lyrics of the Co-operation Song. As the chant gave way to song, spectators were invited to join in as the entire assembly processed out of the venue into the social realm of contemporary life.

Aesthetic Morality and Consolation

This kind of emphasis on the social significance of the theatrical event in CCPs suggests other ways in which the mise en scène of the Blyth play in particular offered opportunities for the "ethical subject" (as described by Foucault) to engage with the project's aesthetic morality. The extended parable of the "Roots," for example, appeared to admonish the spectator to consider community as an
extended family and to accord its members and its values the kind of respect and co-operation that characterize the "ideal family" (as represented by the project and its processes). At the same time, however, the story of the "Roots" embraced an essential paradox: the family's greatest strengths but also its greatest weaknesses co-existed as manifestations of a restless pioneer spirit torn between a deep need for the challenges of new frontiers and a fundamental dedication to family and home.

In this regard, a number of ideological principles affecting the portrayal of "family values" in Many Hands are inherent in the CCP form itself. The validation of a progressivist approach to history and the positioning of particular values as "timeless," for example, are largely implicit in the form's use of community history and experience as the basic material of scripts. But while the Root family tree was essentially patrilinear, scenes depicting "official" history consistently drew attention to the neglected role of women in history (a common trope in CCPs because of the large number of women participants). Maggie Pollock's interjection of herself into a "photograph" of the "Train of Heros" in order to tell the story of little Glen Turvey's death, for example, positioned her as an emblematic example of the unacknowledged woman erased from the notion that history records the deeds of great men, and implicitly challenged traditional assumptions about methods
of gathering, interpreting, and reporting historical data.\textsuperscript{9} The "Train" sequence also demonstrated the CCP's tendency to value and reclaim social or popular histories alongside, or even in contradiction to, official histories. For example, the conflicting images presented by the juxtaposition of the "Heros" and little Glen Turvey (a Root and thus "everychild") illustrated the often neglected social cost of history. At the same time, such episodes as the gaggle of little boy Reeves who were bribed with chocolate cigars simultaneously affirmed and challenged the kind of traditional hierarchies organizing small town Ontario life.

The "ethical subject" was challenged to accommodate other reactionary and progressivist tensions within the project as well. Overall, \textit{Many Hands} tended to celebrate and affirm traditional "family values" concerned with gender roles and patriarchal authority. At the same time, however, the emblematic staging of the clairvoyant Maggie Pollock suggested more progressive parameters in the project's representation of women. Maggie's character was central to the contemporary present of the play, yet her unrationlized "appearances" in various historical eras, including the story of her acquittal on charges of witchcraft and her subsequent constraint to practice her "craft" in secret collusion with other women, positioned her both as the intuitive "Other" operating outside the traditional structures of power, and as "timeless" community conscience
and visionary. Maggie’s unmarried and childless status was a notable exception to an otherwise "ecofeminist" portrayal in which women were represented as equally capable as men, but biologically and morally obligated to family first and to politics second. Ultimately, however, Maggie’s transference of maternal devotion to her community, together with her position as Other, proffered a compensatory moral worth for women which contained, and therefore "re recuperated," any potential challenges to traditional notions of gender, thus benefiting conventional structures of patriarchal authority.¹⁰

Many Hands also promoted compensatory values through its use of familiar experiences and expectations. The play’s intermission, for example, announced by Sharon, the boss’s daughter, as a "Fifteen minute break" with an invitation to join "the Hallahan Family Reunion," affirmed the universal nature of the community’s work ethic and the compensations offered by family. Other familiar experiences within the play itself, such as the use of popular traditions of humour drawing on familiar tropes like the "battle of the sexes," alcohol use, or sex and pregnancy, served to affirm elements of the status quo concerning issues of gender, age, and class.

A similar effect can be seen in the use of ritualized namings and localisms, occupational casting, personal testimonies and social histories, and other documentary
elements which serve as primary means of consolidating community identity in CCPs. This privileging of local knowledge and experience may serve to empower participants and contribute to creative autonomy, but it can also undermine the authority of competing polemic perspectives which are not sanctioned by existing local circumstance and are therefore not validated for ideological consideration.\textsuperscript{11} To counteract this, CCPs often include sequences designed to lessen xenophobic tendencies: the staged public testimonies and debates about issues such as Agracrop and immigration in Many Hands, for example.

The degree to which the communal processes of creating and witnessing CCPs remain visible in performance also is reflected in a project's aesthetic morality, and in Many Hands the relationship between process and product served to affirm an ideology in which co-operation and creative expression were essential components of a work ethic valuing pragmatism and frugality. This was expressed in the occupational nature of the venue and in the CCP's imaginative use of effects which depended on actor-based transformations and mechanical effects emphasizing human, as opposed to technical, contributions--the sequence depicting the emigration of the Roots to the new world for example. Work and pleasure in Many Hands, far from being mutually exclusive, were portrayed as functioning together as an integral part of local culture. And while all CCPs
reconfigure cultural production to the degree that they query traditional notions of theatre through the use of vaudeville and circus techniques, localisms, "turns" by local talent and the like, in the case of Many Hands this use of theatre explicitly challenged the local structures of artistic valuation and authority as represented by the Blyth Theatre Festival. Furthermore, the form's eclecticism, supported by its extended process of production and the degree to which plays are expressly connected to community life, might appear to suggest a postmodern desire to erase traditional boundaries between art, life, and class; but CCPs are also analogous to the post-colonial drive to assert an indigenous cultural identity, and conflating a postmodern concern with the individual with a postcolonial concern with community can mask or dilute the inherent political agendas of cultural expression. This was clearly demonstrated in the presentation of Many Hands as a popular and participatory alternative to the "professional theatre" represented by the Blyth Festival. The depiction of the judge who passed sentence on Maggie Pollock's "witchcraft," for example, was resonant with the kinds of tensions which continue to exist between the "theatre" and the "community." The "Judge," played by Artistic Director Smith, was ridiculously outfitted in a wig of empty toilet paper rolls and brandished a bowl brush as a gavel. When Maggie and Mrs. Sage retreated to the privacy of the outdoor toilet to
discuss the details of the trial, the spectre of the judge rose up through an unoccupied seat. The obvious humour of pushing Judge Smith, the community's emblematic arbiter of theatrical taste, back down into what he refers to as the "black stinking hole" (of witchcraft or intuition), while ostensibly striking a metaphoric blow for both individual autonomy and a populist theatre based on community sensibilities, also raised issues around the imposition of censorious "community" or individual standards on the theatre. Depending on the participant or spectator's degree of knowledge about the politics of the Blyth project, this apparently good-natured staging of "community" criticism, alternately masked or drew attention to the Festival's ultimate control of the project, and ran the risk of potentially feeding the sense of alienation experienced by both sides. The implications of the privy gesture became increasingly clear later in the play during "The Theatre People" sequence which staged community criticism of the Festival's use of "bad language" onstage.

For the most part, however, the production's primary concern with affirming non-contentious community values and its relatively modest engagement with issues of social intervention were reflected in a consolatory approach to community building in which participants and spectators were idealistically assured of their ability to overcome problems through enacting and witnessing simplified, often
sentimentalized dramatic analogues.\textsuperscript{13}

As Many Hands demonstrates, however, CCPs can be read descriptively or prescriptively, and the semiotic complexities of theatrical production tend to discourage monolithic interpretations which might alienate widespread local support for projects. Because support is most directly tendered in terms of participation, and CCP policy is to exclude no one who wishes to be included (my emphasis), the extent to which projects are able to contribute to a meaningful discourse about community depends both on the degree to which projects are successful in attracting widespread community participation, and on the nature of representation in the processes of creation and performance.

Omission is therefore an integral part of a project's aesthetic morality, implicit in avoidance or sublimation of contentious community perspectives and in a combination of idealization and appropriation of critical aspects in the scripts themselves. In the Blyth project, in spite of the project's apparent focus on challenges facing young people, teenage participants often appeared to be articulating adult perspectives about things like dress codes, the pressures of conformity, and the peril of AIDS. The script gave passing mention to the danger, but not the causes, of drinking-and-driving (even though one young participant had recently been involved in a fatal accident involving alcohol), and its
romanticization (and recuperation) of a young man’s desire to escape the parochial pressures of community effectively sublimated serious criticism of the xenophobic pressures stemming from ethnic or gender prejudice. In emphasizing "family values," Many Hands uncompromisingly affirmed traditional heterosexuality despite the ghostly presence of alternative viewpoints in the sexual anxieties of adolescent participants and in the themes of xenophobia, ostracization, growing up and leaving home (and, more implicitly, in the project’s negotiation of gender-based myths about "artists" and "feminine" sensitivities, theatre aesthetics and behavior, and the freedoms required by the artistic temperament). Unspoken differences between an aspiring "truck driver’s" and an aspiring "artist’s" reasons for leaving Blyth (and returning or not), for example, were resonant in the casting and costuming of a youth with the sensitive and classically "pretty" look of a Greek Kritious Boy to play "Georgie Reed," while Red was played by a tall, rangy lad wearing a baseball cap. Ultimately, although the project’s inclusion of feminist and ethnic perspectives within its thematic concern with xenophobia acknowledged a certain measure of acceptance of contrary points of view, perspectives on sexual orientation other than a "compulsory heterosexuality" were conspicuously absent, suggesting that homosexuality could not be accommodated within existing portrayals of family and community.¹⁴
Jeffrey Weeks suggests that sexual difference is one of the most fundamental threats to "traditional" family authority, and it is therefore not surprising that it should not be represented in Many Hands. Absence, however, is the antithesis of participation, and as such represents one of the greatest challenges to the CCP's philosophy of community building. In the case of Many Hands, the relative absence of contentious issues, and the project's emphasis on consolatory and recuperative approaches to community building were certainly in the best interests of Smith, whose primary motivation for producing the play was to affirm the Festival's position in the community while adhering to the Board's admonition to produce "something lighter, a comedy and a musical." Smith's instincts as artistic director in this regard appear to have been sound; the show was the most financially successful show of the 1993 season, its run was completely sold out, and Festival staff have subsequently donated their services to organize a number of well attended reunions of community play participants.

Generally, however, the project did not develop beyond the community affirming strategies which are the first steps of CCPs: the identification and representation of values which are to be perceived as universal and fundamental. On the other hand, the enthusiastic reception of Many Hands by both participants and spectators suggests that the CCP's
emphasis on the social significance of creating and performing locally-engaged theatre answered a need which was not being met by the existing model of professional theatre. But while "the people of Blyth and District" appear to have supported the project's conservative (and ultimately flattering) portrayal, the failure of the project to develop to the degree where it also (in CCP terms) "challenged and implicated" its community may be attributed in part to the absence of a strong and autonomous steering committee.

The very act of producing a CCP in partnership with a resident professional theatre company with such vested interests transgressed the spirit, if not the letter, of the CCP's usual guidelines for professional and voluntary involvement in a number of ways. CCPs generally assume that the concerns of professionals employed by projects are primarily artistic in nature, yet because Many Hands was considered part of the Festival season, the project received a proportionate share of the theatre's budget and a corresponding obligation to answer to the Festival's board. Where standard CCP policy advocates that voting members of steering committees should not include members of the professional core, in the case of the Blyth project, the presence of Smith and other members of the Festival's staff on the already unwieldy steering committee of fourteen, resulted in a number of cases where decisions made by Smith and his staff over-rode the steering committee's authority.\[17\]
The politics of the Festival also affected the choice of at least one member of the professional core, whose appointment was made by Smith in spite of objections from the steering committee and other members of the professional core, and resulted in considerable friction. Those opposed to the appointment argued that the member's philosophy of working would be incompatible with CCP philosophy. In another instance (made ironic by the project's stated concern with addressing issues of xenophobia), Festival publicity, on at least one occasion, tried to downplay the extent of Jon Oram's contribution because his British roots (and those of the CCP form) were seen as a potential embarrassment to Blyth's "home-grown" Canadian mandate.

The Festival's role as co-producer was also reflected in an interesting configuration of the CCP's inherent "siege mentality." The costume and prop designer, Ruth Howard, kept a diary of the project which notes initial divisions between "us" and the regular theatre staff, with ongoing feelings of invasion or displacement on both sides as the rehearsal halls, shops, and resources of the Festival were taken over for use by the community play. However, these relatively minor tensions between the "community play" and the Festival appear to have averted any sense of "siege" between community participants and members of the professional core not otherwise associated with the Festival. And, given that the project's mandate was to bridge differences between all
these groups, negotiating such frictions appears to have been a justifiable activity in itself. Ultimately, those who worked together on the project generally expressed a belief that Many Hands had been successful in encouraging mutual respect and understanding. 18

In the end, the Festival's dominant position in the project and the resulting sense of undermined self-determination on the part of the steering committee and professional core appears to have contributed to the Blyth play's tendency to avoid in-depth explorations of the issues which divided the co-producers. The fact that the production was part of the Festival Theatre's season, however, suggests that, unlike most CCPs, Many Hands' engagement with social issues must also be considered within the context of that theatre's present and past seasons. The remainder of the 1993 season, for example, included Mary-Colin Chisholm's Safe Haven (a play about a young mother afflicted with AIDS returning home to rural Nova Scotia) and Raymond Storey's examination of xenophobia in The Glorious 12th. Past seasons have included considerations of issues such as local immigration, and The Blyth Memorial History Show by Jim Schaefer provided a precedent for an historical look at Blyth in 1977.

A primary role of the Blyth play in the 1993 season appears to have been to generate a sense of "returning the theatre to its community roots" through the involvement and
participation of local residents, while avoiding the kinds of risks which the Festival could undertake elsewhere in its programming. In this regard, the Festival’s ideological agenda in producing a CCP appears relatively innocuous. The overtly prescriptive nature of the Blyth project’s affirmation of moral codes, however, raises general questions about the combined use of animation techniques, sentimentality, and moral conservatism as a means of attracting widespread support for less clearly stated ideological agendas. This is a concern in all CCPs, but it is especially relevant in the case of the political interventions of the Eramosa project. Before turning to this case study, however, we need to examine further the formal ways in which CCPs communicate their aesthetic morality through a consideration of promenade staging in the Fort Qu’Appelle plays.
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Notes:

1. The Blyth and District Community Play program, 1993. The play was written by Dale Hamilton with Jon Oram as dramaturge and director. Ruth Howard designed costumes, masks, and puppets. The production involved a professional core of 10, plus 3 paid assistants; a cast of 140; 30 musicians; a stage management team of 8; and 30 people working front of house.

2. This information is based on personal interviews with the Festival office manager, Karen Stewart, and other staff and community members. An account of these factors also can be found in King.

3. From a telephone interview with Gayle Waters, a board member, cited in King, 108.

4. As noted, the Festival has a strong historical connection to youth, and in addition to the Young People's Company, the Festival also hosts an annual high school drama festival. The participation of the Seaforth students was facilitated by an OAC "Artists in the Schools" program, which the project's costume designer, Ruth Howard, had been conducting in the months prior to Many Hands.

5. A description of "the usual program for the public commemoration of history in the late 19th century" can be found in Glassberg, pp 18-21. Included in this program are monument dedications, historical orations or speeches on a moral or patriotic theme, parades or processions,
reunions, and displays of relics.


7. Similarities between the CCP form and American historical pageantry are illustrated in the philosophical positions advocated by "Maggie" and "Smillie" which correspond precisely to Glassberg's description of "progressivism" and "antimodernism."

8. According to King, tensions between the "theatre people" and local residents were reflected in the standard operating procedures of the artistic director, Katherine Kaszas, who required actors to attend rehearsal sessions advising them about "acceptable Blyth behavior." In spite of the project's original intent to address tensions between "the theatre people" and the community at large, however, the intermission sequence is the only overt discussion of xenophobia concerning these two groups in the entire play.

9. For a concise discussion of historiography and common historical practice in this regard see Postlewait.

10. In my assessment of compensation and recuperation in *Many Hands*, I am drawing on Judith Stephens' analysis of gender ideology in Progressive era drama. In Stephens' formulation, "... 'compensation' refers to the presentation of imagery and ideas that tend to elevate the 'moral value' of femininity and 'recuperation' refers to the
process of negating and defusing challenges to the historically dominant meaning of gender in particular periods . . . " (1990, 283). Stephens cites Michelle Barrett to demonstrate that compensating women for "systematic denial of opportunities" through "a corresponding ideology of moral worth" is a long standing strategy of recuperation (1990, 287).

11. Filewod notes this tendency in the Canadian collectively created documentary drama, which he suggests is "anti-ideological" in that it often does not try to "explain the significance of the matter it documents in an intellectual scheme, but rather suggests the significance of a shared historical or community experience by transforming it into art" (1987a, 183).

12. Helen Tiffin, for example, has stressed that the term "postmodern" can be "applied hegemonically " as a strategy to assimilate postcolonial works into the dominant cultures from which they are asserting independence or difference (1988, 172).

13. Michael Blankfort, in his pioneering work on social drama, cites this kind of "consolation" as one of three forms of "wish-fulfillment" which are common to the bourgeois theatre and function as a means of escaping social reality: purgation, sublimation, and consolation. Blankfort's theories were published in three issues of New Theatre in 1934, and are concisely summarized in McDermott
1965, 76. Blankfort's ideas on purgation have been more recently taken up in Augusto Boal's reservations about catharsis.

14. Adrienne Rich, for example, discusses "compulsory heterosexuality" as "a beachhead of male dominance" and a means of regulating the procreative and sexual functions of women. Significantly, both Maggie and Smillie, the only central characters not part of a traditional family, were portrayed as asexual.

15. Weeks examines the historical relationship between notions of family and the control of sexuality in his chapter on "The New Moralism" pp. 33-57. Of course, it may also be argued that alternative sexual orientation was not a major concern at Blyth, except perhaps in the unspoken reasons for youths leaving home and in the community's distrust of Festival "theatre people" (Play Co-ordinator, Karen Stewart, for example, noted cases of men wearing earings offending community standards). These notions of "absence" in the rural context of the Blyth project are worth noting, however, because of the contrast they afford to the other case studies, and in particular the inner-urban subject of the final case study which focused extensively on issues of xenophobia and isolation as they relate to young people in general and a young gay male in particular.

16. Demand for tickets was so great that Smith unilaterally decided to increase the number sold for each
performance in spite of Oram's objections that this would adversely affect the experience of spectators, especially children.

17. The role of the steering committee in the processes of representation and participation will be taken up in greater detail in the third case study. In addition to Smith, the other main Festival staff member involved in the community play was the office manager, Karen Stewart, who served both on the steering committee and as Play Coordinator. Other factors, including the Festival's obvious experience at producing theatre, conspired to blur the lines between the role of the professional core as "animators" and that of the Festival as co-producer. Final drafts of the script were delayed as a result of illness experienced by the playwright, while Oram, the only member of the professional core with experience in dealing with these sorts of complications in CCPs, was often only available by telephone because of the distances and costs involved in either bringing him from England or having him onsite for an extended residency period.

18. At the same time, it should also be noted that staff members who worked on the project did so within the context of their present and future employment with the Festival.

19. Weeks' explanation of the neo-conservative political use of this kind of evocation of moral issues is
instructive:

The real triumph of the right has been its recognition that ideological interventions on traditionally personal or private issues can capture significant support for a wide-ranging social and political agenda. It can constitute and unify political forces on the right in a way the older conservative interventions were unable to do. (1985, 38)
CASE STUDY TWO

Staging Race in The Calling Lakes Community Plays

Overview and Focus:

The Calling Lakes community play, originally entitled Pa’ko’pi’ci wak, was first staged during the summer of 1992, with a re-cast and revised version of the play subsequently mounted in 1993 with the new title, Ka’ma’mo’pi’ cik/The Gathering.¹

Calling Lakes is an English translation of the Cree name for Saskatchewan’s Qu’Appelle Valley which is located about an hour and a half drive northeast of Regina. The area is home of the historic village of LeBret (originally a Metis settlement), and of the Treaty Four lands: one of the two major concentrations of Plains Indians reserves in the province.² Fort Qu’Appelle, with about 2,000 residents of mostly European descent, is the population centre of the Valley. In the 1860’s, the Fort was one the Hudson’s Bay Company’s largest buffalo trading centres; today the town is at the centre of a primarily non-native tourist industry which includes provincial parks, camping, boating, and cottages.

The Valley has a deeply entrenched history of racism, and in setting out to address and heal some of the long-standing tensions between Native and non-native residents, the Calling Lakes play challenged the CCP concept of inclusivity to accommodate residents of European descent in
addition to the area's diverse population of Cree, Saulteaux, Sioux, and Metis. The project's general mandate was to promote cross-cultural awareness and integration; its specific goals included creating a forum where participants from the various communities could expand their social spheres, break through stereotypes in order to meet as individuals, and experience increased opportunities to interact as both collaborators and as friends. To this end, the project sought, and largely achieved, a balance of input and representation from a range of Native and non-native communities in all aspects of administration, research, artistic and technical direction, production, and performance. The project was initiated by Rachael Van Fossen on behalf of Common Weal Community Plays, and the early collaboration and support of representatives from local organizations such as the Touchwood File Hills Qu'Appelle (TFRQ) Tribal Council and the Qu'Appelle Indian Residential School ensured Native participation and facilitated outreach into local reserves.

The resulting play, Pa'ma'mo'pi cik/The Gathering, created a kind of theatrical dialogue in which a revisionist First Nations perspective (often dealing with instances of Aboriginal oppression) engaged with a primarily social account of European settlement and development to present parallel histories of the Qu'Appelle Valley. In keeping with the collaborative spirit of the project, the 1992
steering committee initiated a policy whereby authorship of
the script and artistic direction of the play would be
undertaken by professional teams consisting of one Native
and one non-native. In the case of co-authorship, however,
the difficulties of this system (artistic and cultural) led
to the disintegration of the writing team eight weeks before
the date set for a final draft, and the script for the 1992
production was subsequently undertaken by co-directors
Darrel Wildcat and Rachael Van Fossen.3

The enthusiasm generated by the 1992 play fostered a
belief that a remounted production would continue the
project’s momentum towards diminishing the area’s racial
tensions. While the initiative for the 1993 remount was
entirely local, Wildcat and Van Fossen, with financial
assistance from the Saskatchewan Arts Board, were
commissioned to revise the script. The 1993 production was
also enthusiastically received both locally and regionally,
but while the remount was considered an unqualified social
and artistic success, the project left in its wake a debt of
almost $30,000.4

The collaboration of hundreds of native and non-native
participants in a public representation and celebration on
the scale of the Calling Lakes project was unprecedented in
the history of the Qu’Appelle Valley, and Ka’ma’mo’pi’cik
can be seen to have employed race in both literal and
emblematic terms as a means to stage social and cultural
intervention. The success of the project depended on the ability of its organizers to exploit and adapt the homogenizing tendencies inherent in the CCP form's conception of community to accommodate and celebrate cultural difference as well as similarity, and to this end the experiential and participatory nature of promenade performance, especially as used in conjunction with the project's treatment of history, was central to the play's success. To appreciate fully the accomplishments of the Calling Lakes play in this regard, however, we first need to consider the roots of racial conflict in the Qu’Appelle Valley.5

A Valley Divided:

A concise account of historical factors contributing to the valley's racial and cultural tensions can be found in Sarah Carter's Lost Harvests. Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy, 1990. Carter provides a detailed and comprehensive examination of documents relating not only to the terms and conditions of Treaty Four, but also to the political maneuvering and systemic racism behind the Government's failure to honour the terms of the Treaty. Carter's focus is on the failure of agriculture on western Canadian reserves, and her research traces the development of the racial tensions which the Calling Lakes plays struggled to ameliorate. In particular, Carter documents the construction of commonly held European perceptions and
myths as they were applied to the Aboriginal population of the Qu'Appelle Valley; for the most part, the same myths that the Native history in *The Gathering* sought to challenge. For these reasons her work warrants citing at length.⁶

Carter's work rejects the standard explanation for the failure of Native agriculture which contends that Indians could not be convinced of the value or necessity of the enterprise. It was believed that the sustained labour required of them was alien to their culture and that the transformation of hunters into farmers was a process that historically took place over centuries. . . . [L]ittle evidence exist[s] to support this interpretation. It was the Indians, not the government, that showed an early and sustained interest in establishing agriculture on the reserves. Although the government publicly proclaimed that its aim was to assist Indians to adopt agriculture, little was done to put this course into effect. In fact government policies acted to retard agriculture on the reserves. The Indians had to persuade government officials of the necessity and importance of agriculture. In treaty negotiations and later assemblies, they sought assurance that a living by agriculture would be provided to them, and they used every means at their disposal to persuade a reluctant
government that they be allowed the means to farm.

. . . In the decade after 1885, government policies made it virtually impossible for reserve agriculture to succeed because the farmers were prevented from using the technology required for agricultural activity in the West. The promotion of reserve land surrender after the turn of the century further precluded the hope that agriculture could form the basis of a stable economy on reserves. (1990, preface).

Carter contends that the widely held popular opinion that Indians and agriculture were irreconcilable is a myth that originated in the time of Victorian Canadians, was largely constructed and supported by government policy and the press, and, until very recently, was legitimized in historical accounts. Carter traces the MacDonald Government's response to mounting public criticism of Native treatment after 1885 in a series of documents which repeatedly sought to justify previous policies rather than admit the severity of the problems created by past policy and seek new solutions. Carter maintains that the MacDonald government systematically denied responsibility for the failure of Native agriculture while perpetuating racist ideas of laziness, unsuitability to farming, and primitiveness which resulted in a public disposition to blame the Indians because of their "assumed disinclination to work, propensity to beg, and their fondness for alcohol"
Carter notes the complicity of the press in the stance of the province’s first newspaper, Battleford’s Saskatchewan Herald, which in 1878-79, in spite of direct evidence to the contrary, consistently denied that First Nations people were starving, and by April 1879 was editorializing that the "Indians" were being given "too much" (1990, 104).

Contradicting the Herald’s claim, Native band councils in the Qu’Appelle Valley have always maintained that portions of land guaranteed by Treaty Four were never ceded to First Nations’ control. The issue of land ownership was complicated by early government policies such as "Severalty" which was proposed in 1888 but not implemented until sometime after 1896. "Severalty" subdivided reserves into separate family farms and resulted in the creation of a class of peasant farmers without markets and with no ability (or permission) to sell their surpluses in order to invest in higher yielding methods of production. This policy, by effectively undermining existing tribal structures, also inhibited Aboriginal ability to seek redress.

At the time when the idea of a community play was conceived, racism and racial tensions were firmly entrenched in the Valley, and the most significant movements towards integration and interaction were proceeding on a legal, as opposed to a social or cultural, basis. The TFHQ Tribal Council, for example, was in the midst of a land claim
dispute with the Federal Government which involved 1300 acres of land to the east and also actually inside Fort Qu’Appelle. The disputed properties within the village were all designated Federal or Crown land, and a growing body of evidence pointed to the Federal Government’s failure to honour the terms of Treaty Four. This dispute was causing concern among a substantial number of village residents who, in spite of the Federal status of the disputed lands, began to voice fears that their own land and homes were being threatened. Several residents eventually demanded and held a public referendum (even though it could have no legal status) to determine whether or not residents of the Fort would permit land within the city limits to be changed to reservation status. In contrast to this kind of response, other residents of the area welcomed the idea of the proposed community play as an opportunity for Native and non-native residents alike to work together in a timely movement towards racial and cultural awareness and interaction.

Text and Performance:

The program notes for Ka‘ma’mo’pi cik describe the play as "an amazing journey through time which reflects the hopes, dreams, conflict and despair of the vast array of cultures that have called the Qu’Appelle Valley home." In reflecting these hopes and dreams, the play employed characteristic CCP strategies for delineating and
constructing common cultural ground. Common humanity and values were emphasized in depictions of marriage, birth, family life, work, and dedication to the land, while other scenes depicted hardships suffered by Natives and non-natives alike. Scenes such as those representing the difficulties of farming and survival in the face of a harsh climate and capitalist exploitation by banks and the Hudson's Bay and Northwest Trading Companies, for example, portrayed an essentialist notion of humanity in which the resilience of the human spirit was presented as transcending race and culture.

As noted by the project's organizers, however, representing conflict and despair within a celebratory form also required that the play "relate some very difficult history in a manner which was non-threatening, yet challenging, to the audience and participants" (Report 1993, 2). For the most part, this "difficult" history pertained to the injustices and oppression suffered by the Aboriginal population: the severe Native food shortage of 1878-9, the inequities of government farming and reserve policies, the corrupt system of Indian Agents, the pain and trauma of residential schools, the liminal status and historical complaints of the Metis, the suppression of sacred ceremonies, and the demolition of a sacred rock in order to create the Qu'Appelle system of lakes, for example.

The attention given to the depiction of the signing of
Treaty Four is indicative of the project’s approach to scenes representing Native oppression. Much of the dialogue dealing with the Treaty was taken verbatim from documented sources, and in a videotape about the making of *Ka’mam’o’pi’cik*, Vern Bellegarde, the Steering Committee Chair, stressed the importance to the First Nations communities of having these actual words of the Treaty restated publicly. From a Native perspective, Bellegarde’s concern with making people aware of “this real history,” points to the importance of such scenes as both a form of public testimonial, and as a form of public “witnessing” of past oppression and injustice.

From a European perspective, “witnessing” such scenes proffered a predominantly liberal stance which, while encouraging recognition of the historic roots of racial tension and distrust, offered a complementary form of cultural affirmation or validation in which feelings of personal or cultural guilt for past wrongs could be ameliorated or even abrogated by the presentation of the forces of oppression as faceless and depersonalized government. In characteristic CCP fashion, the villains were seen as coming from outside the community.

Other scenes designed to foster cultural and cross-cultural awareness contributed to these complementary affirmations from a more celebratory perspective. Story-telling scenes such as the creation myth of the "Trickster
and the Flood," for example, presented not only a version of the native legend itself, but also acknowledged appropriate spiritual and ceremonial contexts for the presentation. As the character of Amisk, the storyteller, explained to the "children" gathered around him:

You know you’re not supposed to talk about the trickster in the summer, you tell stories in the winter when he is asleep. But just this one time so you’ll learn.  

In such instances, "learning" served cross-cultural and cultural agendas simultaneously. For participants, this kind of expression of respect for First Nations beliefs and spirituality began much earlier in the project. A "Cleansing Ceremony" involving chants and the burning of sweet grasses, for example, was held at the play site prior to production and the entire company was invited to participate as the area was prepared for the cultural rites to be enacted and represented in the play.

Obviously the multicultural nature of the project challenged it to accommodate readings of the script and performance from the perspectives of at least two broad cultural traditions. In addition, however, the goals of the project, as expressed in its staging of inter-related Native and non-native histories, in its mix of cultural and cross-cultural agendas, and in the varying strategies it provided for community validation, insisted that moments of the play
intended to function as cultural affirmation for one constituent community must also be able to prompt an experience of intervention in the other, without alienating members of either cultural tradition. John Fiske's focus on popular culture as a process of production as opposed to consumption offers insight into how this duality remained "non-threatening."

Fiske maintains that all popular texts function as "a cultural resource out of which numerous new texts are made" (1989, 148). This defining characteristic means that for texts to be popular, they must above all be "producerly": that is they must offer "not just a plurality of meanings, but a plurality of ways of reading, of modes of consumption" (1989, 145). Fiske uses the term "productivity" to describe the activity of producing relevant and functional meanings from popular texts (as opposed to a more passive consumption of the preferred meanings proffered by the text).

Application of Fiske's approach to the Calling Lakes play accommodates not only the various cultural perspectives and the pluralistic nature of the project's affirmations and interventions, but also the participatory (or, to appropriate Fiske's term, the "producerly") nature of promenade performance. To begin with, CCPs in general, considered both in their process of creation and in their "reading" in performance, closely coincide with Fiske's description of what makes a text "popular":
Popular texts must offer popular meanings and pleasures—popular meanings are constructed out of the relevances between the text and everyday life, popular pleasures derive from the production of these meanings by the people, from the power to produce them. There is little pleasure in accepting ready-made meanings, however pertinent. The pleasure derives both from the power and process of making meanings out of their resources and from the sense that these meanings are ours as opposed to theirs (1989, 127).

In the case of CCPs in general, and of Ka’ma’mo’pi cik in particular, however, popular pleasures may be variously found either in accepting the preferred or "ready-made" readings of the script (which are already productive in their response to "official" history, "professional" theatre, and the like), or in creating "relevant" oppositional readings, or, of course, ideally in combining both.¹⁰

Narrative Strategies of "Productive" Intervention:

The "producerly" nature of the Calling Lakes text was most overtly expressed in its various strategies of narrative intervention which were used to emphasize the relevance and social significance of the project.¹¹ Direct audience address by narrator figures, for example, was used to interject editorial commentary and thereby intervene in the various "official," revised, and social histories
presented in the play. While this strategy recurred throughout the play, its most concentrated application was in a series of vignettes surrounding the Treaty signing. Here commentary from the cultural perspectives represented by "Fool" (a medieval clown figure) and "Wesakeychuk" (the Trickster figure of Cree mythology) was used both to expose a narrative of hypocrisy and duplicity on the part of the Crown’s chief negotiator, and to trace the impact of distinct cultural agendas, beliefs, and expectations on the Treaty’s outcome.

This kind of intervention, while also enlisting dramatic irony to foreshadow the racial and cultural tensions to come, offered "productive" opportunities for spectators to question, break, or intervene in the stereotypes and biases informing the inherited histories and values reproduced within the play. The potential for this kind of intervention was made explicit by the play’s primary narrator, Legendwoman, during the opening moments of the performance. In the midst of the procession to the site of the play, as spectators approached the hills framing the entrance to the coulee where the main action would be staged, a lone male figure in traditional Cree dress emitted a war cry from atop a surrounding hill and charged towards the audience. Pushing his way through the crowd he approached the inert body of a young native woman dressed to resemble the small "squaw" dolls commonly marketed for
tourists. As the young man recited "The Legend of the Qu’Appelle Valley" by Pauline Johnson, his "dead" wife, Legendwoman, suddenly sat up to join in the recitation. She then interrupted the poem with an aside to the audience, "That’s me the dead one" (2). Moments later the same figure, blurring the distinction between actor and role, again turned her attention to the audience to remark:

Do you know that poem? Too bad the Indian girl is always the one who dies, eh? Well anyway, tansi, hello and welcome. (She reaches to adjust the feather in her hair, accidentally pokes herself) Ouch! Geez, I hate this costume they gave me.

The anti-illusionism of the direct address combined with uncertainty about whether it was by the actor or by the character momentarily collapsed distinctions between stage and life to foreground the social significance of the play and emphasize its relevance for the contemporary spectator. The scene provided opportunities to challenge notions of the Native body as culturally limited by and within literary and popular traditions, and the scene’s "productivity" ranged from the pleasure derived from recognition of Johnson’s poem (and its accompanying popular aesthetic) to varying degrees of engagement with the staged intervention.

The productive role of anachronism as a form of narrative intervention (combined with direct references to temporal displacement) also was used throughout the play to
superimpose the performance's various fictional and actual
time frames. This was clearly emphasized in an enactment of
the myth of the Trickster's role in the great Flood.
Wesakeychuk's story was interrupted by the appearance of his
European counterpart, Fool, who proclaimed:

I am a fool, see? Knucklebones, Harlequin Suit, Red
Nose, Big Shoes ... I got 'em all. I'm in the theatre,
you see, and I've lost my travelling troupe of players
(9).

The anachronistic, present day feel of the language (and
performance), together with the characters' temporal,
geographic, and cultural displacement and the Fool's claim
to be a member of the theatre, "produced" opportunities to
emphasize the enduring and universal nature of human feeling
and experience not only across the project's cultural
perspectives as represented by the script, but also across
the various social perspectives inherent in the theatrical
event itself. And, as Legendwoman pointed out, in the
"dreamtime" of the theatrical event, "Chronological time
means nothing--to feel the events as they happen is
everything" (14).

The invitation to find social significance in "feeling"
was proffered not only from the two broad cultural
perspectives, but also from a third, overarching and
unifying environmental perspective. Legendwoman, in her
multiple roles as earthmother, Native representative,
narrator and guide, offered a number of points of view all of which ultimately argued for a collective responsibility to fertility, land, and environment that transcended race and culture.

In keeping with Legendwoman's repeatedly emphasized belief that "Feeling comes before understanding," the experiential aspects of promenade performance, including the project's emblematic staging of race, figured prominently in Ka'ma'mo'pi cik's strategies of narrative intervention.

The parallel histories of the valley were presented primarily from a Native point of view with non-native perspectives introduced as a series of interruptions or interventions. Initially only Native actors were visible as the first act began with an environmentally staged experience of "everyday" pre-contact Native culture complete with drumming and singing by actors of all ages. As the action moved towards the signing of Treaty Four, intimate and realistic scenes of first contact with European Traders presenting an initial relationship of respect and equality gave way to an escalating series of largescale interruptions depicting the arrival of Government Officials, Surveyors, and Settlers. These "interventions" exploited the experiential dynamics of promenade to stage such events as streams of "Government Officials" proclaiming "free land" and charging into the platea to a musical accompaniment suggesting antique player pianos, and an inexorable march of
choreographed Surveyors singing "Divide and sub-divide, cut up and quarter." For spectators standing in the platea, such intrusions offered an immediate sense of the first-contact Native experience in both literal and emblematic terms.

And while the earliest scenes of first contact celebrated the mutual benefits of "free trade" in action and song, as the act progressed toward the signing of the treaty the historic roots of Native distrust and oppression were represented in a sequence which began with emblematic portrayals of Native autonomy and numerical superiority, but ended with images of subjugation and isolation. The scene began with the two cultural groups meeting as equals; then, as the negotiations progressed, a fourteen-foot-tall puppet of Queen Victoria processed through the platea to take its place as a backdrop, under a banner proclaiming "The Queen Loves Her Red Children." The end of the scene (and act) ominously separated the two racial groups and reversed the numerical superiority of the Aboriginal presence as the Native group, paraded through the platea under the escort of a masked (and faceless) Queen's army, were replaced by a second invasion of the Surveyors who flooded into the platea as the First Nations people left.

The action of the second act, encompassing the period from the Treaty signing to the present day, presented a number of intimate and realistic scenes which explored the historic causes and effects of racial conflicts and
oppression. For spectators, the overwhelming impact of European influence and presence was experienced through largescale scenes celebrating a European perspective on settlement and expansion, in which the Native point of view, while ubiquitously present, was now staged as that of only onlooker or commentator. In such ways, the act reflected the conspicuous absence of the kind of political and economic equality promised by the treaty.

But while the project's presentation of history was primarily Native and revisionist, ambiguities and contradictions stemming from the script's use of lyrical music and humour, and supported by costuming and staging especially in the large production numbers, allowed both cultural perspectives to partake of the popular pleasure of "productivity," involving the creation of varying degrees of parodic and satirical or affirming and validating meanings simultaneously. Stage directions for the ironically titled PFRA Song (Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration), for example, call for a lively invasion of "white" vacationers wearing silly boating hats and sunglasses, and carry[ing] oversized props such as a fishing pole, a giant ice cream cone, an inflatable raft, and a giant rubber duckie to parade around the perimeter stages singing:

Where will we float our boat our boat
When we're on vacation
Where will we float our boat our boat
When we need recreation
We'll get the old PFRA
To make a dam and bury
The farmland 'cause there's plenty left
Elsewhere on the prairie

Following behind the parade came three native women, picking up garbage left behind by the recreation people (83).

Promenade and The Contributions of the Social Mise en Scène:

The social mise en scène created by spectators, casting, staging, and the site itself provided another range of "producerly" options supporting the project's social and cultural agendas. Performances were staged outdoors in a glacially cut coulee located behind the historic Fort San tuberculosis treatment centre. The site was chosen in part for its historical significance, and in part for its timeless, untouched natural beauty and its remove from the aural and visual distractions of contemporary life. The physical arrangement at the site emphasized the importance of the Four Directions as revealed in the Cree creation story, and effectively reversed European conventions of in-the-round staging to suggest instead a traditional native round in which the action surrounded and included the spectators.12 Spectators passed into the platea under an elevated bridge linking two sections of staging. On each side of this linked staging were bleachers provided for mothers with infant children, the elderly, and others less
able to stand during the performance. The platea itself was a roughly circular space with its circumference defined by a series of four elevated platforms, a shelter for musicians, and two lighting towers housing follow spots (the only artificial lighting provided for the performances). At the centre of the platea stood a single elevated platform suggestive of a large drum. Directly opposite the audience entry, a reconstructed Cree village served as both backdrop and backstage. For the scenes set on the perimeter staging, the potential scenic backdrops included the relatively unobstructed wooded sides of the coulee, the elders et al. "elevated" on bleachers, and the "Cree village."

Moments staged on the central platform incorporated the surrounding crowd (often including those on bleachers) as witness and backdrop and in this regard tended to emphasize most overtly the social significance of the theatrical event. Scenes concerned with interaction between the editorializing characters of Wesakychuk and the Fool, for example, often made use of the central staging, while the Treaty scenes, staged on the "bridge" platform, more specifically exploited the seated elders et al as backdrop.

Casting, in itself and in combination with staging, also served to generate a "producerly" performance text. The racial and cultural implications of this could be seen clearly in the play’s treatment of the story of Wesakeychuk and the great Flood. The roles of Trickster and Fool were
played by a male and a female adolescent respectively, and youth, naivete, pubescence, and the cross-gendered casting of Fool, especially within a contemporary patriarchal context (and even more so for spectators with knowledge of the mythological androgeny and gender-shifting powers of the Trickster figure), proffered an evocative system of cultural and cross-cultural meanings relating to innocence, wisdom, and authority.\textsuperscript{13}

The mythological animal characters in the Flood legend were all played by Native children, and the staging alternated between the "bridge" set (flanked by the seated elders, mothers, etc. of both cultures) and the central platform (involving the whole spectating crowd). The resulting emphasis on the social \textit{mise en scène} drew attention to the shared familial, communal, and cultural pride in the children's performances which many spectators were experiencing. By acknowledging fundamental human similarities amidst racial and cultural differences, the scene served both to promote cross-cultural awareness and implicitly to sanction native traditions.

Finally, the play's emblematic use of staging presented a step-by-step model for social action against racism and segregation. In its temporal present the play juxtaposed testimonials and enactments of past conflicts and oppressions with escalating representations of unity, in order to advocate a process whereby cross-cultural awareness
might lead to tolerance and understanding, which in turn could foster first social, then cultural interaction. Within this structure, and functioning in a manner analogous to ritualized systems of call and response, race was progressively staged first as a separate, non-determining and autonomous experience, then as interactive conflict, and finally as an experience that could be integrated within a multicultural context.

To this end, the resurrection of Legendwoman preceding the play established from the start an implicit unity which foreshadowed the integration of separate cultural beliefs and concerns. The sequence evoked much of the substance of the European popular tradition of Mumming with its association with natural cycles, re-birth, and regeneration; while the character of Legendwoman herself, as Native, narrator, guide, and earthmother figure, combined traditional First Nations, European, ecofeminist, and ancient and contemporary spiritual beliefs so as to express an overarching environmental concern which ultimately argued for a shared responsibility to fertility, land, and environment that could transcend differences of race and culture.

The initial emblematic response to this implicit and fundamental unity, however, saw the two main cultural groups and perspectives remaining, for the most part, physically (although not ideologically) separate throughout the
project's staging of largescale experiential interventions. The ubiquitous presence of the Fool and the Trickster, along with their contemporary and editorializing functions, provided the notable exceptions to this separation and established the ideological links between the two groups.

Near the end of the first act, the project explicitly staged gender as a racial, cultural, and ideological bridge by having a group of "White Women" from "Ontario" (staged with the natural hills as backdrop) and a group of "Cree Women" (staged with the Village as backdrop) sing antiphonally of their common concerns and exclusion from the patriarchal political structures of both cultures. Their final chorus, staged as a dance which progressively occupied the platea, literally and emblematically united race and culture.

The project's multicultural agenda was made increasing explicit in the second act of the performance which began with a largescale production number in which the full cast remained physically separated into racial groupings but sang to each other of the need for understanding, forgiveness, and the healing of historic tensions. As if in response, the subsequent scenes concerning the historic causes and effects of racial conflict were staged from one of two perspectives. Scenes staging only one race emphasized the common humanity, as well as the ubiquitous divisions and xenophobia found in each cultural group. These scenes
presented some of the shared historic and contemporary concerns facing both cultures: farm foreclosures, the politics and ethics of land claims, crises of faith, and racial fears and distrust, for example.

The metaphorical climax of this form of emblematic staging occurred in the "Work Song" in which actors of both cultures, separately grouped by race and by gender, performed a largescale production number celebrating common values and beliefs. The potential hegemony of such reductive approaches to culture was then identified and challenged by scenes in which actors of both cultures worked together to enact some of the systemic inequities experienced by the two races. These scenes were most often introduced by the editorial interventions of Trickster and Fool. One such scene, for example, dramatized the personal cost of racial and cultural oppression, as an Indian Agent, a patriarchal figure who misperceived himself as "friendly and generous," dismissed the relevance of Native spiritual beliefs and then proceeded to project an unconscious but systematically demeaning racial stereotype onto a Native farmer who sat at his feet, attempting to mend a worn out and useless government-issued harness. The act ended with a symbolic reunification of the divided earth which involved Legendwoman, Trickster, and Fool.

The third act was entirely ceremonial. It began with a candle-lit procession by cast members and concluded with a
Native Round Dance involving cast, crew, and spectators. The physical and ceremonial nature of the dance brought the diverse communities together face to face literally and figuratively, in present time and present action, to reify the social significance and relevance of the project.

Relevance and Popular Pleasure, Testimony and Witnessing:

The "producerly" nature of the Calling Lakes project encouraged awareness of the constructed nature both of stereotypes and of history as a precondition for the creation of a consensual and inclusive vision of community. To a large extent, it did so through re-enactments of conflict and oppression within a metaphoric call-and-response structure which often depended on spectators recognizing that family, friends, and neighbours were performing roles whose values and attitudes might run counter to their actual personal beliefs. In this regard, the project's staging of race as a means of revisioning community made extensive use of the CCP form's emphasis on the social significance of the theatrical event to encourage its witnesses not so much to change their minds, but rather, however briefly, to change their roles. This, in conjunction with the persuasiveness of the experiential aspects of promenade staging, offered participants and spectators alike opportunities to find popular pleasure in the creation of meanings with relevance both to individuals and to constituent communities within a process which by its very
existence was already transgressing many of the valley's implicit social and racial boundaries. The Calling Lakes project's complicated system of public testimony and witnessing operated within cultural, cross-cultural, individual, and communal contexts simultaneously. The complex nature of testimonial re-enactments of the historic circumstances of First Nations oppression, for example, can be seen in the project's synchronic approach to cultural and cross-cultural intervention and affirmation. From a cross-cultural perspective, such testimonials, by resisting "official" European narratives, functioned as a form of intervention. From the perspective of the First Nations, such scenes provided a form of affirmation and validation with deeply therapeutic implications. Native playwrights such as Thomson Highway and Monique Mojica have advocated the healing potential of such scenes and their ability to provide a form of release from the pain of the past.14

But while testimony was an inherent part of both Native and non-native perspectives, the project's emphasis on social and cultural integration resulted in a tendency for the scenes explicitly promoting cross-cultural awareness to deal primarily with First Nations traditions and beliefs and present a revisionist Native history which assumed a universal conversance with European traditions as the dominant or "default" position.15 This allowed the European histories to focus on social, as opposed to political
events, thereby affirming common ground and effectively sidestepping issues of cultural blame. Such a position of default ensured that testimony, at least as used in the Calling Lakes project, became primarily a tool of intervention and resistance.

In response to testimony, the "productivity" of witnessing in the Calling Lakes project ranged from a self-interested cultural perspective in which popular pleasure and a sense of solidarity could be found in accepting and validating the resistant meanings preferred by the testimony, or, alternately, by engaging in a process of making meaning in which a more critical evaluation of the proffered testimony and its relevance became the primary source of pleasure instead.

To be effective, however, such a system of testimony and witnessing required of participants and spectators alike a "productive" engagement in the semiotic activity of making relevant meanings. According to Fiske’s paradigm, this "productivity" depends on the successful combination of the inherent popular pleasure to be found in such activity with the "producerly" aspects of the project itself: the myriad ways in which the project, as enacted text, emphasizes social significance and relevance. Popular relevance, according to Fiske, requires that the hegemonic and disciplinary forces of domination, as well as the resistances to them, must be represented in the meanings
produced, just as they are manifest within the social experience of the individual who is subordinate to them (1989, 57). Fiske emphasizes that "without the textual reproduction of the power that is being struggled against, there can be no relevance." Before a text can be made into popular culture it must therefore "contain both the forces of domination and the opportunities to speak against them" (1989, 25).

Following Fiske's paradigm, the Calling Lakes project, in confronting and staging historically opposed cultural positions and conflicts, provided an essential relevance without which individual and communal "ownership" or responsibility for the process of making meaning could not have occurred. Participation and "productivity" (and therefore empowerment) were centred around the script's construction of narratives and meanings which in varying ways and to varying degrees reflected the status quo of the valley in non-threatening ways. The CCP's inherently progressive, as opposed to radical, approach to representation and intervention must be seen as a central factor that made this possible.16

Afterword:

The first Calling Lakes play was presented with a National Race Unity Award by the Ba'hai faith in Toronto in March 1993, and the 1993 remount was nominated by the Canadian Heritage Interpretation Society to represent Canada
at an international conference in Barcelona in the summer of 1995. The referendum to determine whether or not residents of the Fort would permit land within the city limits to be changed to reservation status was decided in favour of increased Native integration, and this result was attributed in large part to the impact of the Calling Lakes plays.

Perhaps the most symbolic testaments to Ka‘ma’mo’pi’ cik’s impact, however, occurred entirely by coincidence. The 1300 acre TPEQ land claim had included the original Fort Qu’Appelle Treaty signing ground, land which the Crown pledged would remain in Native hands and serve in perpetuity as a site for political negotiation. By December 1992 the government had formally recognized the validity of this claim and final negotiations for settlement were concluded during the run of the Calling Lakes play in July 1993. *The coincidental timing of the settlement points to what was perhaps the ultimate role of the Ka‘ma’mo’pi’ cik/The Gathering: the construction of a social and cultural treaty ground as a popular, grassroots response to the failures of "official" political process.*

The next case study also deals with the use of a CCP to respond to a perceived failure of political process. In the case of the Eramosa community play, however, the project’s implicit advocacy of direct political action raised a number of difficult ethical issues concerning the use of the CCP form as agitational propaganda.
COLOUR ILLUSTRATIONS ON PAGES 175 TO 177

ARE NOT AVAILABLE IN MICROFILM COPIES
Notes:

1. The name was changed for the 1993 production because \textit{Ka'ma'mo'pi cik} was considered to be a more accurate translation of "the gathering."

2. Treaty Four or the Qu'Appelle Treaty was negotiated in September 1894; the complete terms of the Treaty can be found in Morris. The Battleford area is the other main centre of Plains Indians reserves in Saskatchewan.

3. Wildcat is an Alberta-based native playwright whose recent work involves the use of community-based theatre to generate public forums dealing with issues such as violence, cultural appropriation, and First Nations autonomy.

4. The 1993 steering committee has undertaken to retire this debt by 1996. The project’s benefits as a tourist attraction were also cited as reason for the remount and were consistently stressed in appeals for financial support from local businesses. The 1993 production marks the first time that a play based on the CCP or Colway model has been remounted. Primarily because of the considerable commitment of local resources required by community plays, standard CCP policy advises against remounts and recommends that communities producing subsequent large scale plays should plan to have a minimum of 3-5 years elapse between productions and create fresh scripts which reflect and incorporate the input of the new participants.
5. This case study will focus on the 1993 production: in part because of the problems encountered with the writing of the 1992 script, and in part because the remount allowed the co-writers to draw on the experience and community response of the first production, and to incorporate fresh input from dramaturge Kim McCaw, from the constituent communities of the Qu’Appelle Valley, and from the 1993 co-directors Lorre Jensen and Micheline Chevrier.

6. While the research team was unaware of Carter’s work, her findings and conclusions are particularly useful in light of their confirmation of the revisionist Native histories contained in the community play.

7. Carter’s research notes other historical factors with a bearing on the Government’s failure to cede these lands. At the time the Treaty was signed, the proposed Canadian Pacific Rail route was north of the Qu’Appelle valley, but the shift of the line south, into the valley, made much of the Treaty Four land suddenly more desirable for non-native trade and agriculture. In addition, in the 1940’s (which was beyond the scope of Carter’s study) the Qu’Appelle River was dammed and prime agricultural land was flooded, so that the remaining property, now lakefront, became some of the most desirable recreational land in the province. The compensation paid for the appropriation of these lands appears to have been inadequate and a source of contention for Native and non-native farmers alike.
8. Salverson describes the use of "witnessing" in popular theatre as "an act through which an incident of violence is understood as significant and is responded to by someone other than the direct victim of that violence . . ." (1996b, 189).


10. Fiske's approach effectively moves the primary emphasis away from narrative and textual structures towards an emphasis on reading (or in the case of promenade, performative) practices, so that the central question shifts from what the people are reading, to how they are reading it (1989, 142). While text as original resource remains key, the theoretical focus and the object of analysis shifts away from the representations encoded in the scripted text towards a semiotic that is based on performance and response. The CCP's process of creation (and the "cultural commodities" produced) also closely resembles Fiske's definition of folk culture as creative and re-creative expression (see especially pages 27, 168-77), so I would argue that the form's hybrid nature in this regard does not alter the "producerly" nature of script and performance.

11. For a discussion of dramatic structures and
devices foregrounding social significance in popular theatre ranging from the medieval period to the Elizabethans, see Weimann.

12. A European precedent for this staging configuration is the Cornish "round" used for medieval plays. For a discussion of The Castle of Perseverance staged in a round, see Southern. In addition to this staging, the importance of the four directions in medieval drama also provides an interesting correspondence to the Cree tradition in which the directions of the compass correspond to the homes of the four human races.

This case study will concentrate on readings of "productivity" from the perspective of spectators promenading in the platea. Obviously the experience of seated spectators will have been substantially different. I am also assuming a model audience consisting of area residents and, in the case of tourists, recurring summer residents with a certain interest and awareness of the area's social and cultural politics.

13. For a discussion of gender and the Trickster figure, see Thomson Highway's introductory notes to Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing.

14. See Agnes Grant's "Native Drama," in Brask, 108.

15. I have borrowed this term from Susan Bennett's discussion of the staging of cultural difference in "Text and Performance: Reading and Viewing Djanet Sears's Afrika

16. See the discussion of progressivism in American historical pageantry in chapter one.
CASE STUDY THREE

Politics and the Community Play: The Eramosa Project

Project Overview:

In the summer of 1990, in and around the ruins of an historic mill on the banks of the Eramosa River in the southern Ontario village of Rockwood, a group of residents came together under the banner of the Eramosa Community Play Project to produce and perform *The Spirit of Shivatee*, the first play in Canada directly based on the Colway or CCP style.¹ The project was billed as "the greatest event since the coming of the glacier," and like its metaphorical counterpart, the ECPP succeeded in altering the local "landscape" in a number of ways. For the better part of two years, public forums and presentations, fund-raising events, theatre skills workshops, extensive posterering, advertising and word of mouth campaigns, together with roadside billboards, a centrally-located play office, and an ongoing process of creation and recruitment leading up to ten days of "sold out" performances, created a theatrical presence which encompassed social, cultural, and eventually, political reaches within the community.

The project evolved in response to what a local playwright named Dale Hamilton saw as a widespread loss of faith in the municipal government's willingness or ability to control rapidly accelerating land development or to take responsibility for the social and economic consequences of

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suburbanization within the township. Hamilton's initiative led to the formation of the Eramosa Community Play Project (ECPP), an ad hoc group which sought to disseminate information, foster communication between divided elements within the community, and promote united and direct action against "exploitative" land development. As Hamilton explained the group's purpose in the local press:

. . . there is a lot of resentment in the community about the way the township is developing . . . the real motive of this play is to get people talking to each other, discussing the causes and the solutions for the problems of the area. (Dooley 1989)

The project's goals were articulated in its pamphlet "Focus on 1990":

* To trace the growth of the township through the eyes of the early settlers and their descendants to present day residents.

* To craft a play that reflects not only the history of Eramosa but the larger social forces which currently are at play during Canada's gradual process of urbanization.

* To workshop and produce a play with as much local involvement, opinion and perspective as possible.

* To foster community involvement and cultivate community spirit.

* To assist local residents interested in learning new skills.
* To create a local theatre group which will continue after the initial production.

* To create a broad [sic] based community event that will be both exciting and fun.

* To establish a permanent community-based play company.

In addition, press releases and grant applications stressed the project’s desire to help relative newcomers to find their "niche" in the community, and to acknowledge the perspective of the local native population and encourage their involvement in the project in general and their input into the script in particular. Seeking to engage the largest possible number of residents in the project, the ECPP contracted the animation skills and experience of the Colway Trust; initially to serve as consultants and advisors, and eventually as co-producers.

The project’s goals suggest not only a privileging of ancestral and historical perspectives, but also a tendency to separate the CCP focus on community animation from the ECPP focus on direct social action to control speculative development. Conceptual control over the latter rested principally with Hamilton and the steering committee, while Colway’s principal role was to provide artistic expertise and ensure widespread participation. This particular co-production arrangement joined with the CCP’s hierarchical structure and philosophy of uniting participants through the pursuit of a common artistic goal ("a play of the highest
possible artistic standards") to create two largely separate discourses within the project; one concerned with the social aspects of building and celebrating community "spirit," the other focused on the project's political agenda. Initially at any rate, these aspects of the project tended to function independently; each attracting its own support and thus broadening the project's base. Ensuring that the two discourses would remain accessible and complementary, however, would prove to be a major challenge for the project and for the CCP form.

In the end result, the impact of the ECPP was considerable. Its organizers estimated that almost twenty percent of the township's residents participated in the project through major and minor contributions of time, funds, materials, or talent, and attendance figures for the play's ten performances represented close to seventy percent of the township's population. The project is credited with inspiring a heightened sense of community solidarity and openness, increased cultural activity (including the creation of theatre, writing, music, and choral groups), electoral changes in municipal leadership, and a far-reaching impact on land development procedures through the creation of a new Official Township Plan.

The ECPP's extensive use of the conceptual and organizational elements of CCPs to recruit and construct a theatrical response to suburbanization and "exploitative"
land development, however, also raises questions about the potential nature and function of "democratization" in CCPs. In this regard, in order to determine the degree to which the ECPP's intervention in community life and politics can be characterized as truly representative or "democratic," we need to consider not only the quality of the balance struck between the discourses of celebration and intervention as applied both to processes and performance, but also the events leading up to the project itself.

Background and Initiation:

Eramosa Township is a patchwork of small rural farming communities which grew up as a result of Scottish and Irish settlement in the 1820's. Today, the population of the area is about 5,500. The village of Rockwood, with approximately 2,000 residents, is the most densely populated area in the township. Located about an hour's drive west of Toronto, Rockwood in the late 1980's was at the centre of what ECPP organizers described as a "siege by developers": a series of severances and subdivisions in the open country of Eramosa Township and within the village itself which had resulted in the conversion of prime agricultural land to rural estate housing and development projects aimed at a primarily urban market. According to ECPP organizers, at one point between 1986 and 1990, there were 126 development proposals before the Township Council and population growth in Rockwood had reached unprecedented levels in excess of
Over this period the massive influx of commuters with no previous ties to the community was resulting in escalating tensions between newcomers and many whose families had lived in the township for up to 170 years. Divisions were also appearing between long-term residents: many were deeply alarmed by the changes; others welcomed the extended market base provided by the sudden growth. Farmers, especially, were caught in the middle. Often finding no one left at home to work the land, they stood to make millions by selling off family holdings. An example of the magnitude of profits to be made and the potential for exploitation can be seen in the plight of a reclusive farmer who sold a fifty-acre farm to a developer for $200,000.00, only to see the land subdivided into 125 serviced lots valued at over $15 million.

While community concern was widespread and growing as early as 1987, the impetus for The Eramosa project as a means of response grew entirely from the initiatives of Hamilton who had returned to Eramosa after an eight year absence to find the township embroiled in a series of public meetings about development issues which had been escalating in intensity over the past three years. Initially, Hamilton decided to write a play as a personal response to the changes wrought by time and outside money. As she later explained:

There are issues at stake that are much beyond "not in my backyard." We're not just saying not here, but not
anywhere on prime agricultural land. It is ethically and morally irresponsible to put up mansion houses for people who already have large houses and just want larger houses. To take productive land out of production for that is morally incorrect and not even rational . . . the play is, the whole thing is, a struggle for survival; because we could become another Mississauga if we lie down and let it happen. (Hamilton, 1990a).

Hamilton began formulating ideas for the play under the working title Eramosa in June of 1987. By late summer, tensions about land development increased significantly when a local used-car dealer, in preparation for a subdivision, began leveling a landmark known as Billy Gordon’s Hill, and an historic stone barn, which residents had been assured would be protected, was demolished to accommodate a luxury housing development. As part of its response to these events, the newly formed ECPP drew public attention to a town meeting scheduled for September 21, 1987 at which a Toronto-based developer, Ronald Oelbaum was to propose to have 200 acres of agricultural land re-zoned to "residential." Attendance at the meeting numbered around 400, roughly twenty percent of the village population, and Oelbaum’s proposal was almost unanimously defeated. Objections to the proposal focused on the unnecessary loss of agricultural land in instances where more marginal land was available (including the "infilling"
of existing hamlets), damage to environmentally sensitive riverfront, loss of significant heritage and archaeological sites, traffic flow, and negative impact on nearby farming. These same objections would later form the core of the Eramosa play's argument for greater control over land development.⁵

The Key Players and the Nature of Support:

Early in 1988, Hamilton made her first call for public input into the script of Eramosa through a writing contest planned in conjunction with Ontario Heritage Week (February 15-21, 1988). Submissions were to explore the theme of Eramosa Township, past, present, or future, and ideas from winning submissions were to be incorporated into Hamilton's script. At that time Hamilton had no financing, no firm ideas about how Eramosa would be produced, and was unaware of Colway's work in Britain. In April of 1988 she received a $4,000.00 Canada Council "Aid to Artists Project Grant" to produce a first draft of the script. That summer Hamilton encountered Colway's work and met with Artistic Director Jon Oram. Convinced that Oram's experience and assistance would ensure the success of the Eramosa project, Hamilton began negotiations to involve Colway in the ECPP. Colway, provisionally upon demonstrated community support for the project, agreed to act as consultants and advisors throughout the project. Their contract included providing budgeting and financial advice, scheduling workshops, providing a director,
and engaging a play officer.

Hamilton was concerned that the cost of appointing a British Play Officer would be hard to justify either to her community or to Canadian funding bodies. As an alternative, she proposed to train with Colway and serve as play officer for the Eramosa project herself. Her successful application to the Ontario Arts Council (OAC) for a professional development grant to study with Colway between February and April of 1989 convinced Oram that this could be feasible. In the final draft of Colway's contract, Oram was named as Director, Hamilton as writer and Play Co-ordinator (the title was preferred to "officer"), and the remaining professional core were to be contracted from among Canadian theatre professionals and semi-professionals by Oram and Hamilton together. Co-production between Colway and the ECPP was formalized in November of 1988 when a steering committee was handpicked from among prospective volunteers by Hamilton in her capacity as play co-ordinator. This committee then unanimously agreed that Hamilton should serve as chair of the subcommittee charged with co-ordinating volunteers.

Hamilton's position as project initiator, play co-ordinator, playwright, and member of the steering committee invested her with a degree of control reminiscent of Jellicoe's position during Colway's early work, although her increasingly high profile as community representative (by the 1990 provincial elections she ran, and received substantial
support, as NDP candidate for the Wellington constituency),
local playwright and long-term resident also contributed
towards a strong sense of community empowerment within the
producing structure which appears to have encouraged others’
participation in the project.

However, the extent of Hamilton’s influence also
presented challenges in terms of "democratizing" the
discourses of celebration and intervention in the project.
From his earliest involvement with the project, Oram had
expressed concern that the pre-established political agenda
of the play could thwart the consensual and celebratory
nature of the CCP, and that ways would have to be found so
that the Eramosa script, already at the point of an early
draft, could be revised and developed in collaboration with
the community.

Members of the steering committee were also aware that
in order to garner community support they would have to
negotiate an appropriate balance between the social and
political aspects of the project, and that reconciling the
diversity of community opinion would require careful
negotiation. There was opposition to the project from at
least one town councillor who accused Hamilton’s play of
being too political and anti-development; from the developer
Oelbaum, who at one point threatened legal action if changes
were not made to the script; and from within the community
itself, as Hamilton was repeatedly called upon to defend the
project against charges of "xenophobia" and "strident politics." In response, informed by the CCP's philosophy of seeking support from within the status quo, the ECPP embarked on a shrewd campaign of community "networking."

Key cultural support for the project was found in the Guelph Arts Council (GAC), which had been established in 1975 to provide "a united voice" for local visual, performing, literary and heritage arts. Along with the ECPP's membership in the GAC, the council agreed to accept limited legal and financial responsibility for a locally produced documentary video of the project and to act as a sponsor for grant applications to funding bodies such as the Ontario Arts Council, the Federal Ministry of Culture and Communications (MCC), and other private and public funding bodies.

Compatibility between their political and social agendas also led to support of the project by the Ontario Rural Learning Association (RLA), a non-profit organization which seeks "To improve the quality of rural life by emphasizing family, community, and environmentally responsible values" (Little and Sim 1992, 10). Hamilton was drawn to the RLA's work through a book titled Land and Community: Crisis in Canada's Countryside written by past RLA president Alex Sim, a sociologist and activist with extensive experience of rural communities. Sim and the RLA actively endorsed the ECPP's environmental stance and advocated the project to other rural communities, and especially to farmers. This contributed to
the growing momentum of the project as other communities sought information and advice about CCPs. The RIA also provided the project with a charitable tax number (thereby serving as a trustee in the administration of grants to the ECPP), and held a series of public meetings, or "soundings," designed to allow all residents, even those who might not become directly involved in the actual play project, to express their vision of the community. The RIA had developed "soundings" as a means of formulating consensual strategies for the implementation of social and political action in rural communities: they begin to identify "common ground" by asking residents to answer a series of questions about what they value about their community, what they would like preserved, and what they would like changed. The first Eramosa sounding was held in April, 1989, in an effort to elucidate the ECPP's political agenda and to balance the primarily social and cultural appeal of participation in the play.

Financial backing for the project's populist mandate was essential to the creation and perpetuation of a "groundswell mentality," so there was a major step forward in October of 1989 when the Laidlaw Foundation declared its full support:

If the Laidlaw Foundation's objectives include awakening community participation towards solving community problems, then this project is a suitable one . . . the investment is for the long term and for positive
community participation. If the democratization process works, it could lead to wider community action and political involvement on local issues (Gilbert, 1989).

The MCC also supported the project, but on the different basis of its value as a "community arts" and "heritage conservation" event that would develop new audiences, increase economic impact (including tourism) of the arts within the community, and enhance interaction among community organizations. Other successful applications to public funding bodies, such as The Canada Council's "Explorations" and visiting foreign artists programs, tended to stress the project's rural focus, the benefits of bringing Colway's experience into Canada, and the innovative use of theatre as a community forum.

Some public funding bodies, however, did express concern about the politics of the project. MCC queried the potential political ramifications of the project's treatment of the "urbanization pressures of the present" in a letter sent to the GAC in January of 1990 (Hart 1990), while the ECPP's initial application to the OAC appears to have been rejected on the basis of the project's perceived politics. According to Hamilton, one juror objected both to what he described as the "pageant-like" and "boring" nature of the script and to the politics of the project which he claimed made him "nervous," and caused him to ask "is it art?" A subsequent application stressing the community nature of the project and
the support already received was successful, however.9

As part of an ongoing effort to enlist local support, beginning in October 1989 and continuing until June of 1990, the project held a series of staged readings at local schools and at a variety of public and private events. Favourite choices for these readings tended to be scenes emphasizing the value of "family and land and heritage."10 Readings were often presented in conjunction with events sponsored by other community-based organizations, and these reciprocal arrangements served to forge and strengthen links to groups such as The Eden Mills Writers and Ontario’s Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee.

The project’s momentum grew further as more community groups, clubs, and organizations pledged support for the project and encouraged participation from their memberships. Eventually the ECPP negotiated an alliance between community service organizations, recreation, business and education groups, agricultural, environmental, historical, and cultural interests which include the Junior Farmers, two Women’s Institutes, church congregations, heritage and environmental groups, the Rockwood School, and the Lion’s Club.

The ECPP’s approach to each of these groups varied, but tended to focus on the social and cultural, as opposed to the political rewards of the project. In the case of the local United Church, for example, the Reverend Sam Wigston voiced support for the project’s quest for broadly based community
participation, its recognition of multiculturalism, and its perspective on the contributions of women and minorities (1990).

While the alliances forged by the project demonstrate the emergence of a shrewd system of community networking and support, the increasing power and scope of the project’s political intervention can be seen in its handling of The Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA), the Rockwood Recreation Committee (RRC), and eventually the township council.

Prior to the 1958 designation of a Conservation Area in Rockwood, local residents had enjoyed free access to an area which contains natural walkways and trails along the village’s east/west boundaries; the restrictions imposed by the GRCA, in particular the controlled access to the site via a single gate, had been a contentious issue between the GRCA and the community since that time. With a groundswell of support behind them, the ECPP pitched their request for use of the historic Harris Woollen Mill site as an opportunity for the GRCA to gain widespread community recognition and improve public relations with the village.

In 1989, the Rockwood Recreational Committee also found itself at odds with the community over their management of a local recreational complex. At a July 1989 Township meeting, a Ministry of Tourism and Culture consultant, James Shuttleworth presented results of a newly completed
Recreational Assessment Study. Shuttleworth found that, although the Rockmosa Community Centre is a public facility, "in the past it has been run as a private facility" (Recreation 1989). At the time there was a high percentage of Lions Club members on the Recreation Committee. Supporting the ECPP's request for extensive use of the centre presented the committee with a face-saving means to demonstrate its commitment to community involvement.  

The Township Council was the last local organization to endorse the project. Its resistance had been passive--official policy was to remain neutral--but eventually its support was achieved through the pressure of sheer numbers.

Involvement and participation in the project also continued to grow through appeals aimed at individuals. A Promotional Subcommittee used all available media outlets,-postering and leafleting, phone trees, and extensive word-of-mouth campaigns. Personal invitations were sent to local farmers and individuals considered unlikely to get involved through organizations, and the Lionettes organized a "Shy Party" for those who might be intimidated by public events.

Community "Voice" and The Evolution of the Script:

While these organizational activities were occurring on one front, the evolution of the script continued on another. In addition to the playwriting contest in February 1988, a number of other steps were taken to encourage public input in the creation of the playtext. The first act of the ECPP
Steering Committee was to strike a Research Subcommittee with a mandate to broaden and balance Hamilton’s research. To this end, local newspapers, town and county histories, the records of community groups, and even residents’ attics were all scoured as repositories of local history. By mid-March of 1989, copies of the script-in-progress were made available at the local library, or could be requested by telephone; at a later stage the script was also made available as an audio cassette.

Beginning in late September of 1989, a series of six informal play-development workshops was held over a six week period. These invited attendance by "any persons interested in undertaking additional research or discussing changes, additions, or deletions to the present script." As well as Hamilton, each session invited a guest playwright. These were carefully selected from among sympathetic Canadian theatre professionals to ensure compatibility with both the project and the amateur status of its participants. While the function of these workshops was ostensibly to open the script to community input, the act of choosing the guest playwrights inevitably revealed certain preconceived ideas and ideologies behind the project.

Daniel David Moses’ affiliation with the project, for instance, embraced political and practical considerations. From the project’s inception it had been Hamilton’s intention to provide a native perspective on the settlement issue, both
at the time of original European settlement and today. She hoped that Moses' participation would ensure a truly representative native perspective, help to draw in the local native population, and forestall potential charges of cultural appropriation.  

In addition to Moses, the participation of such established, "mainstream" alternative/political theatre practitioners as David Fennario and Rick Salutin helped legitimize the project's credibility and artistic merit to funding agencies and the community. This concern for external validation must be seen as somewhat ironic, however, given that members of the community had earlier expressed opposition to the use of British expertise for the project.

While undoubtedly beneficial in terms of professional collaboration, a higher public profile, and increased credibility with funding organizations, these workshops were less successful in terms of soliciting input from the community. Those who attended were residents with a background or interest in writing and history, and numbers varied between six and twenty. The intimate nature of guest playwrights holding the workshops primarily in private homes may also have served to discourage participation by other than initiates to the ECPP.

Hamilton's intention had been to allow the script to develop further in rehearsal through explorations of its material by the actors. However, perhaps as a result of the
inexperience of the participants, there were few substantive changes between early and late drafts of the script. The changes that were made are attributable to a variety of other factors and are indicative of general trends in the project's process. The first of these were simply refinements of craft as the work of the other collaborators (James Gordon's music, Jerry Prager's choreography) were incorporated into the script. Other changes represent a softening of the stridency of Hamilton's political stance, which, as she freely admits, was "born out of anger at the way our community was being developed" (Cadogan 1990). As a consequence of the ongoing democratization of the project, many participants pushed for a more moderate position. One early revision was prompted by the libel action threatened by the developer whose plans were crushed by the town meeting (Oelbaum had borrowed a copy of the script from the local library); and the minutes of the April 11, 1989 steering committee meeting indicate a general degree of discomfort with aspects of the script which the committee felt should be altered to "avoid offense" by effacing obvious links between persons living in Toronto who were absentee landowners, and by removing aspersions on the character of the landdeveloper who was named Stoneheart in the early draft. On Salutin's advice, changes to the final auction scene present a more humanized developer, who voluntarily abstains from buying the township instead of being physically intimidated from doing so. Although this
change effectively removed any suggestion that violence was being advocated, the two-dimensional agitprop nature of the character portrayal was retained in a land developer wearing dark glasses and interrupting himself with a cellular phone, who promises a barbecue in every backyard and subdivision streets named after Indians and pioneers.

Drafts of the script up to the final one included several scenes involving native characters as well as the potential use of native drummers and dancers. However, when last minute discussions were unable to resolve the concerns voiced by local native elders that natives should not perform in a play written by a white woman, Hamilton was forced to re-write so that the native perspective was either eliminated or voiced by a white settler woman sympathetic to the traditional beliefs of the First Nations. The social and political permutations behind this withdrawal of native support from the project are difficult to ascertain fully, but one can speculate that native land claims issues and a play legitimizing the property rights of descendents of European settlers are at odds quite fundamentally.

Overview of Shivaree in Performance:

The final script of Shivaree incorporated thirty-one scenes in two acts to present historical and contemporary aspects of life in Eramosa Township. Each evening prior to performance the audience and cast gathered at Rockwood’s old Town Hall to process along a tree-lined path following the
Eramosa river to the ruins of the Harris mill. Along the way, spectators witnessed recreations and affirmations of pioneer life and values, as historically costumed figures pointed out historic landmarks (including the site of the demolished stone barn), paddled canoes, emerged from caves, and harangued passers-by with grievances.

The procession passed into the Rockwood Conservation Area through gates which had been chained against public access for almost twenty years. For the many residents who regularly clambered through a hole cut in the fence, the route itself represented a degree of reclamation and empowerment. In this way, while celebrating environment, the procession also initiated the performance's conjoining of landscape and history: a conjunction in which the land can be seen (in both senses of the word) to have contained history. Like William Langdon's American historical pageants, the ECPP held that "place is the hero" (Glassberg 1990, 6), and the script was dedicated not only "to those past and present who call Eramosa home," but also "to the land." Fostering a belief in the sacred significance of the land was a central strategy to legitimate the project's views on development issues, and drew either on popular conceptions of the spiritual nature of traditional Native relationships to the land or on the point of view of farmers and residents who articulated a concept of the land as a contemporary provider of both material and spiritual sustenance. In this way, the
land was also intended to be reified as a mediating element between Native and European traditions and beliefs. Landscape, land usage, and history were most evocatively conjoined in the project's choice of the ruins of the mill as venue, the use of which aimed, as in Glassberg's formulation, to "transform everyday surroundings into a ceremonial landscape imbued with sacred significance" (1990, 14).

The sense in which the ruins themselves contained and elided history was emblematically demonstrated, first in their use in "settlement scenes" to portray the mill under construction, then later as a venerated repository of heritage in the "town hall" sequence where the empty casements of the ruins framed historically costumed characters of ancestors who acted as both witness and as conscience. Beyond the ruins themselves the river, the limestone cliffs, the surrounding forest, and the shifts and progression of natural lighting leading to sunset amplified a sense of continuity: of history as place-over-time.

On arrival at the mill ruins, the audience found themselves part of a country fair with live music, crafts, refreshments, and a lively auction. "Common ground" was immediately established through the social and political battle lines draw by a bidding war between the character of Donald Neuman, the Toronto-based, part-time Eramosa resident and real-estate developer and "local farmers" Gordon and Merle Cameron. The action pitted the conspicuous consumption
of the wealthy urbanite against the pragmatic needs of the working farmer as Neuman grossly out-bid Merle for a pickle crock which he coveted as a "unique umbrella stand." The announcement that the entire township would be on the block at the evening's end established the play's overarching theme of a landscape under siege, and, true to Jellicoe's formula for solidarity, Neuman's status as Toronto-based, together with the two-dimensional nature of his character's portrayal, ensured that the villain remained from "outside" the community.

The crowd was then guided to the centre of an open space to watch moments in their township's history re-enacted on, around, under, and in the window casements overlooking surrounding platforms. The architecture of the theatre consisted of rough-hewn platform stages designed to complement and safe-guard the natural and historic environments, with giant puppets, props, and images which, in keeping with the scale of the landscape, established a ceremonial sense of human presence.

The play itself depicted various historical and contemporary relationships to the land--Native, pioneer, contemporary farmer, new resident, old resident, commuter, absentee landholder, and land speculator. The historical events focused on people and issues affecting land control; chronicling threats to Rockwood's autonomy that ranged from the colonial government of Sir Francis Bond Head and the
"Family Compact" to the regional planning, development, and mortgage financing of today.

The first Act was concerned with the early history of the Township and presented scenes of settlement and development. The action focused on 1837, the Mackenzie rebellion, and the story of the meetings, arrest, and trial of the so-called "Rockwood Rebels" on charges of treason. Rockwood was depicted in these scenes as a "rebel nest" amidst the Tory strongholds of Guelph and Fergus, and a village with a history of isolation and oppression at the hands of outsiders. This impression was authenticated through the inclusion of the historical details of the "rebels’" innocence, the arrests conducted as night raids, and the statistics enumerating the 14 sleighloads of Eramosa residents who were arrested and taken to Guelph in one day.

The history of the Rebels also incorporated a local legend that William Lyon Mackenzie had sheltered in Rockwood while fleeing the battle of Montgomery’s tavern. The play confirmed Mackenzie’s status as temporary and "exemplary" citizen of the community, and connected the cause of the "farmers’ rebellion" of 1837 to the proposed 1990 "rebellion against suburbanization" through the liberal use of excerpts from Mackenzie’s speeches calling for land reform.

At the same time, in characteristic CCP fashion, Shivaree tended to emphasize social or popular, as opposed to "official" history, so that Mackenzie, for example, could
cite what "the history books don't tell you" (56). In the case of the Eramosa play, however, the project's use of social or revisionist history had overtly political overtones. At the very outset of the action the play staged a debate about the veracity and ownership of history between Sir Francis Bond Head, Governor of Upper Canada, and a woman speaking in French. Bond Head, while delivering a lecture on history, in locum, was interrupted by the woman in the platea, who argued (through a translator) that, "God doesn't only speak English and ... history didn't begin when the white men came." In response to her claim that Bond Head "got the story wrong," the Governor replied that he is "talking about history, not stories," to which she managed to reply "stories are histories and histories are stories," before she was silenced by an armed guard (9). The sequence explicitly demonstrated not only that "history" as story is ideologically constructed and coded, but also that to control history is to exercise power. Arguably, the scene also attempted to demystify such power and render it contestable.

A revisionist and overtly agitational approach to social history was also evident in the script's treatment of women. This was most clearly expressed in the invention of the non-historical character, "Ensa Cameron," who, like Hamilton herself in 1990, provided an activist voice for change in the represented community of 1837. During the scene depicting the township meeting of the "Rockwood Rebels," for example,
Ensa is the only woman bold enough to attend, and when the
men resolve to "go directly to the Centre Inn Tavern and
there within commence to mind our own business" (36), it is
she who objects to the resolution and proposes action; and it
is she who hides the fleeing Mackenzie under her skirts when
he (apocryphally) passes through Rockwood en route to Navy
Island. Through Ensa, the true "rebels" of Rockwood are seen
to be the women of the community."

Ideological coding was also exposed in the play's
celebration and treatment of two of its earliest residents:
Colonel Henry Strange and J.J. Hill. The story of Strange,
original owner of the Stone Barn, is ironically the story of
a land speculator whose stone house and barn were built from
the spoils of his speculation at the expense of the Grand
Trunk Railway. Similarly, the story of J.J. Hill, while
celebrating (primarily through the music, rhythm and giant
images of a parade) the local lad who grew up to become a
railway magnate, also juxtaposed lyrics and commentary that
criticized Hill's brutal capitalist methods and philosophy.

The second Act dramatized more recent events and suggested
possible scenarios for the future. It included testimonials
by current residents, stories of farm foreclosures,
transcripts from recent town meetings, local anecdotes, an
apocalyptic nightmare of development, and the symbolic
auction of the Township. The shift between past and present
history was made explicit via a "Time Bridge" in which
choreographed newspaper sellers called out major world historical events from the mid-19th century onwards. These were followed by recent events in Eramosa’s history which were entirely development-related. The growing intensity of the conflict over land use policy and the resulting state of crisis in the community were dramatized through headlines telling of development-project decisions being reversed, threats to local officials, and the resignation or firing of local bureaucrats. This set the tone for a primarily agitprop style and approach to the second half of the play which exploited the immediacy of community members performing stories of crisis for their peers to emphasize the authentic nature of the play’s portrayal of recent community experience.

A series of “Contemporary Vignettes” which included testimonials solicited from local residents was central to this strategy and the stage directions for their performance indicate a typical agitprop strategy for authentication: by taking off [their] costumes, applying modern makeup, accessories, etc. (59) as they spoke, actors were seen to be shedding their previously assumed roles in order to return to their individual identities as community members before giving testimonials.15 Two of these sequences in particular illustrate the range of the project’s agitational strategies. One was specifically activist in its reference to political events, while the other worked more indirectly by appealing
to traditional emotional attachments to the land. The first case involved a direct indictment of the short-sighted policies of the previous township council; a "newcomer" from a development on the outskirts of Rockwood, complaining about a lack of open space for children because the council took cash in lieu of parkland, exposed an instance of what she termed "political blackmail" that involved an adjacent developer offering her and her neighbours parkland if the council approved his development (60). In the second example, a seventh-generation farmer (notably suggestive of Hamilton’s father) spoke movingly about having a sea of rooftops replace the view of fields and cedar bush that he had been taught to nurture and respect as a child, and of the pain of watching his grandchildren grow up like "urban kids," unaware of their responsibilities to the land. To varying degrees, both testimonials can be seen as co-opting a typical CCP emphasis on family tradition and love of a particular place to a specific and more narrowly focussed interventionist attack on contemporary urban development.

Similar ambiguities arose in testimonials given by newcomers about their difficulty in adjusting to life in North America and being accepted by the Eramosa community. The head of a family which had recently immigrated to Canada, for example, sympathized with Eramosa’s problems but argued that they paled by comparison to the troubles facing his home village in Pakistan. In another case, a newcomer with a job
in Toronto despaired of ever finding a "niche" in the community because the amount of time spent working and commuting precluded any possibility of becoming more involved locally. Like the Act I scenes about Henry Strange and J.J. Hill, these episodes carried a potential challenge to the simple binary representation of "good" community versus "evil" outsider; but the complexities they suggested (which will be crucial in the final case history in Regina) were overwhelmed by a much more frequent emphasis on the romanticized values of "family and land and heritage." This is, of course, more typical of the CCP model, and could easily be identified with the ECPP's opposition to "outside" developers.

Another aspect of this co-option of traditional sympathies in the service of specific social action was the project's appeal to specific bloodlines through the use of "ancestral casting." In addition to Richard Lay who played his great-great-grandfather, William Lyon Mackenzie, members of the Benham, Harris, and Hamilton families were cast to play their own ancestors. The ghostly presence of these characters looming in the windows of the mill ruins to preside over contemporary proceedings and serve as the voices of history that have, in Phillips's terms, "embodied and exemplified the meaning of the community," revealed an essentialist notion of identity and a fetishizing of ancestral descent that tended to exploit emotional and
sentimental attachments in order to legitimize the authority of the descendents of the Township’s pioneers. The affirmation of a social status quo in Eramosa township that these techniques implied was paradoxically contrary to the social activism of both Hamilton and Oram, but in this case it could be neatly equated with an interventionist purpose.

Oram was also anxious that the political purpose of the production not obliterate its communal, more celebratory aspects, so scenes with a political edge were judiciously mixed with songs, musical numbers, and the kind of humorous depictions of community life which are so characteristic of CCPs. The "Jane Never Came" sequence, for example, was clearly staged to ensure that the community did not take itself too seriously. The scene mocked the community’s star-struck anticipation and disappointment when Jane Fonda, filming on location at the historic Rockwood Academy, failed to lead a fitness class at the town hall. Stage directions called for a Large "Woman"--actually-and-obviously-a man to participate in a choreographed fitness routine while accompanied by a comically mournful song entitled "Oh Jane."

Here as elsewhere, the impact of Musical Director James Gordon’s contribution to the project’s construction of social histories was substantial. Gordon approached the task of composition for Shivaree from a variety of perspectives, and in order to create original compositions with as much local flavour as possible, he drew on various genres of folk music.
A Celtic influence, for example, gently permeated the songs of the settlers of Irish and Scottish decent; J.J. Hill’s song drew on the strong American tradition of railway songs; and Mackenzie’s musical call to action owed much to the marches of Scottish pipe bands. Running through much of the music were common threads of melody often reprised, sometimes in altered rhythm. The worker’s song is a particularly strong example of the communal, celebratory effect of music.

Where the Eramosa flows
So slowly to the Grand
We work away to make this home
Out of this untamed land
This rock and wood that hides the soil
We clear away in endless toil
Bended back and calloused hands
Then we pile them row on row
That’s the way it always goes
Where the Eramosa flows (13).

But music was also given an activist twist; the same "worker’s" melody was used later in "The Cameron’s Song" to raise sympathy and unite the community through a sense of common oppression:

Once the only banks that we ever knew
Were on the Eramosa river where the fiddleheads grew
I swear all I told that banker I needed
Was a little help in getting those lower fields seeded
Now things have got so out of hand
Too much for me to understand
Mr. Banker please don’t take my land
Don’t take our farm away (70)

The production’s simultaneous appeal to emotion and argument was most clearly demonstrated in the last two episodes of Act II. The play’s emotional argument climaxed in "The Nightmare": a powerfully visual and abstract scene in which music, dance, and artificial lighting responded to a vision of community Armageddon imagined by a "Mackenzie" figure who had "forgotten the dream." The intimate connection between landscape and spiritual and emotional well-being was again evoked, as garbage was thrown from the top of the limestone cliffs while rioting demonstrators carrying real estate signs in place of pickets besieged the plateau and harassed a giant processing image of Mackenzie astride his horse.

This was followed by a more reasoned argument against development which worked to draw the performance towards a consensual conclusion. Here the play’s aim to provide a site for current and future public debate was made explicit when the action and the audience moved, physically, to the interior of the mill ruins for the final auction sequence. The scene simulated a public forum or town hall-style debate in which a variety of perspectives, including that of the land-developers, were voiced about land use, development, conservation, and the future of the township. Here again,
landscape played a central and evocative role. The theatrical world of the play was symbolically staged as giving way to real life experience as spectators passed under a previously hidden drawbridge which raised to part the central stage platform in two and provide passage into the heart of the mill ruins. Once inside, in the midst of a smaller, newly-contextualized platea, spectators and cast stood shoulder to shoulder, surrounded by the echo of the mill's water course, with artificial lighting shimmering and reflecting off the millstream as the "ghosts" of the township's ancestors looked down from the hollow casements of the mill ruins.

The debate raised issues of anti-development and anti-progress xenophobia, but the bias was clearly against the land-developer whose rhetoric was calculated to parody and insult community (and especially farm) sensibilities:

I have a dream ... executive estates homes covering acres and acres of former farm fields, linking hamlet to hamlet. . . . Developers such as I are the new pioneers, breaking soil, leveling the landscape, planting a new crop of hybrid homes. . . . Change is inevitable. There's no point in fighting it. . . . A new wave of settler is emerging; the commuting executive; struggling to overcome the hardships of rural living. (65)

The play's resolution, however, depicted a triumph of community solidarity, good will, and consensus as the developer voluntarily withdrew his bid (instead of being
physically intimidated to do so, as in Hamilton's original script) and the evening concluded with a song.

Democratization and The Community Defined:

There is no question but that the Eramosa project was very successful. The community's overall reception and support of the values expressed in the script can be gauged in part by the impressive numbers of participants and the 3,500 tickets sold. Also, as part of its effort to evaluate the project, the RLA distributed a post-performance questionnaire, and all of those returned indicated strong support for both the project and the performance. In addition to the increased cultural activity noted earlier, the successful election of three members of the ECPP to the Township council in the 1991 municipal elections can also be largely attributed to the impact of the community play. Furthermore, the nature of follow-up activities after the play's performances testifies to an ethical concern with complementing the project's use of the CCP as a form of agitational propaganda. In this regard, the early "soundings" were felt to be so effective that in April of 1990 an ad hoc group of residents, several of whom were also involved in the ECPP, initiated a citizen's discussion and action group under the name "The Eramosa Sounding Project." In response to the scheduled review of the Official Plan of Eramosa Township, the group initiated an elaborate assessment of the perceived defects and strengths of the existing plan
and compiled recommendations for its modification. The result of this activity was a document entitled "The Green Paper" which was widely circulated in the community, revised, and then formally presented to Council and to planning authorities. Its recommendations have been highly influential at both municipal and regional levels: the paper provided the substance of a successful presentation to the Ontario Municipal Board hearings early in 1992, when a proposal for a large subdivision on the periphery of Rockwood was before the board; and it has been cited as a model by the provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs.\(^\text{22}\)

In terms of the ECPP's impact on the CCPs, the Eramosa project served to confirm Oram's conviction that these plays could be adopted for political purposes without totally violating the form. Oram now maintains that politics are central to CCPs, and soundings have become standard practice. But the ECPP also raised some problems and questions which it did not resolve. Not all CCP interventions will be able to coincide as neatly with usual CCP strategy as Eramosa's defense of "hereditary land" and "family values." In particular, this kind of validation of a social status quo can be inhospitable to "outsiders" who are not evil but benign—the marginalized and the newcomers, for example. Certainly this tendency was manifest in the withdrawal of the ECPP's Native collaborators, in the peripheral attention paid to the "testimonials" of newcomers about difficulties in
accomodating to community, and in the project's failure to explore the inherent ambiguities of such stories of local boys-making-good as those of Henry Strange and J.J. Hill.

This kind of problem, with its recognition that the rights of individuals and needs of community may sometimes be at odds, is at the centre of the last Case History, A North Side Story (or two) performed in North Central Regina.
COLOUR ILLUSTRATIONS ON PAGES 219 TO 221
ARE NOT AVAILABLE ON MICROFILM COPIES
Notes:

1. Notable Canadian precedents for this kind of community play include James Reaney's *King Whistle*, David Fennario's *Joe Beef*, and to a lesser extent, the Native Forest Theatre of the Six Nations' reserve. The text of Reaney's play along with an extended discussion of the project is contained in a special issue of *Brick: A Journal of Reviews*, Winter 1980. For a concise discussion of Fennario's work with the amateur group Black Rock Players, see Paulette Collet's entry on Fennario in *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Theatre*. A detailed study of Forest Theatre can be found in Kreig. For further examples of related forms of community-oriented theatre and pageantry see Little and Knowles.

2. The ECPP used figures from the year-end analysis of population and households in Police Villages contained in the Ontario Assessment System "Wellington County Study."
Statistics Canada figures detailing overall population growth in Eramosa Township between 1901 and 1986 are reproduced in Little and Sim, 5-6.


4. Hamilton had gained experience in theatre addressing Native and environmental issues while living on Vancouver Island between 1980 and 1987. A more detailed account of Hamilton's theatre training and experience can be found in
Little and Sim, 24-25.

5. In their continuing drive to solicit support and solidarity, the ECPP cited this meeting in a press release dated February 13, 1989, as a example of the power of collective community response. Hamilton's activism also reflected a deeply personal engagement with the issues, however, which did not escape the local community. The 200 acre development proposed by Oelbaum had been the Hamilton family farm from 1830 until 1975, and it had been a long-standing dream of Dale Hamilton to buy the farm back.

6. Hamilton's original application to the OAC was for $2,000.00, but the Council was so receptive to her project that they awarded her $5,300.00 on condition that she broaden the scope of her investigation to include other community-based projects in the United Kingdom.

7. Not surprisingly, the common denominators within the steering committee were their shared perspective and involvement in local development issues and active participation in the local structures of middle-class culture. The committee was composed of members from a wide range of occupations which included teachers, health care professionals, a former municipal councillor, business people, and farmers with connections to a variety of community groups. Members of the group had specific expertise in such additional areas as community activism, engineering, environmental and landscape design, heritage conservation,
and the visual arts.

8. Sim's advocacy of direct action is explicitly stated in the opening page of his book: "I want to persuade [the residents of rural communities] to try to control and direct the changes that are taking place. I want them to stop allowing change to sweep over them passively without their sounding an effective protest" (1988). For a detailed description of the RLA and soundings see Little and Sim, 9-15. It is also worth noting that the RLA's mandate to promote "informational educational activities" focusing on the needs of rural communities, is strikingly similar to that of the American Country Life movement which was a principal supporter of American historical pageantry.

9. Hamilton's comments can be found on an undated memo filed with the ECPP Archives. The project's total budget was about $123,000. Of this, support from public funding organizations and private foundations totalled about $77,000; community fundraising, including box office and financial support from local businesses and organizations, accounted for over $35,000; and government initiatives such as the Unemployment Insurance Job Creation Program contributed close to $11,000.

10. Dale Hamilton. 1990. The Spirit of Shivaree, p. 83. All subsequent references to the script will be by page numbers only.

11. The compilation of files in the ECPP archives
containing newspaper articles and strategic notes relating to these events testify further to the comprehensive and shrewd nature of the ECPP’s negotiations with these organizations.

12. Hamilton’s experience with Westcoast native theatre had sharpened her sensitivity towards issues of cultural sovereignty, and in exploring the possibility of incorporating several scenes involving native characters, as well the potential use of native drummers and dancers, she sought the advice of a local woman from the Guelph Native Circle who had expressed interest in performing a central native role.

13. Salutin has considerable experience in collaborative and documentary drama, and had treated a central theme of Shivaree in his play, 1837: The Farmer’s Revolt. The other guest playwrights were Simon Malbogat, Jan Kudelka, and local writer Leon Rooke. A discussion of the contributions of these writers can be found in Little and Sim, 42-44.

14. In fact, as local historian E.B. Jolliffe has pointed out, the "Rebels" were actually known as "the Rockwood Martyrs" (Letter 1987). As Hamilton noted in the documentary video of the project: "[it] was a very deliberate act on my part, to remind people that there were women there. And when the men were off meeting or being thrown in jail, [women] were holding . . . things together." For an expanded discussion of the role of women in Shivaree, see Little and Knowles, 78-79.
15. Compare, for example, the Workers' Theatre Movement's use of simple, standard costume elements to identify its performers as members of the same working class as its audience, or the Living Newspaper's "selection" of "an average citizen" from among audience members to serve as protagonist (McDermott 1965, 88). The ECPP "testimonials" mixed actual statements by community members with scripted perspectives prepared by Hamilton.

16. This tendency was made especially evident when, at one point in the performance, "Mackenzie" clearly elided past and present for the audience as well as for the ancestrally cast actors by claiming "I would never have made it to the border alive without the aid and assistance of country people such as are gathered here tonight" (my emphasis). Actor Richard Lay's treatment of this section is captured in the videotape, "The Spirit of Shivaree," though the final part of the phrase is not included in the published compuscript (see page 56).

17. These scenes, in characteristic CCP fashion, integrated short "cameo" appearances by individuals or community groups, required a relatively minimal time commitment from participants, and allowed various levels of performance skills to blend together to provide the type of comic relief reminiscent of traditional popular entertainments.

18. A composer and lyricist, Gordon is a native of
Rockwood and a founding member of the folk music ensemble "Tamarack," a particular interest of which is the creation of an historical-documentary style of folk music. Gordon describes this as a process of digging up the myths and legends of a particular town, then, if there are no existing folk songs, writing them.

19. Here, once again, events of the Oelbaum meeting provided material as many of the actual words and events from the original meeting were included in this debate.

20. The questionnaire asked for a personal response to four questions:

* Overall impression of the performance;
* Reaction to story line and message;
* Reaction to setting and staging;
* Reaction to the Community Play Project idea.

Responses to each question were to be rated on a scale of one to ten: one indicating a negative reaction, ten a positive reaction. Additional space was provided for comments. 110 questionnaires were returned. The lowest score was 31 and several responded with 40. For a more detailed discussion of the results and the evaluative problems of the questionnaire, see Little and Sim, 87ff.

21. The three elected members were: Leverne Harris as Reeve, and Dale Hamilton and Rick Hughes as Councillors; in a more recent election, Hughes was elected Reeve. In this regard, however, the principal beneficiaries of the project
appear to have been the community in general, as the new council embarked on a more open and accessible approach to governance by invigorating existing committees and striking new ones such as the Public Participation Advisory Committee (see Little and Sim, 110-111). Gains by specific individuals appear relatively minor, however, in view of the extensive nature of investment in the project. Hamilton, for example, who devoted close to two years of full-time work to the project, earned in total $19,340. Fees and expenses for the remaining 10 members of the professional core totalled $52,750.

22. For a more detailed account of the impact of Shivaree see Little and Sim. A comprehensive analysis of the Eramosa project can be found in Little 1991.
CASE STUDY FOUR

Staging Diversity

in A North Side Story (or two).

Background and Focus:

A North Side Story (or two), co-produced by The North Central Community Play (NCCP) and Common Weal Community Plays, was performed during the summer of 1995 in a 60’ x 130’ tent set up on the grounds of Scott Collegiate School in North Central Regina. The area, one of the city’s poorest neighbourhoods, is also known as "moccasin flats" or the "Rez" in reference to its large number of Native residents. The impetus to produce a CCP in North Central came from Richard Agecoutay, a local artist/administrator and a founding member of Common Weal. Agecoutay had spent much of his childhood growing up in North Central, and had served as the Production Stage Manager for the 1992 Calling Lakes play. At the time of the North Central project’s inception, he was Professional Development Officer at Circle Vision, a local, membership-based organization promoting Native arts and artists.

Agecoutay and Common Weal’s Artistic Director, Rachael Van Fossen, with support from members of Circle Vision, formed an initial feasibility and setup committee consisting of neighbourhood residents and members of Common Weal. This group set out to explore ways of adapting the CCP form to engage neighbours of diverse socio-economic and cultural
backgrounds in "a creative expression of their stories, dreams, aspirations, and (yes) gripes." From its inception, the committee agreed that addressing youth-related problems should be a major focus of the project, and the CCP form was seen, in part, as a means of developing new skills and employment opportunities for Aboriginal youths in particular. The committee shared a belief that many of the problems facing young people in the area were indicative of a breakdown in any overall sense of community. It envisioned a project that would begin by concentrating on problems facing youths, then, given the momentum and will of people of all ages, would expand to unite increasing numbers of neighbourhood residents in a pro-active struggle against the effects of poverty, crime, economic exploitation, and the divisive effects of racism and intolerance. The project's mandate to examine local responsibility and confront the villains "within" (as opposed to the traditional Colway practice of naming only villains from "outside" the community) was to present a major challenge for the NCCP's application of the CCP form.

In attempting to meet this challenge, the NCCP committed the project to the affirmation and advocacy of difference as well as similarity; its organizers envisioned a play that would celebrate not just the perspective of like-minded people, but the interests of as many diverse members of the neighbourhood as possible. To this end, the
project eschewed the traditional CCP focus on historical narratives articulating commonly held values, and sought to explore instead potentially conflicting values within a more contemporary narrative structure.

But while NCCP publicity materials tended to emphasize the affirmative nature of the project, promoting the play as an event designed to "explore our lives, raise our spirits, and leave a positive legacy of accomplishment through community participation," the local press, drawing on interviews with project organizers and participants, emphasized instead the project's struggle against conflict and oppression, describing the play as a "cathartic celebration of human resilience, proof that adversity can be a unifying force" (Pilon, 1995). As a result, the project rallied a substantial degree of ideological and financial support, but appeared to sacrifice some of the exponential "ground-swell" of participation produced by the CCP's usual emphasis on similarity and common ground.

Not only was participation modest in comparison with previous CCP projects, it was also fraught with problems of attrition. In the final tally, the NCCP involved a cast of only 60 (down from over 100), with roughly 250 others involved in various aspects of preparation and production. Compensating for this relatively small contribution of human resources, however, the project was supported by a generous budget of over $100,000.00 (including an unprecedented
amount of support from private sector business and crown corporations). But while the urban setting provided greater access to such potential sponsors, the Play Coordinator, Rae Staeson, summed up early resistance to the NCCP in the words of a corporate fundraiser who advised her that the main things wrong with the project’s "pitch" were the words "community" and "play." To counter anticipated arguments by potential sponsors that they had already contributed to community arts through donations to established theatres in Regina (the Globe in particular), Staeson designed her fundraising campaign to emphasize the project’s social aspects: its youth-oriented nature, and its potential to develop marketable skills and self-esteem. Crown corporations in particular expressed an eagerness to be identified as supporting Aboriginal youth, and the advocacy of various Native groups enabled the project to raise funds: from Training Project Grants and from other sources funding Aboriginal incentives.2

The project’s focus on youth-related problems within an economically depressed, inner-urban environment called for an extraordinary level of tolerance and acceptance of diversity on the part of both organizers and participants. The NCCP’s strategy for achieving this depended on a complex balancing of the individualistic and communal approaches to theatre and advocacy in the CCP form so as to allow personal stories of marginalization and difference to be integrated
into the narratives of self-representation shared by the "community" at large. To this end, the North Central project exploited the CCP form's concentrated impact on its volunteers, as a means of "rehearsing" the entry of the historically marginalized (many of whom were actual participants in the project) into the larger social structures of the neighbourhood and community. For these reasons, while this case study will include issues concerning the project's effect within its encompassing neighborhood, city, and region as context, its primary focus will be on the play's more immediate impact on those who were actual participants.

"Welcome to the Hood, North Central" (NCCP theme song): A North Side Story (or two) marked the first time in Canada that a CCP or Colway-style play had been produced in an inner city environment, and the particular urban context presented significant challenges for the project's celebration of difference. As organizers put it, North Central is a neighbourhood with a "bad rep." The area suffers from a disproportionate degree of transience, sub-standard rental accommodation, prostitution, crime and vandalism; and over the past fifteen years significant demographic changes have exacerbated tensions between "long time" residents (mostly white homeowners), and "newcomers" (largely Aboriginal tenants). However, according to preparatory research conducted by the NCCP, many residents
were united in their belief that a tendency on the part of the Regina press to sensationalize the negative aspects of their neighbourhood was exacerbating the area’s problems rather than contributing to solutions.3

North Central is not only among the poorest of Regina’s neighbourhoods, it is also among the oldest. It was the site of the original North West Territorial Government and was developed in the shadow of the speculative land deals of the first Lieutenant Governor and Commissioner of Indians, Edgar Dewdney. As Regina grew, the area developed into a primarily residential neighbourhood for working class families of European descent. A high point of neighbourhood solidarity occurred in 1935, when during the "On To Ottawa Trek" which culminated in the infamous "Regina Riots," the housewives of the area organized a massive rally to feed and mobilize support for the Trekkers bivouacked at the North Central Exhibition grounds.

After the Second World War, increased employment enabled many upwardly mobile residents to move to more affluent neighbourhoods. Their homes were bought up and converted to revenue properties; and beginning in the 1950’s, Native and Metis people began to move into this rental housing, a trend which continued through the seventies and eighties. Today the neighbourhood is home to a diverse cultural, racial, and socio-economic mix which includes retired long-term residents, young families
purchasing a first home, and low income families and individuals who accept the sub-standard accommodation provided by "slum landlords" in exchange for marginally affordable rents. As the area's buildings aged and neglect of the revenue properties contributed to lower property values, North Central became increasingly "a place to leave, rather than a place to live," and transience, racial tensions, break-ins, and, in particular, such youth-related crimes as vandalism, car theft, and prostitution have continued to increase year by year.  

While a variety of organizations and community groups have been set up to address neighbourhood issues, the funding, mandates, and operating procedures of these groups are usually defined by interests which are demographically, culturally, or religiously circumscribed. Consequently, they have tended to function independently, with very limited inter-organizational cooperation.  

Many of these neighbourhood groups are exclusively oriented towards young people. Youth Unlimited, for example, provides recreation facilities, advocacy and intervention for street kids in general, while Circle Project focuses on recreation and a life-skill programs for Native youth. Rainbow Youth Centre has strong ties to the John Howard Society and also maintains a Teen Help Centre offering such services as peer counselling, information about contraception and drug use, and "runaway" intervention for
11 to 19 year olds. The Salvation Army runs a Youth Resource Centre and the House of Concord open-custody centre for young offenders. Chili for Children began with a basic concern for providing hot meals for school children, then in 1995 its members organized a series of community meetings on prostitution which led to the formation of "Children off the Streets," a group whose mandate to seek out, protect, and counsel teenage prostitutes has generated a substantial amount of controversy within the neighbourhood.

"We're in when you let us in" (part of a call and response segment used in the NCCP):

Soliciting participation from such a heterogeneous constituency called for a re-examination of the CCP concept of inclusivity. Rather than simply "excluding no one who wishes to be involved" (my emphasis), NCCP organizers decided that the project needed a more radically pro-active approach which would seek out and enlist participation by, for, and about such diverse groups as property owners, school children, youth groups, young offenders, youths at risk from alcohol and drug abuse, neighbourhood groups, prostitutes, and business people. The "common ground" offered by the project was defined by its call for a unified commitment to youth as a common concern and resource transcending racial, cultural, and socio-economic barriers.

The NCCP implemented its policy of inclusive diversity through an innovative research and outreach process which
combined the usual CCP research committee with a number of other approaches: school programs enlisted staff and students at Scott Collegiate to interview themselves and their families, and included a research assignment as part of the school's English lesson plans; innovative workshops to teach acting skills to youths from Scott Collegiate, Circle Project Youth Group, Youth Unlimited, and Rainbow Youth integrated research and outreach processes by focusing on improvisations and exercises dealing with aspects of the lives of participants; personal interviews and discussions were conducted with youths at risk, home owners, business people, prostitutes and members of a Street Workers Advocacy Group; and outreach presentations to the Lions Club and other community organizations were often combined with sessions in which members shared stories of their lives in the neighbourhood. Finally, the project called for general submissions of creative writing about the neighbourhood, and the material generated by all of these activities was then selectively integrated into a script.

To complement these strategies, the NCCP also took a pro-active approach to access. In order to enable the broadest possible range of participants (especially mothers with infants and those with limited resources), the NCCP organized paid child care (a first for a CCP in Canada), transport and disability access, and (on an individual and informal basis) occasional meals for those perceived to be
"Why here and why now?" (lyrics of NCCP song):

The play itself was set in the streets and homes of North Central, and characters and situations were often composites drawn from actual events, circumstances, and people. The characters were shown meeting at local cafes and referring to local events, and Van Fossen made extensive use of the vernacular of "kids" on the streets, including actual or paraphrased dialogue and the use of such recognizable local gestures as the gift of a bracelet between a boy and a girl, which among North Central youth serves as a sign of a potentially suicidal frame of mind.

The fears of violence and alienation that youths held in common were expressed in stories of the coercive power of peer pressure, while the frustration, factionalism, and intransigence encountered by many adult residents were reflected in portrayals of interminable community meetings on issues such as prostitution and neighbourhood "cleanups." At the same time, the play's celebration of the small pleasures of everyday neighbourhood life affirmed an existing sense of community which pointed to the idealism and optimism of those individuals who were committed to making the neighbourhood a better place to live.

Diversity in North Central was emphasized through such composite characters and events as: a young inter-racial couple's struggle to "fit in"; an upwardly mobile couple's
experience of a "break and enter" at their newly purchased first home; the struggle of "Doreen," a prototypical single mother, to maintain a job and a decent home in the shadow of her absentee "slum landlord"; and "Sheldon," an aboriginal victim of domestic violence struggling to escape his past mistakes and define his separate identity.

Sheldon's story of false arrest on the basis of a previous conviction for "B&E" spoke directly to the plight and needs of Native youth, and by advocating that young Aboriginals have more access to traditional cultural structures, it plugged into current debate and controversy concerning Native autonomy and the use of measures such as Sentencing Circles to determine appropriate punishment (and rehabilitation) for Native offenders. Other composite characters also articulated tensions between various community groups and individuals; conflicting points of view (including direct quotes from a woman who had worked as a prostitute) were either paraphrased or taken verbatim from actual meetings and interviews; the perspectives of both "cops" and "party goers" were solicited and integrated into a portrayal of regulars at a North Central "party house"; and the plight of a retired house-proud couple who suffer the unwarranted vengeance of partyers after a police raid dramatized the conflict between a husband determined to sell their property and move to "Kamloops" and a wife determined to stay. Portions of their debate, together with the story
of their "son's" arrest on false charges, were created by combining verbatim extracts from interviews with several different seniors. "Jamie's story" combined various arguments collected during the research process to bring two diametrically opposed points of view into theatricalized contact. "Jamie," a self-styled "urban poet" attempting to communicate with the masses by means of a campaign of political and philosophical graffiti, was confronted by "Ylang," a young Oriental woman whose critique of vandalism and social irresponsibility forced Jamie to consider the futility and destructive aspects of his type of polemic.

Other characters, while presenting recognizable types, were more purely fictional and served primarily dramaturgical ends. Taras and Joe, for example, immigrants from distinct cultural backgrounds, one Ukrainian and the other Chinese, were literally and figuratively perched "above it all," as they persistently yet ineffectually tried to repair Joe's roof while sitting in judgement on the whole neighbourhood. Joe and Taras drank, bickered, and provided comic relief with their exaggerated mutual bigotry and intolerance of the younger generation. In the case of "Marie," a teenage single mother who dreams of escaping to Vancouver, her conscious dreams were repeatedly interrupted by historical flashbacks proceeding from a kind of collective subconscious. These flashbacks helped rationalize the inclusion of occasional historical scenes
such as the "On to Ottawa Trek" and a "Blessed by Night sequence" which combined documentary material relating to the Gradual Civilization Act with a poetic speech written by Van Fossen to connect the roots of Native oppression today with ill-conceived government policies of the past."

The inclusion of recognizable, biographically based characters lent further authority to the script's representation of crisis and difference. The central character of "Levi" was among those most closely based on biographical research. Levi's story was largely self-scripted by a teenager who had until recently attended Scott Collegiate. In fiction as in life, Levi's story was that of a young gay male living with an aunt in a small house overcrowded by children. Locked out by his aunt and shunned by his peers, Levi turned to male prostitution, and the alienated, unpredictable nature of his predicament was conveyed by showing him befriended by one prostitute and rejected by her fellow "hooker." The real "Levi" disappeared just before A North Side Story went into production; but the fictional Levi was shown dying in the partyhouse fire which marked the production's climax. Blame for the death was assigned to xenophobia in general, but focussed on a specific homophobic response which denied Levi mouth to mouth resuscitation--another event which mirrored an actual public humiliation suffered by the real Levi at a school CPR workshop.
Levi's death was the final episode in *A North Side Story (or two)*'s fictional construction of community. From this point on, the theatrical event moved increasingly into a ritualized "real time" experience. Immediately following the house fire sequence, and prior to the announcement of Levi's death, a series of "live" interviews was conducted among the spectators and projected onto the 10 x 10 foot video screen. During these sequences, the Interviewer explicitly referred to the actions of the running crew as they could be observed positioning "police barricades" and nailing boards over windows. By contrast, all of the production's other set changes had been accomplished while the attention of spectators was directed elsewhere. The interviews thus produced a kind of Brechtian distancing effect as the houses of the "set" were literally degraded in ways that reflected the harsh realities of current neighbourhood experience.

Interviewees were questioned about their responses to the performance and the accuracy of its portrayal of the neighbourhood, then they were encouraged to voice opinions regarding what should be done to address the sorts of problems depicted in the play. Those interviewed included neighbourhood and municipal residents, a city councillor, and members of the Regina arts community. One long-term resident acknowledged the accuracy of the project's portrayal but suggested that it also stopped short of
representing the more positive aspects of the neighbourhood: its sense of friendliness and belonging. Respondents consistently attested to the truthful and "realistic" nature of the neighbourhood portrayal and suggested that solutions to the area's problems were most likely to be found through "working together." These on-the-spot interviews can be seen as functioning along the lines of Augusto Boal's Forum theatre in which spectators "intervene" in the dramatized action in order to demonstrate alternative responses or actions as a kind of "rehearsal for revolution." 8

Following the interviews, spectators were briefly returned to the world of the play by the announcement of Levi's death, which then served as pretext for a ritualized ceremony involving a pledge of commitment to social change. The ceremony began with a small dramatized native rite of mourning which was then expanded into a full cast procession surrounding and enclosing the spectators in the platea. This sequence began with a musical round asking the question "Why here and why now?", moved into a catechism of questions posed to diverse individual characters (hookers, youths, homeowners, etc.), then finally ended in a group chant. The questions, "What are you going to do about it?" and "Are you in?", led to the responses, "We're here; we're in; we're in when you let us," and culminated in the group chant, "It will not happen again!" The ritualized nature of the promise (developed in part from voice workshops) effectively blurred
distinctions between actor and role to demonstrate both literally and figuratively the project’s commitment to inclusive diversity and social change.

"We are the Warriors, and we are the enemy. It’s all . . . right here in the Hood." (NCCP call and response segment):

All CCPs tend to use music as textual support to insure that the messages of plays are both compelling and non-threatening. In keeping with the genre of its namesake, West Side Story, however, the NCCP incorporated music and lyrics as a principal means of communicating the play’s advocacy of diversity, and under the direction of the composer and musical director, Echo Mazur, music and lyrics became an important means of “democratizing” the play’s message.

One local resident, for instance (in collaboration with Van Fossen), scripted and performed a "rap poem" about her experience of racial and cultural disenfranchisement. This kind of self-scripting was also used in the case of a local Native "rap" group called "Anishnabee," who composed and performed the music and lyrics for two of the production’s numbers expressing the experiences of youth in North Central. These rap numbers were complemented by a recurring chant: "Nothin to do--Nothin to be/Nowhere to go--Nothin to see," and a song about the appeal of drinking and partying in which collaboratively written lyrics were set to music composed and performed by one of the young cast members. In another instance, the "Intertribal Song" was pre-recorded by
the Elkwhistle Singers, then played back to suggest a kind of distant cultural memory as cast members, several of whom had trained professionally, performed a traditional Native dance.\(^{10}\)

The project's staging of generational differences was emphasized in its two recurring musical themes: Anishnabee's rhythmic, upbeat, and socially conscious rap piece "Welcome to the Hood" emphasized the hard-edged youth-oriented aspects of the production, while "The Northsider's Song" drew upon the romantic, timeless nature of lyrical balladry to evoke sentimental, nostalgic memories of cooperation and neighbourliness in a "simpler time."

The play's musical prologue, "Life is a Gamble, Death is a Bet," performed as part of the gathering phase outside the tent, drew an analogy between a roulette wheel and history to introduce debate about the need for direct intervention so that the diverse stories of the traditionally marginalized might be told.\(^{11}\) To this end, Anishnabee's second rap piece, "Fifteen Days," exploited a "bluesy" feel to convey the boredom and frustration of all those who depend on welfare cheques, while the group's overall appropriation of a popularized Black American form suggested the degree to which many North Central youths identify with the same ghetto experience of marginalization and dislocation as black American youths. In another instance, "Levi's Song," the story of the teenage male
prostitute who dreams of becoming a country and western star, poignantly expressed the degree to which the boy’s adolescent dreams of achieving love and respect through fame, were rendered impossible at even the most basic level by the social realities of poverty and homophobia.

Diverse cultural perspectives and instances of local pride were celebrated in two musical numbers drawing on historical perspectives: one dealing with a native pow wow, and the other with the On to Ottawa Trek. The "Intertribal Song" evoked a purely Aboriginal experience and targeted Native youths who had lost touch with traditional cultural forms of expression, while "Ottawa Ho" presented an image of resistance to poverty bridging the gaps of race, culture, and social and economic status. The latter piece’s "colour-blind" casting of Aboriginals in "White" roles suggested both the universal nature of poverty and unemployment, and the need for contemporary solidarity, as Native and non-native actors collaborated to enact an historical event from which the Aboriginal peoples had been conspicuously absent because of their Reserve status.12

Other production numbers, such as "Lock the Doors," took a more Brechtian approach that created tensions between medium and message in order to parody the divisive effects of fear and suspicion in the community. This piece juxtaposed lyrics that expressed the commonly held fear of break ins, with an upbeat showtune featuring a parade of
doors, comically choreographed skulking figures, and diverse residents lapsing into Motown harmonies to send a message about the need for vigilance but not panic.

"Brother Hood/Sister Hood/Neighbour Hood/In the Hood"

(graffito reproduced by the NCCP):

The NCCP achieved varying degrees of representation and participation from Scott Collegiate and all the local youth groups, as well as from Neighbourhood Watch, the North Central Community Association, the local Native rap group Anishnabee, and an ex-city counsellor. And whereas CCPs generally attract a preponderance of women, the North Central cast was unusual in being almost equally balanced between male and female participants in all age ranges. The project was also successful in casting almost equal numbers of Native and non-native participants.

The NCCP’s commitment to inclusive diversity and its focus on the concerns of youth did result in problems, however. In the final cast of sixty, forty-two were under twenty-five years of age, and of these seventeen were between thirteen and nineteen and nine were children under twelve. This imbalance in age created difficulties for the CCP’s usual processes of inter-generational mentorship and democratization. CCPs depend heavily on the commitment, community experience, contacts, and leadership of a bulk of adult cast members who share the conceptual, organizational, and physical load of projects through participation on
committees and subcommittees. The NCCP project's focus on youth—a group not advantageously placed to participate in community leadership—put increased conceptual responsibility in the hands of a relatively small group of adult participants, especially the professional core. In addition, CCPs conventionally depend on help from the immediate families of those involved, but in the case of the NCCP the cast included fewer families than usual and a much larger number of individuals isolated from any traditional support networks. For many of the cast, simply developing the discipline, social skills, and understanding necessary to participate in rehearsal and performance constituted a major challenge. Although at least half of them found time to volunteer in a variety of practical capacities, the exigencies of rehearsals and production left little room for participants to contribute to the conceptual elements of the project. Of the youths between thirteen and twenty-five, over forty percent were identified as either victims of abuse, or young offenders "at risk" for substance abuse, or as people struggling with behaviour problems relating to the management of anger or what is called Attention Deficit Disorder (an inability to concentrate). As a result, participants and core were often called upon to function in areas more akin to social work than to community animation. Affirmation and intervention within this context included various degrees of peer counselling, ranging from the
pragmatic contributions of a retired actor whose professional approach provided a model of discipline, commitment, and vocal skill, to the remarkable instance of a thirty-year-old man who combined natural leadership abilities and a frank approach to his and others' life experiences (including his own membership in Narcotics Anonymous) in ways that inspired "at risk" members of the cast in particular to let go of their self-consciousness and commit themselves wholeheartedly to the ideas and performance of the project.

This conjunction of cast demographics, together with the project's quest for inclusive diversity, also contributed to the relatively high degree of attrition in the NCCP. While all CCPs experience a certain degree of this as participants come to realize the extent of the commitment required by the projects, the dropout rate in the NCCP was exacerbated by family and personal problems, by transience, and by problems of access stemming from the project's inner urban environment. In combating this attrition, organizers had to develop strategies to deal with issues such as domestic violence, curfew and probation requirements that prevented some young offenders from rehearsing and performing after hours on the school grounds, negotiations to have the project accepted as a way of fulfilling community service hours, and in one case, release from weekend sentencing to ensure that a cast member could
be present for Friday and Saturday performances. The
tenuous economic situation of many cast members, especially
the young adults, created additional problems. Several
participants who had low-paying, entry-level jobs involving
shift work encountered employers who took a "Show up when I
say, or don't show up at all" attitude which created serious
problems of attendance at final rehearsals and performances.
Despite appeals by project organizers, a number of these
participants were forced to drop out of the play because
they were denied release from such work.\(^{15}\)

Other factors, including the project's conception of
difference, resulted in an unusually high level of attrition
among the professional core. In December 1994 both the play
co-ordinator and the co-writer withdrew from the project as
the emotional nature of its demands on them became evident.
Richard Agecoutay left the project to accept a teaching
contract in Banff, and ill health led to the withdrawal of
the co-director, Darrel Wildcat. Complete responsibility
for writing and directing the project then fell on Van
Fossen who had originally been contracted only as co-writer
and co-director.\(^{16}\)

To complicate matters further, Regina experienced
unseasonable amounts of rain and wind during the period
immediately leading up to and including the performances.
The initial setup of the tent was delayed for several days
by high winds, and the show had to open one day late without
the benefit of either technical or dress rehearsals. The final Saturday performance had to be cancelled due to flooding after a tornado touched down in Regina six hours before curtain time.

Successful CCPs invariably bring people together around the common adversities facing production, however, and in the case of the NCCP, the play’s conception of difference, the local press’s emphasis on conflict and adversity, and especially the last-minute crises of weather appear to have contributed significantly to the construction of the play as a community "cause." As A North Side Story neared production, many participants began to perceive a shift in the local media’s portrayal of the neighbourhood from the disempowering, alienating construction of a "bad rep," to a pro-active call for the mobilization of resources in support of the North Central project. From its inception, the project had received support from community and youth organizations, local churches, the school board, libraries, and cultural organizations in such areas as the provision of workshop, office, and meeting spaces, but as the play neared production, increasingly NCCP began to receive donations of publicity and things like food, the use of cell phones, and material to combat flooding. The professional core were able to draw on contacts and support from Regina’s Globe Theatre and the Department of Theatre at the University of Saskatchewan, and the Open Custody Program for young
offenders supplied labour to help put up the tent at the site of Scott Collegiate. One local radio station responded both "on air" and "personally" to the production's flood problems by broadcasting calls for assistance, and by donating truckloads of sand and straw and arranging the loan and transport of hockey boards from a local arena. During the run of the show itself, many individual spectators demonstrated their support of the project and its cause by contributing hundreds of dollars to a collection taken up to offset the revenues from the two performances which had to be cancelled. 17

Relative to the previous CCPs discussed in this study, however, this ratio between material and human contributions points to a very different sense of community "ownership" in the case of the NCCP. The project's focus on youth, its confrontation of controversial issues, its limited hands-on participation and problems of attrition resulted in an overall tendency for the conceptual, organizational, and aesthetic elements of the project to originate and remain in the hands of the professional core. Although many of the core had close connections to North Central and had been participants in the Fort Qu'Appelle projects earlier, the NCCP, while remaining deeply committed to community participation, leaned further toward models of community-oriented popular theatre in which a comparatively small group of theatre professionals assume responsibility for the
creation and performance of a theatrical representation for a host community instead of catalysing the community in the true CCP manner to create this for themselves.\textsuperscript{18}

In comparison to the usual scale of these and other forms of community-based theatre, however, the NCCP was huge, and this contributed to a variation of Jellicoe's "siege mentality" in which the autonomy of the professional core remained, for the most part, unchallenged by participants. This was exacerbated by a tendency on the part of the core to resist "letting go" and permitting community members to "take ownership" and responsibility for the complicated technical aspects of the production.\textsuperscript{19}

From the project's inception the sophistication of the NCCP's various design components, while conceptually in keeping with the play's quest for an appropriately urban aesthetic, risked isolating the professional core by limiting opportunities for community involvement. Lighting and sound designs called for a complicated system of stage amplification accommodating four main stages (two of which were over 60' long) and a lighting plot that involved about 50 instruments, 36 dimmers, and two followspots to light almost 5,000 square feet of interior space, including the platea and over 1,500 square feet of elevated staging. (By comparison, the 1993 Calling Lakes play used a simple system of lighting consisting merely of two followspots positioned in towers on the perimeter of the promenade). The NCCP set
design was also very elaborate, calling for an integration of the realistic, 3-dimensional facades of neighbourhood houses, live video and overhead projections on the central 10' by 10' screen, plus general "scenery" consisting of reproductions of actual graffiti and photographs of the neighbourhood projected onto the walls of the tent from a battery of projectors situated at six separate locations. This technical sophistication complicated community involvement even in the pre-production phases; then when weather-related delays resulted in cancelled technical rehearsals, there was only minimal time for training or briefing inexperienced community participants in the complexity of setting up and operating such an arsenal of equipment. Charged with maintaining "the highest possible artistic standards" under extremely trying conditions, some members of the core expressed frustrations about the lack of skill and professional commitment on the part of community participants. The overall result was a tendency for the overworked core to do it themselves in order to have it done quickly and properly--a cardinal error according to CCP philosophy.  

We’re here we’re in, WE ARE HERE (NCCP group chant):

But while factors such as attrition, weather, "over-teching," and the narrow focus on youth helped to diminish community ownership of many of the conceptual aspects of the project, A North Side Story appears to have been highly
successful in giving "voice" to neighbourhood diversity. The NCCP set out to prove that:

the conflict and crisis which divide a community can ultimately also be its unifying force. Especially when art, and connection to imaginative individual creativity, is used to express and synthesize the diverse components of a story in a very public presentation.  

To this end, the project’s urban character required a performance text that would offer relevance to individuals of diverse backgrounds by containing "both the forces of domination and the opportunities to speak against them" (Fiske 1989, 25). The project’s use of music in this regard was highly effective, and points to its underdeveloped potential to celebrate difference in other CCPs. Similarly, the decision to focus on contemporary and fictionalized "stories" minimized one of the problematic aspects of the CCP’s more usual approach in this regard: a tendency--inherent in the celebration of common values derived from shared history--to affirm the values of longer term residents or cultures at the expense of more recent arrivals. By presenting a demographic cross-section of the neighbourhood in the form of a fictionalized "slice" of North Central life in 1995, the NCCP avoided potentially divisive entanglements with historical cause or simplistic solutions which can result from the more usual CCP
progressivist approach to history.

For young participants in particular, the cooperative and "productive" experience of promenade played a central role in the project's social intervention. As the NCCP entered the final stages of rehearsal, it was characterized by a gap between the youthful exuberance, spontaneous clowning, and typical role-playing of socializing teens which occurred around rehearsals, and the timid, self-conscious characterizations which they often exhibited during rehearsals. This separation between formal and informal creative activity was most clearly expressed in the cast's struggle with the cooperative essence of promenade, as self-absorption, problems with group focus, and irrelevant socializing in the platea during rehearsal persistently hampered the establishment of a sense of ensemble. This slowly began to change as the relevance and strength of the scripted material started to emerge through the hard work, ability, and experience of a handful of actors (especially those with professional experience and training) who began to identify with the contemporary relevance of their roles and thereby encouraged others to do the same. The biographical nature of many of the script's characters had been designed to encourage this kind of identification between actor and role, and many cast members had been given synopses of the actual and composite histories of their characters as part of the rehearsal
process. As individual scenes and performances slowly began to coalesce, and as participants became more competent with the support and focus techniques of promenade, an increasingly attentive, and ultimately reactive "audience" of participants began to develop. Eventually the ingenuous enthusiasm generated by cast members responding to "truths" in the work of their fellow actors began to establish a ground-swell of support and reward for creative risk-taking and accomplishment which continued unabated throughout the run.\(^22\)

This contributed to a number of particularly moving performances. The story of the "stay or go" conflict between the older couple, the Native speech about the *Gradual Civilization Act* (which drew applause several times during the run), the testimony of a woman speaking of the circumstances which led to her dependence on prostitution, and the story of a young woman's struggle to avoid prostitution, were outstanding examples of this.

These highly committed, biographically authenticated performances were instrumental in validating the project's questioning of social and even moral boundaries. In this regard, the portrayals of some of the project's most contentious issues--homosexuality and prostitution, in particular--served to put human faces to problems of ethnic and other diversity and emphasized the individual and collective human cost of xenophobic behaviour. A reporter
for the *Regina Leader Post*, for example, noted:

It's surprising when a teenaged male prostitute sings about wanting to be a country and western star. We do not expect this kid to have the same kind of pie-in-the-sky dreams other teenagers have. But why shouldn't he? (O'Brian, 1995)

Similarly, among the participants themselves the impact of working together with neighbours of diverse backgrounds (including a same-sex couple) to produce such narratives as Levi's story led to a perception among organizers that homophobic jokes and behaviour by some of the young cast members were increasingly, and successfully, being challenged by their peers.

Several participants also expressed a belief that the group support and informal peer counselling engendered by the project were important factors in breaking patterns of isolation which had previously inhibited personal growth and agency. The example of one woman in her thirties is particularly striking. Subject to physical abuse by her husband, she was forced to miss one of the opening performances. When she appeared to perform on the next night, she spoke of her determination to continue in the project, of the importance to her of being a part of the production, and of her gratitude for the support she received from fellow participants. 23

In such ways the "unifying force" which the NCCP set
out to harness appears to have been manifest primarily in
the project’s bonding of diverse participants into a sense
of extended family which transgressed many of the boundaries
defined by age, race, and socio-economic status. In terms
of local and regional impact, the personal contacts and
relationships developed by participants in the project have
facilitated communications between many municipal and
neighbourhood groups and agencies since, and the project has
resulted in the creation of a non-partisan community group
advocating intervention in neighbourhood issues (membership
in this group was solicited immediately following each
performance).

More recently, a revised one-act version of A North
Side Story (or two) including only the stories about youths
was staged at the 1995 annual conference of the Canadian
Council for Inner City Education held in Regina. Van Fossen
and the cast, including most of the original participants,
were subsequently invited to perform the play (titled City
Flats) in a number of urban centres, and toured to Victoria,
B.C. in February, 1996. The tour of City Flats was a
resounding success, and a number of those involved credit
the NCCP and tour experience with motivating them to become
actively involved in neighbourhood issues. Two youths are
now peer counsellors with Rainbow Youth, another has put
together a student run drama club at her high school (their
first project was a collectively created play about teen
suicide), and a 17 year-old former prostitute is now involved in public speaking about working the streets. In addition, a 25 year-old high school dropout, who at the time of *A North Side Story* was working under the auspices of the John Howard Society and enrolled in a mandatory Anger Management Program, credits the NCCP with making it possible for him to enroll in university as a mature student.

The success of the NCCP and its follow up activities speaks directly to some central concerns of popular theatre in general, and provides insight into the potential efficacy of relationships between individualistic and communal approaches to theatre in the CCP form in particular. Many community-based popular theatre projects worry that staging the oppression and concerns of particular sections of a community can reinforce (or even construct) the marginalization of such groups and thus deprive them of opportunities for taking a greater degree of responsibility for personal agency and solutions.

The tendency towards romanticization in the North Central project's use of biographical and composite characterization points directly to these questions of responsibility and empowerment. While the circumstances of alienation borne by composite and biographically inspired characters appears to have been presented truthfully, representation of individual characters tended toward a romanticization in which they were invariably portrayed as
"good at heart," and led astray only by the circumstances imposed upon them by a hostile environment. Most importantly, almost all were seen as capable of rehabilitation, although, ironically perhaps, the one who was not (Levi the homosexual, as opposed to Levi the prostitute) had to die tragically in order to be accepted into the constituting narratives of the community at large.24

Such romanticizations of human nature may be seen to obscure the complicity of individuals in their own oppression, while romanticized portrayals of the empowerment of a marginalized subject suggests a diminished responsibility for individual choice or, by extension, individual agency in change as the "oppressed," through a process of identification with dramatic protagonists who are successful in their quest for upward mobility, receives a disempowering "consolation" for enduring the status quo.25

By their own criteria, however, successful CCPs must "morally implicate" both audiences and participants in the events depicted in the play; and considered from the perspective of the individual participant, romanticism in the NCCP appears to have facilitated the kind of identification and consciousness-raising that was necessary for acceptance to occur across difference. While sentimentality may have been used to mobilize an idealistic projection of community solidarity, the project's emphasis on the contemporary relevance of individual diversity within
the neighbourhood, together with the highly theatricalized context of CCPs in general and the shared knowledge of the difficult personal histories of fellow participants (inherent in the actor/role paradigm of CCPs in general), appears to have mitigated against overly simplistic or literal responses to A North Side Story. The NCCP seems to have countered the potential pitfalls of romanticizing identity (including the diminishment of a sense of personal responsibility among spectators) with a participatory process which enhanced the sense of self-worth and individual understanding of difference by the project's diverse participants.

An essential element in achieving this balance between sentimentality and individual agency appears to have been the NCCP's inclusion and treatment of what Salverson and others have referred to as "risky stories," personal narratives which include or embody "stories of emergency and violation" (1996b). Salverson warns, however, that when participants in popular theatre projects act out versions of their own stories which have not been adequately depersonalized by the mediation of theatrical form, they risk becoming trapped in "recycling a story they may wish they had never remembered." In such cases participants can be left feeling "used and discarded" as the theatre prevents them from taking the important step of "re-externalizing the [traumatic] event."26 Salverson advocates that testimony or
witnessing involving "personal trauma" be "contained" within a theatrical structure which will avoid "the lie of the literal":

A common concern among popular and community theatre workers is to be faithful to the integrity of the storyteller--not to interfere with her words, to make her the final arbiter of what gets shown or said. This idealization of "authenticity" often happens at the expense of aesthetics or theatrical form, which may be considered as distortions, or as impositions of the artist's "high" culture. Yet this overemphasis upon a single, authentic story does not allow for sufficient complexity, nuance, and multiple points of entry. Such a story may remain either outside the experience of the listener, as the exotic and impenetrable but vicariously viewed "other"; or, it will be collapsed and assimilated by the listener as "just like me."

(1996, 184)

As a corrective to this, Salverson advocates the use of theatrical forms to create a kind of "producerly text" (Fiske 1989) which balances the "evasiveness" of the overly symbolic or abstract against the "lie" of the overly literal. Such texts make room for listeners (or "witnesses") to enter the story actively, while at the same time providing those telling their stories with "external images" which function rather like "containers with gaps"
into which participants may safely "step" in order to provide their testimony (Salverson 1996, 188).

The experience of the NCCP suggests that, while entirely capable of staging the "lie of the literal" (organizers had originally intended to use "autobiographical casting" in a number of roles, including that of a local prostitute), CCPs are perhaps more naturally inclined toward constructing the kind of "gaps" in the theatrical "container" which Salverson advocates. In the case of the NCCP, for example, the form's largescale and overarching concern with communal approaches to affirmation created multiple points of entry into biographically based stories by encouraging the creation and performance of composite narratives of diversity, while the CCP's eclectic nature facilitated the use of self-scripted material within the abstracted and metaphoric contexts of music and poetry.

Relative to the other projects considered in these studies, then, the NCCP suggests a further range of options available to CCPs as they respond and adapt to particular communities. A North Side Story (or two) drew upon both the individualistic and the communal approaches to theatre and advocacy which are available in the CCP form to create an environment in which deeply personal stories of trauma and difference might be safely integrated into the constituting narratives of the North Central neighbourhood. Ora Avni implies that such reconstitutions not only function as a
preliminary step in formulating a notion of community which includes a role for the individuals whose stories have been represented, but that they also thereby "infer a new code of behaviour" for the community at large (cited in Salverson 1996b, 182). In these and other regards, the NCCP has much to contribute to ongoing debate around the strengths and possible liabilities of the CCP's use of progressivism and historical documentary (including avoiding the promotion of xenophobia and the affirmation of prescriptive moralism), and what the limits of the professional theatre artist's ideological influence in community plays should be (particularly in relation to the 20th century theatre's privileging of autonomy in such areas as playwrighting and directing). These issues, as well as the problem of what criteria should be applied for evaluating the aesthetic and artistic accomplishments of community plays, can only be summarized at this stage but not yet solved.
COLOUR ILLUSTRATIONS ON PAGES 266 TO 268 ARE NOT AVAILABLE IN MICROFILM COPIES
Notes:

1. The quotation is from the production program. Circle Vision is a non-profit, registered charity governed by a traditional Native Council and a volunteer Board of Directors. Its members and contacts provided high profile support, and such well-known native actors as Errol Kinistino conducted acting workshops and advocated the project to local youth and the community at large. (Kinistino grew up on a reserve in the Qu’Appelle Valley, was an original cast member of Thomson Highway’s Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing, and appears regularly on the television show North of Sixty). While Agecoutay’s position as Development Officer was later terminated because of lack of funding, he continued to sit on the organization’s board.

2. The project was able to raise almost 40% of its Public and Private Funding target from a campaign aimed at crown corporations and local businesses and individuals. While British projects routinely aim for a similar percentage, the Canadian projects discussed in the previous case studies averaged less than 20% of this revenue from private funding sources.

3. Among the most controversial reports were a series of stories about a gang of car thieves allegedly operating out of North Central, and the September 1994 reportage of “drive by shootings.” During the run of A North Side Story (or two), media reports concerning North Central included
stories of the arrest of a "gang" of 11-16 year olds on charges of break-and-enter and the discovery of an unidentified murder victim in a back lane.

4. For a comprehensive historical account of the North Central area see Ann Blakeney's *North Side Stories*.

5. Neighbourhood Watch and the municipally-funded North Central Community Association, for example, two groups which share concerns about issues of safety, neighbourhood cleanup, and advocacy in municipal politics, are primarily composed of home-owners and have no Native members. Circle of Life, on the other hand, is a Native Lutheran Ministry which runs food and clothing banks, a drop-in centre, counselling facilities, and the Alanon and Teenanon alcohol rehabilitation programs. These groups are representative of what several residents described as pockets of strong and enduring community spirit which are generally restricted along common socio-economic, racial, or generational lines. Families with adult children who have taken up residence in the area are rare.

6. These included two eleven year olds who, drawn to the project by the imposing presence of the "Big Top" on the local school grounds, arrived too late to be cast in the show but showed up every day to run errands, deliver messages, and offer general help.

7. The *Gradual Civilization Act* empowered the Territorial Government "to detain and arrest any Indian who
is under suspicion of inciting rebellion." Enforcement of the act led to a pass system whereby Aboriginals who left reserve land without a pass could be detained "under suspicion." This sequence, like the other historical sequences (the majority of which dealt with incidents of Native and working class oppression), was an exception to the NCCP's tendency to eschew discussions of historical blame. The sequences were conventionally Colway, however, in their adherence to the dictum that the villain be portrayed as from outside the community.

Other historical flashbacks included: a look at the oppressive economics of the buffalo bone fertilizer industry in Regina (historically known as "Pile of Bones" by the Native people); the dramatized story of an older woman's childhood memories of discrimination as she recalled the Regina Exhibition's ban prohibiting Natives from entering the grounds; and a representation of documented KKK terrorism against Chinese immigrants to North Central.

8. Published works by Boal dealing with Forum Theatre include Theatre of the Oppressed, The Rainbow of Desire: The Boal Method of Theatre and Therapy, Games for Actors and Non-Actors and numerous essays and journal articles. Variations on Forum Theatre are widely used in Canadian popular theatre by such diverse groups as the Women's Theatre and Creativity Centre in Halifax, Mixed Company and Ella Theatre Projects in Toronto, Edmonton's Concrete
Theatre, Vancouver’s Alchemy TheatreLab and Headlines Theatre, and Victoria’s Puente Theatre for immigrant women, to name but a few.

9. In addition to its evocation of West Side Story, the play sought to enhance the project’s contemporary feel through intertextual and aesthetic references to such recent popular films as Boyz in the Hood, Do the Right Thing, and The Outsiders. The play’s final poetic plea owed a recognizable debt to the rhetoric of Martin Luther King Jr.

10. Other credits for collaboration include: a member of the steering committee who also performed in the play, the Play co-ordinator, and Van Fossen’s husband, a local musician.

11. This theme was supported later in the play by a top-hatted circus performer on stilts selling versions of history and lecturing about the land speculations of Governor Dewdney (represented by a giant puppet). Here again, the villain was portrayed as part of “larger” forces outside of the everyday experience of community members.

12. The “colour blind” casting of this sequence afforded a striking contrast to the racially specific strategies of representation in the Fort Qu’Appelle play, particularly for those who experienced both projects. The power of “ancestral” casting was also invoked in the NCCP as Joe McEwan, an ex-city councillor commonly referred to as "Red Joe," led the Trekkers’ protest on which his father had
been one of the original marchers.

13. This gender balance was in part reflective of the high level of unemployment among local youth generally and males in particular. The Worker’s Theatre Movement of the 1930’s had a high level of gender parity for similar reasons.

14. Of the remaining eighteen cast members, seven were between twenty-six and thirty-one, three were between thirty-four and thirty-eight and the rest ranged from forty to seventy-one, with the average age being forty-five.

15. A 23 year old male who had helped to develop one of the central roles regretfully left the show in the final week of rehearsals because he was required to return to his parents’ home and care for younger siblings. In another case, a local woman who had worked as a prostitute (and whose testimony was included in the final script) dropped out just before performances. In several cases where the roles of participants who left at the last minute could not be reassigned or cut, members of the professional core with acting experience had to step in as substitutes. Overall, attrition among cast members tended to be evenly spread among the male/female and age demographics which characterized the final cast.

16. The replacement co-ordinator was Rae Staeson. Agecoutay’s departure in particular points to a persistent problem for theatre professionals who wish to work on CCPs.
Commitment to its two-year process (often with remuneration commensurate only to specific aspects or periods of the projects) often conflicts with the standard 4-6 week contracts of regular theatres which are dictated by the time frame of a subscription season.

17. Oram has often remarked that the experience of CCPs is somewhat like the way a war brings people together, except that "in a war you know who your enemies are, in a community play you know who your friends are." In spite of this kind of support, however, attendance at the remaining ten shows was less than sold out, and the project incurred a $5,000 deficit. Van Fossen expressed the opinion that, in many cases, the lack of attendance at performances reflected an ambivalence that led many to offer material assistance in recognition and support of the problems which the project was attempting to address, but an unwillingness to become more directly or personally involved, even to the extent of attending a performance.

18. Of the nine person steering committee, for example, only two were directly involved as performers. See Little and Knowles, 71ff for a discussion of Canadian community-based popular theatre groups operating in this manner. Two members of the NCCP professional core, the Associate Director Mark Dieter and the Assistant Director Pearl Yuzicappi, had participated in the Calling Lakes plays as volunteers.
19. As noted, Jellicoe discusses the "seige mentality" at length in *Community Plays* (1987). Oram's discussions with members of the professional core of later Colway and CCP projects consistently emphasize the importance of "letting go" and permitting the community to "take ownership" (see Little and Knowles, 71).

20. Sets were designed by Don McEwan, and Jayson McLean served as Technical Director. McEwan's design incorporated video footage and slides of actual places and events, such as footage of cars and hookers and projections of a local "hangout" (the Utopia café). One particularly complicated sequence involved synchronizing the movements of a live actor portraying a youth fleeing the police, with background video images of the same actor moving through an urban to a rural landscape. While McEwan's design did call for community participation in the video footage, editing and preparation of overheads and slides remained principally in the hands of the designer. Agecoutay took most of the neighbourhood photographs with the assistance of a NCCP-secured grant, and while the results were often evocative, neighbourhood participation in the process was minimal. McLean had been Technical Director for the Blyth Festival's production of *Many Hands* and in comparing the two projects spoke of the differences between the "work ethic" of the Blyth area farmers and the more casual sense of commitment from many members of the North Central cast.
21. Quoted from the Project Description for the NCCP's application to the Canada Council for an Explorations Grant.

22. The contributions of trained and experienced actors to this process, including the Assistant and Associate Directors, Yuzicappi and Dieter, as last-minute "stand ins," suggests that the CCP's theoretical insistence that professional actors should not act in community plays must be assessed on a project to project basis, like all other aspects of the form.

23. The woman subsequently had a restraining order put on her husband for the duration of the performance period and later left the marriage. In a similar case, a woman in her thirties credited the play with helping her to find the self esteem necessary to leave her emotionally abusive husband.

24. Vito Russo discusses this tradition of killing off sympathetic homosexual characters in *The Celluloid Closet*.

25. As noted in the Blyth project, for example.

26. Salverson cites psychoanalyst Dori Laub to demonstrate how the "re-externalization" of a reconstruction of history which includes both testimony and witnessing can only occur "when one can articulate and transmit the story, literally and figuratively to another outside oneself and then take it back again inside" (1996b, 187). Salverson's work draws upon her practical experience with "trauma memory" in popular theatre projects.
Conclusion:

The Colway experience in Canada has reaffirmed the form's flexibility by testing its boundaries in a variety of unique "communal" situations of widely different kinds. Individual projects have highlighted contradictions and paradoxes within the form itself, in particular its combination of "celebratory" and "interventionist" modes, and the persistent danger of valuing existing traditional status and mores at the expense of individual or group "differences" within the "host" community. While very different from English prototypes, Canadian productions have met and responded to these problems with varying degrees of success, one key to which has been the extent and manner of the professional "core's" involvement with community volunteers. And while no easy or universally applicable "solutions" are available, a number of more-or-less successful compromises have been evolved that provide very useful models for further applications--and adaptations--of the CCP form.

All of these strategies are predicated on the assumption that CCPs cannot be evaluated on either their social or their aesthetic accomplishments without reference to the values and standards of their particular host communities. CCPs proceed from the imperatives of community, and precisely because the form is so fundamentally involved in constructing a collective response
to the social conditions of the community for whose benefit the play is being mounted, they provide a rare opportunity for participants to integrate into the play-making processes many of those same unique conditions.

Like many forms of popular theatre, CCPs exploit the "gathering" and "dispersal" phases immediately preceding and following performances, in order to establish familiar conventions for the reception of the play and to emphasize the social significance (and therefore the social action) of the theatrical event. The form is almost unprecedented, however, in creating largescale community events which define themselves as including within these gathering and dispersal phases the extensive processes of play-making leading up to performance, as well as any directly related "follow up" activities.

To consider CCPs as protracted theatrical events each occurring within a two year time frame suggests that their essentially communal aesthetic of performance be seen as the cumulative celebration of months of collective work and community preparation in which, to varying degrees, the majority of audience members have been implicated well before the actual performance. From this perspective, gathering and dispersal phases also serve to set up and sanction a time and space for an animated, even ecstatic intergenerational participation in the play itself which at times approximates the abandon of more strictly
carnivalesque and processional forms: such as Toronto’s Caribana Festival, for example.

The final principle of CCPs is that they should embrace a process which assumes a commitment by participants to develop further activities after the play is over. For the most part, however, this extended "dispersal" phase remains the most unstructured and underdeveloped aspect of CCPs. Some practitioners argue that this is as it should be, because in the true spirit of "democratization" decisions as to what comes after should be left entirely in the hands of community members. This assumes that follow up activities will be inspired by the processes and performance of the CCP: a dubious assumption, however, given that the physical and material resources of a community can be so depleted in producing an event the size of a CCP that little impetus or support is left for further creativity. In Canada at any rate, follow up activities have tended to be spearheaded by community residents who claim to have been motivated by the example of the CCP, but did not participate directly in the event itself. Paradoxically, the failure of a CCP to accomplish absolute inclusivity is precisely what has been required to generate follow-up activities.

Oram suggests that a ritualized burning of artifacts following the performance of a CCP can function not only as a rite of passage for the community, but also as a cathartic act of mourning, implicitly acknowledging that, once the
role of the professional core is over, a sense of loss will remain for the community. Oram is not alone in his concern for this reaction of displacement and distress that can affect participants immediately following the months of intensive work leading up the 10 or 12 performances of a CCP. Practitioners in both Canada and Britain have searched for appropriate structures to promote follow up activities, and community play conferences and training sessions now invariably include workshops with such titles as "After the Euphoria," or "What to do when the Circus Leaves Town." The problem, however, still remains largely unsolved, unless we look at follow-up from the viewpoint of the CCP form itself rather than from that of particular communities.

What should be stressed in conclusion is that the use and adaptation of the CCP form in Canada has only just begun and is now developing very rapidly. In 1994 Common Weal successfully adapted the form to produce a "mini" community play in Wollaston Lake, a remote Dene village in Northern Saskatchewan; and in the same year, the St. Norbert Arts and Cultural Centre, situated on the grounds of an abandoned Trappist Monastery near Winnipeg, made extensive use of the Colway model to present a community play exploring the history of the monastery and the land it occupied. CCP symposia held in Ontario and Saskatchewan have also drawn interest to the form, particularly from practitioners of popular theatre. The CPTA elected to hold their annual
general meeting in conjunction with the Fort Qu'Appelle conference, and as a result groups such as Puente Theatre in Victoria, B.C. and the Women’s Creativity Centre in Halifax, N.S. have recently drawn on the CCP form to produce community plays about the experience of immigrant women and war brides respectively. In addition, a number of communities in Ontario and B.C. are studying the feasibility of producing CCPs, and Common Weal and 4th Line Theatre of Peterborough, Ontario are working on a joint venture involving Batoche, Saskatchewan, and Millbrook, Ontario, two rural communities linked by the legend of a bell stolen from the one and hidden in the other.

The extent of this activity suggests that there are likely to be many more CCPs in the future, and though initial organization and procedures may be standard, the final effects are destined to be unique because each community’s situation will be different from all others. What is required above all is for the CCP process to remain self-critical and flexible, ready to meet new circumstances with innovative solutions, as it has proven itself so capable of doing in Canada over the past six years. As in A North Side Story (or two), the ultimate "community" may prove in fact to be the Colway form itself.
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Appendix A: List of Plays by the Colway Theatre Trust
(Colway-style plays involving Oram working independently from CTT are marked *)

1978  The Reckoning. Lyme Regis, Dorset
Written and directed by Ann Jellicoe

1980  The Tide. Axe Valley, Devon
Written and directed by Ann Jellicoe

1981  The Poor Man’s Friend. Bridport, Dorset
Written by Howard Barker, directed by Ann Jellicoe

1982  Shh. Burtin Bradstock, Dorset
Written and directed by Andrew Dixon

1982  The Garden. Sherborne, Dorset
Written by Charles Wood, directed by Ann Jellicoe and Jon Oram

1983  Colyford Matters. Colyford, Devon
Written by Dennis Warner, directed by Liz Katis

1983  Today of All Days. Crediton, Devon
Written by John Downie, directed by Val Floyd

1984  Western Women. Lyme Regis, Dorset
Written by Ann Jellicoe and Fay Weldon, directed by Ann Jellicoe, with research by John Fowles

1984  The Earth Turned Inside Out. Restormel, Cornwall*
Written by Nick Darke, directed by Jon Oram

1985  Ballad of Tuly Bake. Ottery St. Mary, Devon
Written by Sheila Yegar, directed by Joan Murs

1985  Waves Against the Flames. Gainsborough, Lincolnshire. Written and directed by Jon Oram

1985  Entertaining Strangers. Dorchester, Dorset
Written by David Edgar, directed by Ann Jellicoe and Jon Oram

1987  Crackling Angels. Beaminster, Dorset
Written by David Cregan, directed by Jon Oram

1987  Crown vs Dennison of Dishwater. Isle of Wight
CTT and Welfare State International Collaboration). Written and directed by Jon Oram and Boris Howarth.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Production Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Writer</th>
<th>Director</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>The King's Shilling</td>
<td>Shillingstone, Dorset</td>
<td>Written by Jon Oram, directed by Chris Fogg</td>
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<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>A Place Called Mars</td>
<td>Thornbury, Avon</td>
<td>Written by Nick Darke, directed by Jon Oram</td>
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<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Beorhtal's Hill</td>
<td>Basildon, Essex</td>
<td>Written by Arnold Wesker, directed by Jon Oram</td>
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<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Odo</td>
<td>Maidstone, Kent</td>
<td>Written by Nick Darke, directed by Steve Woodward</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Out of the Blue</td>
<td>Frome Valley, Dorset</td>
<td>Written by Jon Oram, directed by Clarissa Brown</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>The Spirit of Shivaree</td>
<td>Rockwood, Ontario*</td>
<td>Written by Dale Hamilton, directed by Jon Oram</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Voices in the Stone</td>
<td>Purbeck, Dorset</td>
<td>Written by Stuart Delves, directed by Steve Woodward</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Flying Crooked</td>
<td>Minneapolis, Minnesota</td>
<td>Written and directed by Jon Oram</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Under the Fish and Over the Water</td>
<td>Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire</td>
<td>Written by Peter Terson, directed by Mark Dornford-May</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Listenstone</td>
<td>South Petherton, Somerset*</td>
<td>Written by Bruce Bedford, directed by Jon Oram</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Everyday Heroes</td>
<td>Worksop, Nottinghamshire</td>
<td>Written by John Godber, directed by Steve Woodward</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Vital Spark</td>
<td>Kingston-upon-Hull, Humberside*</td>
<td>Written by Jon Oram, directed by Jon Oram and Rupert Creed</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Many Hands</td>
<td>Blyth, Ontario*</td>
<td>Written by Dale Hamilton, directed by Jon Oram</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Birds of Passage</td>
<td>South Petherton, Somerset*</td>
<td>Written and directed by Jon Oram</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>The Torbay Tempest</td>
<td>Torbay, Devon</td>
<td>Written and directed by Jon Oram</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Over and Under the Earth</td>
<td>Alesham, Kent</td>
<td>Written and directed by Jon Oram</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>The Minehead Community Play</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(in progress)</td>
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Appendix B:  
Professional Core Credits (Artistic)

Many Hands:

Writer/Assistant Director: Dale Hamilton  
Director/Dramaturg: Jon Oram  
Set/Props/Lighting Designer: Ange Zhang  
Costume/Puppet/Mask Designer: Ruth Howard  
Original Score/Musical Direction: Michael Taylor

Ka‘ma‘mo‘pi cik/The Gathering:

Writers: Darrel Wildcat and Rachael Van Fossen  
Co-Directors: Micheline Chevrier and Lorre Jenson  
Original Set and Prop Design: Ruth Howard  
Costume Design: Jo Dibb  
Music and Lyrics: Billy Morton  
Musical Director: Danny Nargang  
Choreographer: Elaine Hanson

The Spirit of Shivaree:

Writer: Dale Hamilton  
Director: Jon Oram  
Set and Prop Designer: Arndt Van Holtzendorff  
Costume Design: Ruth Howard  
Lighting Design: Mark McInnis  
Sound Design: Rob Bell  
Composer/Musical Director: James Gordon  
Choreographer: Jerry Prager

A North Side Story (or two):

Writer: Rachael Van Fossen  
Director: Rachael Van Fossen  
Set Design: Don McEwen  
Costume Design: Michelle Latta  
Lighting Design: Jayson McLean  
Composer/Musical Director: Echo Mazur