

Biographical Sketch

Dr. C. Drew Smith is the director of the Center for International Programs at Henderson State University, where he also teaches courses in philosophy and world religions. He earned his Ph.D. in Early Christianity at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. He has presented and published research in the area of early Christian studies, primarily focusing on the literary nature of early Christian literature and how this literature constructs social formation. He has also presented lectures on the interconnections and interrelationships between the Abrahamic faiths of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and he has organized and moderated inter-religious panel discussions.

The Art of Sincerity

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Abstract: This paper explains some constraints that, due to certain policies, may affect and limit the idealism of the young actor or musician when joining the ranks of professionals in a union. In addition, as in the case of the visual artist, where there is no professional union, I discuss how various rules and regulations may demand compromise. I discuss how the compromise can either “make or break” the artistic opportunity. This research endeavor contains examples of how various actors, musicians, and visual artists have dealt with compromise. I argue that those who were successful, in spite of their acceptance of compromise, were so because of their ability and willingness to execute their art with sincerity.

The Art of Sincerity

A student entering any field of professional art soon discovers that his or her ideals, goals, and artistic freedoms are often met with rules and regulations from unions, directors, fellow artists, record companies, patron censorship, galleries, etc. Especially when entering into any professional artistic society, the young artist will definitely confront the need to compromise these ideals, goals, and artistic freedoms in order to survive. The accepted compromise may hinder or enhance the artist’s final product.

It is my belief that most young professional artists can mediate between their own idealism and the typical hegemonic set of rules that are prevalent in the artistic world by executing their art with sincerity.

This paper will explain some constraints that, due to certain policies, may affect and limit the idealism of the young actor or musician when joining the ranks of professionals in a union. In addition, as in the case of the visual artist, where there is no professional union, I will discuss how various rules and regulations may demand compromise. I will show how the compromise can either “make or break” the artistic opportunity. This research endeavor contains examples of how various actors, musicians, and visual artists have dealt with

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compromise. It is my belief that those who were successful, in spite of their acceptance of compromise, were so because of their ability and willingness to execute their art with sincerity. They have found a way to mediate between artistic idealism and compromises to create an artistic product, which they are pleased and proud to have displayed.

Tolstoy's belief that the sincerity of the artist is the most important factor in creating art is a position that I am espousing. Obviously, there are other factors that are required in creating art, but here talent, skill, and particular creativity are assumed. It is the presence or absence of sincerity that will determine whether the talented artist will succeed in a world of fences and boundaries.

Tolstoy's philosophy encompasses three elements that produce infectious art, the individuality of the emotion transmitted, the amount of clarity in which the emotion is transmitted, and the sincerity in which the emotion transmits (Tolstoy 140). Tolstoy states that individuality and clarity are a part of sincerity. He concludes that of the three factors the most important in creating infectious art is sincerity (141). He believes an artist's work without sincerity perverts the art as well as repels the audience. A lack of sincerity is usually caused when either an artist is forced or enticed to do something beyond the point to which his heart is willing to go.

An aspiring actor entering the professional field of theatre normally will set certain goals. One objective might be to become a member of the Actors Equity Union. Being a member of the Actors Union is considered by many as a professional status to be highly desired, and a must for maintaining certain professional careers. The entrance into this professional union is not the only way an actor becomes a professional, but it does denote high esteem in the theatre world, and there are benefits of belonging. However, the young aspiring and freedom-loving actor who becomes a member of the union is soon made aware that his artistic idealism is somewhat hindered now and that certain freedoms enjoyed as an amateur are mercilessly destroyed by the Lord and Master named "contractual agreement." Therefore, the qualified protections and benefits, which the union brings, are accompanied by various measures of constraints.

One of the basic constraints or loss of freedom one often faces is not living where you like, but where there is artistic opportunity. There are over 450 equity theatres in New York City. Chicago has around ninety- three union theatres. In the whole state of Arkansas, there are two (Actors' Equity Association). Do not like Chicago or New York? This could be a problem, but many can overcome it.

Another example of stifling restrictions, which must be accepted when becoming a member of Equity, is the rule-forbidding actors to work in a non-equity theatre, educational theatre, or with a religious group unless approved by the union. Also, once an Equity actor signs a production contract, he or she in most cases cannot withdraw once rehearsals begin, unless Equity gives permission. In fact, with Broadway productions, there is absolutely no quitting during the rehearsal period without permission from the actors union (Actors' Equity Association 124).

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Regulations can be a pain, but most artists are able to compromise and still maintain sufficient measures of artistic idealism. People do it every day with sincere compliance. There is no clause in a standard Equity contract for personal artistic freedom. Artistic expression comes under the jurisdiction of the director and producer. However, my research, as well as my observation as an Equity actor, reveals that producing a great work of art is still possible when an artist accepts, what he or she judges to be, reasonable compromises while being convinced that his opportunity for expression is satisfactory if not perfect. This represents Tolstoy's idea of sincerity.

The standard Equity contract in which these following performers signed is much the same as the contracts of today, so the contractual constraints will most likely be the same for a young artist of today. Martin Gottfried, in his book *Broadway Musicals*, gives several examples of how theatrical artists have had to compromise. In 1962, Jerome Robbins arrived to fix a troubled out of town tryout production called, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, starring Zero Mostel. Normally, the cast would be elated at the prospects of such a fix. In this case, however, Zero Mostel was less than enthusiastic about the new director that would give him artistic direction. Actually, Mostel loathed Robbins because of personal insult and injury, which Mostel endured during the McCarthy hearings in which Robbins testified. Mostel evidently was blacklisted, and resentment ensued.

In spite of Zero Mostel's personal grudge, he continued to work due to contractual obligations and the professionalism he possessed. He submitted to Robbins' direction. This was Mostel's second Broadway show, and he worked within the parameters and compromises laid out by Robbins. His talent was enhanced by the direction he took from someone he did not like and became known as one of modern theatres' greatest clowns (Gottfried 101).

In William Young's book, *Famous Actors and Actresses on the American Stage*, Jerome Robbins, the director Mostel loathed, praises Mostel for his sincerity as a performer (Young 828). Even unpleasant compromises, coupled with sincerity, can enable an actor to overcome and arrive at success.

There are times, however, when forced compromise is unbearable to an artist, and therefore, sincerity is seemingly impossible. Again, accordingly to Tolstoy, a lack of sincerity pollutes the art. Author Martin Gottfried tells the story about how the theatrical career of a young artist named Carol Burnett came to a halt. Because of misgivings with the producer and a loss of interest in her work, she broke her contract for the Broadway production of "Fade Out Fade In". The producer sued Burnett, and she was required to return to the show. Newspaper journalist, Bud Wilkinson, wrote, "Burnett's performance was reported to be hysterical, but she had qualms with the show. When she returned to the show, her heart wasn't in it, and the show sputtered and closed after just 199 performances." This was in 1964, and she never returned to Broadway until 30 years later (1995) when she appeared in *Moon over Buffalo*. Carol Burnett had all the ingredients for success except sincerity.

Unlike the young actor, the musician does not have the need to seek to be a member of the union to gain acceptance as a professional in the music world. Many professional musicians are non-union freelancers. Some exceptions include the areas of music that are symphonic and

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Broadway shows and tours. The American Federation of Musicians gives the definition of what constitutes a professional musician: "Any musician, who receives pay for his musical services, shall be considered a professional musician" (History of AFM).

Freedom from unions, however, does not necessarily mean freedom from compromise. In an interview in the December 2000 issue of *Ink 19* with recording artist John Flansburg from the group *They Might Be Giants*, Flansburg is asked about music projects that they do not personally enjoy. Flansburg states, "What's interesting about audiences' relationships to musicians is that they tend to think of musicians as people who should not ever compromise, and maybe have never compromised. What's strange is that a musician's life, even finding a band to be in, can be a total compromise" (Diaz).

John Flansburgh and his long time business partner and fellow band member, John Linnell, have worked under constraints and compromises that, rather than hindered them, actually enhanced their art. They had recorded rock music for the Elektra Label when Rounder Label recognized a talent in them that the band had not even discovered about themselves. Rounder Records contracted them to do a children's album. Flansburgh afterwards states, "We're not children's artists in the traditional sense.... It came out pretty good and we are proud of it" (Diaz). It seems that some restrictions upon the artist may actually serve as a useful channel, a helping hand, guiding to an experience of expression that otherwise would not have been possible.

The young visual artist entering the market place does not have a union attempting to organize its members. The visual artist typically does not seek to be a professional in that context. The professional visual artist seeks to have their work exhibited, discussed, and sustained. According to Art Historian Carolyn Tate, "Artists do want their work exhibited, but may choose academic or local venues rather than sell out to the art market."

There are thousands of galleries and guilds for artists to display their work. One could even call these venues little artist unions. The compromise comes in the exhibition of the art. This is where the idealism of the young visual artist must learn to mediate their art with the annoying rules.

The artist may be required to exclude a section of his work in order to accommodate the size of the gallery. The gallery management may not want to repaint the walls the very color that will complement the artist's paintings. The artist can survive these and other logistical regulations only if they sincerely believe that they can maintain satisfactorily the concept or expression after being slightly altered by the hindrances. Artists may have their own threshold of tolerance depending on the level and severity of the hindrance.

The famous artist, Mark Rothko, compromised with his art exhibit. Rothko wrote about his display in a letter to Katharine Kuh:

"Since my pictures are large, colorful, and unframed, and since museum walls are usually immense and formidable, there is the danger that the pictures relate themselves

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as decorative areas to the walls. This would be a distortion of their meaning, since the pictures are intimate and intense, and are the opposite of what is decorative; and have been painted in a scale of normal living rather than an institutional scale. I have on occasion successfully dealt with this problem by tending to crowd the show rather than making it spare. By saturating the room with the feeling of the work, the walls are defeated and the poignancy of each single work...become[s] more visible” (Horsley).

Here, the artist overcomes a threat to his art by compensating or countering with an alternative, which helps to negate the hindrance. Again, sincerity keeps the art on the wall.

There are, however, instances where artists will judge the proposed compromise as a serious or fatal threat to their art and therefore will choose not to compromise, especially when the basic essence of the art itself is the problem rather than simply its manner of display. There are artists whose creations are so unacceptable to the rule-makers that the demand is, “this is not art, do something else.” Historian Carolyn Tate states, “Certainly, the way the “art market” or “art world” is structured now, the only art that is considered “cutting edge” is that which questions definitions of art, either in terms of form or concept” (Tate). Particular forms and concepts of art often will prompt calls for censorship.

Patronage censorship was not a compromise that Merry Alpern could stomach, and her work was not an art that the NEA could stomach. Merry Alpern, in 1995, exhibited her work, “Dirty Window.” The exhibit was of her photography. Alpern had placed herself in a building across from a sex club. She hid in the airshaft and captured on film people engaged in sexual pleasures. Because of the rejection of the NEA, her work became notoriously famous.

This extreme constraint of fundamental rejection caused by patronage censorship could have given her motivation to moderate her work. It did not. In fact, she continued with her quest to produce these controversial images. She produced and exhibited a similar show called *Shopping* that contained images from a hidden video camera. She video-taped women in dressing rooms trying on clothes and bikinis (Caniglia.) Alpern also displayed sincerity in her work, but she did so by refusing to bend to the expectations and requirements which would have rendered sincerity, for her, as impossible. In this case, the artist maintains sincerity by not compromising.

In conclusion, this paper has presented a look at three types of young professionals: those that are affiliated with a professional union and work under contract, those that get paid for doing their art under a contract or in a free-lance manner, and those who first and foremost choose to exhibit their talent regardless of the marketability of their art. All three types of professional artists will, with few exceptions, be faced with various constraints, guidelines, and prerequisites to some degree or another. Whether in theatre, music, or visual art, unless one is at the top of the food chain, some sort of accommodation to a higher power or need is expected. Judging the reasonableness or unreasonableness of such required accommodation is, I believe, determined by the artist answering this basic question: “Can I create and express my art under such preconditions while maintaining sincerity?” Yes or No? Many artists simply cannot or

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will not trade lots of freedom for a little reward, but many artists will sacrifice a little freedom for a perceived great reward or fulfillment. Only the artist can discern the prospects of compromise coexisting with his or her idealism and whether or not he or she can muster the required sincerity to “pull it off.” I believe that most artists can mediate between their idealism and conventional constraints when sincerity is present in the creating of their art.

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Biographical Sketch

Jana Henleben Jones holds a Ph.D. in Fine Arts from Texas Tech University.

Dr. Jones has presented at the International Conference of Association of Arts Administrator Educators, the Association of Theatre in Higher Education Conference, and The Southeastern Theatre Conference Convention. She conducted and acting workshop at the Christians in Theatre Arts Conference in Puerto Rico.

She is an active member of Actors Equity Association and the Screen Actors/Television, and Radio Artist Guild. Her professional acting credits include: The Guiding Light on CBS, New York City Opera, Off- Broadway productions at The Theatre for the New City, 13th Street Theatre, and The American Theatre for Actors.

She has performed the USO European tour of *Godspell*, in television and radio commercials, and in films. She has performed with such stars as John Goodman, Kathleen Turner, Nathan Lane, and Leslie Nielson.

While living in Branson, Missouri, she wrote and directed for Silver Dollar City, a turn-of-the-century-theme park, produced, directed and performed for the 76 Music Hall, and developed show concepts for the Grand Palace and the Branson Bell.

She has taught acting at Texas Tech University, Ouachita Baptist University, and broadcast, oral-communication, and theatre classes at Henderson State University where she is member of the Honors Faculty. She is the drama minister for New Life Church in Arkadelphia, Arkansas.

The History of Huie Library

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Abstract

Huie Library is unique and integral part of Henderson State University. One of the oldest academic libraries in Arkansas, Huie is the only one named for a female or for a librarian. The library has grown from a handful of journals to several hundred thousand books, journals, videos, tapes, and other items. An ever evolving institution, Huie is continuing to serve the students and faculty of Henderson more than a century after its founding.

Introduction

Huie Library is an academic library located on the campus of Henderson State University, in Arkadelphia, Arkansas. Henderson is Arkansas's public liberal arts university and the majority of the degrees awarded by the institution fall into the traditional arts and