

The Influence of Barrett H. Clark on American Theatre

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requirements for the degree of

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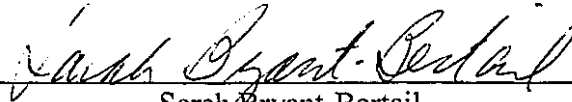
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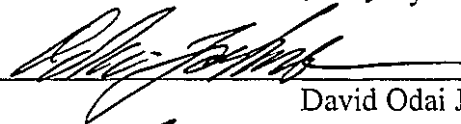


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Abstract

The Influence of Barrett H. Clark on American Theatre

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Barrett H. Clark (1890-1953) was an influential editor, critic, historian, lecturer and literary manager. He also helped create theatre companies that encouraged experimental American dramatists in the pattern of the Provincetown and Washington Square Players. As he developed professionally, he incorporated most of the skills of a modern American dramaturg into his work, using these skills to promote and encourage hundreds of American dramatists.

The style of writing that he preferred was the modern American folk drama, as exemplified in Paul Green, Lynn Riggs, E.P. Conkle and Virgil Geddes. Even when writers did not identify themselves as folk dramatists, Clark still encouraged use of components of folk style. He guided playwrights such as Eugene O'Neill, Maxwell Anderson and Sidney Howard in the use of aesthetic choices like poetic language, working class characters, American themes, local dialects and plots of everyday survival in a grim world, which were the characteristics of American folk drama.

From 1936 until 1953, Clark headed the Dramatists' Play Service which benefited from his dramaturgical thinking and theatre experience. Because of his earlier experience, he ran this play publishing company for the benefit of the dramatists and amateur theatre, rather than for the benefit of the stock-holders. His dramaturgical approach to American drama helped to bridge the gap between the production-based style of theatre of the 19th century and dramatist-driven theatre of the second half of the 20th century.

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Even more dear to me are all those who have personally helped me progress and grow in this venture. Thanks particularly to Barry Witham, a bastion of patience, wisdom and motivation; Sarah Bryant-Bertail for her kindness and her challenging conversations; and Jack Walcott, for showing me that the best trout to catch is not the largest but the most challenging. In no particular order (and of no less importance) thanks to: Mom, Dad, David, Janet, Derek and Melissa Davidson, Laurie Kurutz, Liz Fugate, Sue Bruns, Ken Cerniglia, Cynthia Caci, Kay Balston, Bluestem Books, A Novel Idea Bookstore, Magus Books, Emerald City Books, Dramatists' Play Service and all other family and friends.

Dedication

To Great Grandma Stroemer

I am still waking up on your silk davenport
I am still remembering to stand up straight

Introduction

Barrett H. Clark was a phenomenally busy man who helped the career of nearly every important American playwright from around 1920 until his death in 1953. He became one of the most important dramaturgs of the Inter-War period because of his single-minded focus on the development of a national dramatic literature, his support of experimentation by dramatists, his enormous web of friends, and his work as a play publisher and agent. He reviewed and critiqued books and plays in numerous publications* and helped found six theatre groups and the second largest English-language play publishing and leasing agency. He even tried to be a playwright until 1926, mostly working on adaptations and translations. As he had nearly 40 years of experience with play publication, his dramaturgy illuminates that industry in the United States. His duties included reading 1200 to 2200 new full-length plays yearly from 1920 to 1953 and corresponding with a broad group of friends and protégés. He was so influential and widely published during this period that I became accustomed to reaching the "Barrett Clark point" – an article, book, or reference – with each new topic I researched. But I was surprised to discover that no one had undertaken an examination of his life or his influence on American theatre.

Early in his career, Clark did not consider America to have dramatic literature. It did have a tradition of performance, but in his opinion, few of the plays performed were worthy of literary permanence. This attitude was not necessarily negative, for Clark enjoyed the theatre for what it was. Since in his opinion so few Americans had

* I have included a complete bibliography of about 400 works as Appendix H.

contributed important ideas to dramatic theory, he included none when he anthologized the most influential texts in 1918. Only in a much later edition (1947) did Clark agree to allow a "supplement" on American drama to be added.* Because so little had been done in his own country to turn drama into literature, Clark spent the early part of his career as a scholar, translator and instructor of European dramatic literature. He tried to teach European theories and get the best European dramas onto American stages so that his own country could learn by example. He traveled repeatedly to Europe to see performances, collect books and copy manuscripts for later translation. Near the end of World War I, he recognized a few exceptional young American writers, including Percy MacKaye, Zona Gale, and especially Eugene O'Neill, who were creating his idea of literature rather than just entertainment. During a final trip through Europe from 1921 to 1923, Clark decided he preferred and respected the newest American theatre and drama over post-War European works. He spent the rest of his life working as a dramaturg for the benefit of hundreds of his own nation's dramatists.

In this dissertation, I use Clark's definition of *dramas*: works of literature that have a life as a text for reading, portray the essence of a nationality, and may also be staged successfully. On the other hand, he thought of *plays* as texts primarily for the purpose of staged entertainment, lacking the long-term viability of literature. For a nation to develop a literature, it needed authors who had stood the test of time and who could be described theoretically as a unit. It is possible to use this understanding to define numerous American dramatic literatures before Clark's time, but Clark would not agree. Similarly, when Clark calls someone a *dramatist*, it is an indication of his respect

* The 1947 edition was revised by Henry Popkins, with Clark's help.

for that person as a creator of important literary work. Clark's understanding of drama and dramatist both rely on his understanding of nationality. Before 1920, he repeatedly mentioned that the best French dramatists were those who could create the essence of Frenchness on the stage. He felt that a nation such as France had common societal and cultural attitudes, a status quo, which he called their "essence." After 1920, he was more concerned with American national development than European, and he tried to shape a dramatic literature around fairly simplistic notions of democracy and freedom formed during the recent war. Added to this, he liked to see the portrayal of the country's ways of speaking, behaving, emoting and reacting. Over time, he developed a more complex idea of American nationality, because he discovered that differences in racial background, living conditions and economic class could make a multiplicity of essences possible.

Throughout his career, Clark focused on the dramatist's work as the most important part of the theatre and used criticism to achieve three goals: to mold a playwright's ideas into a play or a play into a drama, to shape an audience's perspective on a piece and show its best qualities, and to define his ideal dramatic literature. Whether he was writing, criticizing, editing, publishing, anthologizing, lecturing, managing, or staging theatre, he consistently supported the script, rather than the actors, directors, designers, and sometimes even the playwrights. In the spirit of Lessing, we now label his critical approach as dramaturgy.

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-81), the prototype of the dramaturg in theatre history, had a classically based education at the University of Leipzig and was exposed to many classical influences in theaters and in print. Lessing was an innovator. Many of

the classical theories in print before his time were developed during the Renaissance, when Aristotle* was interpreted strictly and formally. Aristotle in the *Poetics* supposedly prescribed the correct and successful form of tragedy (and from tragedy all legitimate drama). From the late 15th century to the early 18th century critics encouraged, if not forced, playwrights to conform their plays to the "unities" supposedly espoused by Aristotle.† Aristotelian formalism was a means of connecting present culture to classical values. It was also used by rulers as a tool for controlling cultural expression (i.e., Richelieu used Aristotle to attack Le Cid). By the late 17th and early 18th century, scholars like Lessing and Goethe used a more adaptable view of theory. They had a great respect for classical writers, but felt capable of forming their own theories. They used reason, logic and more accurate translation of Aristotle to critique plays and dramatic literature more flexibly.

Lessing used theory to encourage development of a German-language dramatic literature. He evaluated each text according to the playwright's goals and the needs of the story, writing that "a true art critic deduces no rules from his individual taste, but has formed his taste from rules necessitated by the nature of the subject."¹ Rather than telling dramatists to force their writing into a pre-formed model, he preferred to use reason to adapt classical theories to suit the needs of the best dramas. One of the fundamental skills of a dramaturg is the ability to think about each play organically, in terms of the goals or needs of the text. Some of his most important theory resides in the Hamburg Dramaturgy, a collection of the twice-weekly essays he wrote while dramaturg for the

* And to a lesser extent, Homer, Longinus, Plato and other Classical writers.

† Usually including: unity of time, unity of place, unity of plot, a five-act structure, verisimilitude of setting and story, purity of genre, and use of decorum in characters.

National Theater in Hamburg. The founders of this institution wanted to elevate German drama, and they hired Lessing to be the critical voice for the venture. He was to critique every piece in their repertory, for the benefit of both the audience and the theatre workers. Read as a collection, his individual critiques cohere into an extended discussion of the issues Lessing felt were important for German literature and culture. The Hamburg National Theater existed only from April 1767 to November 1768, but Lessing continued to write essays for another year, in order to finish critiquing the rest of the theater's repertory. Lessing, as a dramaturg, critiqued productions and texts, suggested dramas that would fill gaps in the repertory, developed audiences, and encouraged a national literature.

Clark, as a dramaturg, performed the same tasks as Lessing and approached his work with similar ideals. When he started as a critic, Clark used fairly strict interpretations of classical formalism in study guides and textbooks such as: The Continental Drama of To-Day (1914), The British and American Drama of To-Day (1915) and European Theories of the Drama (1918). At the time, he was comfortable thinking that the best dramatists were those who had followed the prescribed dramatic forms as handed down from the time of Aristotle. His European Theories is a collection of those same practical tools of writing drama. To Clark, theory was not the ideology that a critic used to elucidate the intellectual complexities of a work. Dramatic theory was the compilation of practical tools and conventions authors used to write drama. Sometimes technique told how a play was to be divided into acts. Sometimes it explained the best patterns of behavior for characters. Sometimes it explained what an audience would be willing to believe. Whatever it included, in Clark's eyes, theory was

something brought to drama by the dramatist. A *critic* would use dramatic theory only when talking about the basic skills a dramatist had or had not applied to a play. *Dramatic technique* was outlined in European Theories as the practical skills a writer needed to follow the trade of playmaking. After 1920, when Clark started reading manuscripts of plays, he lost his dependence on this strict formalism and he began looking at plays more organically. Instead of quoting the rules explained in a Renaissance essay on Aristotle, Clark looked at what the playwright had actually written and then helped shape the ideas, characters, themes and stories to forward the author's goals. His individualized attention to dramatists gave them room to experiment in a way that strict formalism had not. Read as a collection, Clark's critiques after 1920 cohere into an extended discussion of the issues he felt important for American dramatic literature.

One of the most important tools that Clark brought to his dramaturgy was his widespread web of connections. He knew nearly all of the significant theatre scholars of his day, as well as all of the important playwrights and most of the leading producers and directors. He was regularly in the public eye and was internationally respected. This created a network that he used to forward the careers of his playwright friends. This aspect of Clark's career is unlike Lessing's, but it is more like the work of a modern American dramaturg.*

Modern American dramaturgy is often separated into production dramaturgy and literary management. The production dramaturg translates and adapts plays for production, does background research, and answers questions about how the text will be best served in production. This usually occupies the dramaturg in a production from well

* By "modern", I am referring to the type of dramaturgy practiced since about 1969 in the United States, when Robert Brustein started a dramaturgy program at Yale University.

before rehearsals begin until after opening. The other side of dramaturgy, literary management, covers the business and development of script submissions. Some literary managers work with non-producing organizations, like publishing companies, and help develop not only specific plays, but also audiences, workshops, contests and any other cultures that support the development of dramatic literature.

Bert Cardullo describes modern dramaturgy as "the multi-faceted study of a given play: its author, content, style, and interpretive possibilities, together with its historical, theatrical, and intellectual background."² At various points in his professional life, Clark did all of these tasks. He focused most often on the style of the play, its author, and the interpretive possibilities. These were his duties as a reviewer, critic, literary editor, agent, play reader, and publisher. Clark, like a modern dramaturg, also worked inside an ethical framework that said the playtext was the central concern of the dramaturg, rather than the performance, design or direction of the play. The dramaturg ensures that the intentions of the playwright in a given drama are respected as much as possible. A dramaturg is also a teacher of audiences, helping them derive the greatest value from a drama.

Most of what Clark did as a dramaturg was literary management for publication. This responsibility presumes the ability to predict the market feasibility of a script in order to advocate for its production. Also, as a literary manager who was concerned with the literary "health" of the playwright, Clark provided means of support for playwrights between successes. The fiscal health of the playwright ensures the long-term fiscal health of the publisher. Clark took this so seriously that he helped create a publishing venture – the Dramatists' Play Service – that was concerned primarily with improving the conditions of playwriting in America.

This thesis traces the development of Clark as a dramaturg in seven chapters.

The first chapter deals with Clark's early career, in which he worked as a critic with the Drama League of America, writing study guides on European drama and dramatic technique, and translating an amazing quantity of European drama. During this period the "Road" declined, and Clark struggled to improve the quality of the drama on the road, in New York, and in the minds of the audience. Clark's environment clearly shaped his thinking, but he occasionally rebelled against it.

The second chapter focuses on Clark's relationship with Eugene O'Neill. O'Neill's drama helped turn Clark from a European into an American dramaturg. This playwright tried to avoid the stiff technique-driven theatre of his father, and looked instead at the psychological and sociological concerns of his characters. O'Neill developed his plays from the specific topics, characters and stories in front of him, making texts that were exciting to Clark. In response, Clark had to rethink his prescriptive dramaturgy in order to encourage the same work in others. His theories about drama were useful for already published plays, but in working with O'Neill Clark learned how to develop a manuscript and express the writer's intentions.

The other playwright who had a significant personal effect on Clark was Sidney Howard, and his work with Clark is explored in the third chapter. What began as a supportive relationship between playwrights eventually became a friendship between a playwright and his editor. Howard and Clark shared opinions about what was needed in American theatre and drama even as they helped find each other useful work. Howard taught Clark the importance of writing based in characters rather than plot or

philosophical ideas, and their relationship led to the founding of the Dramatists' Play Service.

The fourth chapter investigates "folk drama," the modern American dramatic movement that Clark found most similar to the best qualities of the work of O'Neill and Howard. Even though Clark did not always refer to it as "folk drama," he developed a set of standards for American drama that came from folk dramatists. These standards include the ability to write untainted by the conventions of popular New York theatre: in American speech, about locally important issues, and for local audiences. Folk drama was also poetic, whether written in verse or simply using imaginative resonance and imagery.

The fifth chapter covers the young folk dramatists and experimenters that Clark helped personally. It begins with an examination of Clark's general tactics in dealing with playwrights and moves into specific examples: Paul Green, Maxwell Anderson and Lynn Riggs – only three of the hundreds of writers that Clark helped from the beginning of their careers. He critiqued each of their plays, helped them get published, produced and discussed. These case studies demonstrate the development of Clark's dramaturgical style after working with O'Neill and Howard.

The sixth chapter examines Clark's promotion of the little theatres that were most likely to perform the playwrights that he considered important. His ideal of the experimental American theatre developed from the mission and structure of the Provincetown and the Washington Square Players. Clark tried on occasion to influence the direction of other established companies, such as the Group Theatre and the Theatre

Guild, and even attempted to create his own little theatres. In all of these projects, Clark worked as a dramaturg, translating, adapting, editing, reading and teaching drama.

The final chapter narrates the founding of the Dramatists' Play Service, of which Clark was the first Executive Director. The Dramatists' Play Service was built as a play publishing and leasing agency whose mission was to support dramatists rather than enrich the company's investors, which was a reflection of Clark's dramaturgical approach on an institutional level. Even though it took ten years to turn a profit, the company had an almost immediate effect on the business of play publication. DPS forced Samuel French to change the way it dealt with playwrights by making the field of amateur rights to Broadway plays competitive.

Clark's Background and Earliest Years

Because Clark's personal history and characteristics are hard to find in his published work, it makes sense to begin this study with a summary of his genealogy and youth. Clark's paternal grandfather, S.M. Cohen, came from Holland of Jewish-Dutch ancestry. Cohen was married to Elizabeth Goldsmith and settled in New York City shortly before the Civil War. He was a small shopkeeper in a Jewish community and became father to Solomon (Saul) Henry Cohen on July 24, 1861. Solomon was probably the oldest, with two brothers and one sister.³ At about the age of 19 he had an argument with his father, after which he changed his name to Clark and cut all ties with his father.⁴ Solomon removed himself further from his family and Jewish ancestry by becoming a Protestant.

He met Annie Maud Fralick (sometimes listed as Frohlich or Fröhlich) when he was working as a substitute preacher in Picton, Canada.⁵ She sang in this small town's choir, while Solomon attended classes (1886) and later taught (1887-88) at Queen's College in Kingston. When she moved to Boston in 1888 to study music, Solomon followed her and they were married August 19, 1889. They settled in Toronto, where Solomon taught at Trinity College as a lecturer in Elocution from 1890 to 1892. To make ends meet, he also taught part-time at McMasters College in nearby Hamilton, gave various lectures and readings, and taught summers at the Chautauqua Institute in New York. The latter two he continued for the rest of his life. S. H. Clark wrote several influential textbooks on speech and, according to his son, had lectured in every town in the United States with a population of 10,000 or more. Many of Solomon's experiences as a lecturer, teacher and traveller were echoed in the life of his son Barrett. He always saw his father as more important and famous than he was.

Barrett Harper Clark, the first of four sons, was born to Solomon and Annie in Toronto, on August 26, 1890. Barrett's middle name came from William Rainey Harper, the principal of the Chautauqua College of Liberal Arts, where Solomon was a regular lecturer after 1888. Shortly thereafter, Harper became the founding president of the University of Chicago and requested that Solomon follow him there to teach. Solomon accepted Harper's invitation to join the University teaching staff as a Reader in Elocution in October 1892, moving to Chicago with two sons and his wife. Solomon's job came with the stipulation that he finish his bachelor's degree. It took Solomon five years, while he was teaching, to complete the necessary classwork to receive a Ph.B. (Bachelor of Philosophy), the highest degree he ever achieved. During that time, Annie gave birth to

their last two children, the twins Harold R. and Coleman Clark, born March 14, 1896. Solomon became the principal of the Department of Elocution at Chautauqua in 1894 and chairman of the Department of Public Speaking at the University of Chicago. Solomon would be nearly the only chair this department ever had, until he took the position of Associate Professor Emeritus of Public Speaking in 1920.⁶ Solomon died on December 27, 1927, after being hit by a streetcar in Chicago while going to a speaking engagement. He was buried in the Chautauqua cemetery next to his wife, who died the previous year.

Barrett Clark became interested in writing at an early age. In his 1928 memoir of his father, Professor Clark, he describes an attempt at the age of twelve to write "an official biography of my father."⁷ In order to help him accomplish this task, his mother gathered as many letters and memorabilia pertaining to Solomon Henry Clark as she could. Clark then arranged these, took copious notes and prepared "the paper, binding and title page, all ready for the complete work."⁸ The 1902 attempt at his father's biography was never completed.

Another important description of Clark's youth comes from Intimate Portraits. The least famous person in this book is the subject of its fifth chapter "Carl B. Clinton, Random Memories of a Failure."⁹ Clark gives him a pseudonym here, but identifies him as Carroll Brent Chilton in Professor Clark.¹⁰ Clark met Chilton when he was about 12 or 13 at the Chautauqua, where Chilton taught "Music Appreciation."¹¹ Chilton managed, through both classes and personal acquaintance, to invest Clark with a great interest in classical music. Important here is Clark's manner of pursuing this interest. Clark and his brother Robert (born a year after Barrett) learned classical music in terms of the techniques that were used in its composition.¹²

In early adolescence Clark was old enough to sell papers around the Chautauqua, and earned 75 cents a week.¹³ He and his brother would sell their share of papers and then be allowed to sit in on classes. Sometimes they would visit their father's class, other times Chilton's. Chilton would teach Music Appreciation even if Clark and his brother were the only students. In such situations he would quiz them on understandings of musical technique beyond their ages. Clark's later education was as unstructured as the education he got from the Chautauqua. He never stopped reading on his own in any field that interested him, and often in any language that he could get a grasp of, but he also never completed a college degree.

Clark hardly ever mentioned his private life in his public works, unless it would help to illustrate a point, but in 1929, he added a brief hint about himself at the head of one of his reviews. He felt that it would help readers if critics stated some basic things about themselves at the beginning of their reviews. So Clark answered the questions he posed to all, saying:

I suppose I ought to be the first to take my own medicine. Well, I may as well make a start, if only as an example to others.

Age, 39; married; exposed to usual educational influences, which did not "take" very effectively; two young children; nearly own a house in a semi-rural district near New York; have a small garden, worked mostly by my wife; no physical ailments; reasonably happy; I have prejudices, but couldn't tell what they are; run a Ford; dislike radios, prizefights, football, buying clothes for myself; having people read plays to me; have a fondness for Balzac, Rheinwein, antique furniture and old books;

passionately fond of music, especially Mozart; not religious as far as I know, but believe wholly in the world and mankind, though I don't love all men as I should.¹⁴

To this description by Clark I would add that he was of medium height, dark haired, with a rectangular face and wise, smiling eyes. He smoked and drank, although there is no indication that he did either in excess. He was a manic worker with a tendency to get bored easily, when not up to his ears in projects. He probably wrote articles in a single draft, which he could have learned when he was a book reviewer for the New York Sun during and just after the First World War.

A Note on the Use of Sources and Notes

I have generalized the format of many of the letters I use in this dissertation, except where the indentation or spacing carried some of the meaning of the letter. Similarly, rather than varying between using all capitals, all italics, or quotation marks to indicate the title of a work, I have employed underlining. When I have quoted from letters that are from published collections of papers, I have followed the patterns used in the books, except as noted above.

The majority of the letters I have included are from three locations: the manuscript letters in the Beinecke Library at Yale, mostly the Barrett Clark Papers, but also the Theatre Guild Papers and the Eugene O'Neill Papers; the Sidney Coe Howard Papers at the University of California, Berkeley; and also the Manuscript division of the University of Washington Library, mostly the School of Drama papers in the University Archives.

Chapter 1: Barrett Clark's Early Work and Education

Clark followed his father by joining the Drama League of America, an organization formed to improve the quality of drama performed in the United States by studying, publishing and, eventually, supporting amateur production. Through his involvement with the League, Clark got his first chance to work as a dramaturg, critic, journalist speaker and editor. At the same time, he learned the skills he would later use to support dramatists, even when he did not agree with their political, ethical, social or aesthetic goals. The League started as a coalition of women's clubs, but was later opened to anyone interested in drama, male or female. Throughout its existence (1911-1931), the club espoused a very conservative moral opinion about what should be allowed in the theaters. Clark did not agree with the imposition of morality or censorship on the arts, and he often appeared to be a radical interloper. When he created study guides for the League, he did not shy away from plays that discussed issues like marital infidelity, venereal disease, divorce or social revolution. He did not choose these plays just to shock the matrons who had started the League. Rather, he picked them because he believed them to be well written, showing technical sophistication, containing believable well-rounded characters, and having plots focused on a single issue in order to create a stronger emotional response in the audience. Where the League sought moral soundness and social respectability in a good drama, Clark desired aesthetic and technical soundness. Clark had developed his approach to drama while in college and immediately after he left. He had begun reading books and essays about dramatic technique, and he

used technique to guide the League members through these otherwise morally difficult plays.

Even before college, he was exposed to plays by George Bernard Shaw, Maurice Donnay, Eugene Bricux and Paul Hervieu on the small stages of Chicago and while traveling in Europe. These modern dramatists thought heavily about the philosophy and politics in their plays, but to Clark, they were masters of practical tools of playmaking and that is how he wrote about them for the League. His study guides, articles and speeches to the League used the formalistic language of technique that was derived from French and Italian Renaissance interpretations of Aristotle. Although Clark loved modern drama, he did not have a very modern theory of drama. His opinion of dramatic theory was that it was a collection of how to make and describe plays. The best example of this is his anthology European Theories of the Drama, in which he excises the parts of articles that relate to political or social issues, leaving only the mechanics of dramatic technique.

Clark's introduction to modern drama was partly due to a high school class in Chicago. His English class was visited by a substitute teacher, Theodore Ballou Hinckley, "just graduated from the university."¹⁵ Clark was freed from the "prescribed reading" when Hinckley "opened up a very profane-looking green book with a modern-style paper label on it, and without comment began reading."¹⁶ Hinckley was reading Shaw's You Never Can Tell (1898), which Clark would later help his college Drama Club perform. About that experience Clark wrote:

[W]hatever gave me pleasure in school and college has remained with me; whatever bored me I have forgotten or could never bring myself to study

alone at a later time. I believe that where there is no pleasure, there is no learning, and I am inclined to think that the pleasure we experience in enjoying good literature and drama, in the pursuit of science or in the reading of history, is not only the means of securing education, but is in a way education itself.¹⁷

Hinckley explained his own approach to the teaching of drama in "Drama and the English Course."¹⁸ He felt that drama was perfect for teaching students a variety of philosophical and social patterns and ideas, because the reading of plays could also be followed with the presentation of them. Since the students would have a better chance of seeing modern plays in their life outside of school, Hinckley felt that these should have the greatest effect on the students while still in class. Only after working through modern playwrights like Shaw, Ibsen, Maeterlinck and Rostand did Hinckley think it was time to look at some of the classics, like Goldsmith and Sheridan.¹⁹

After enrolling at the University of Chicago, Clark began regularly going to the theatre. This is also when he first called himself a "critic" of drama. He described this period as a time of continuing revelations of "the Coming American Dramatist."²⁰ During his young adulthood, the "American Dramatist" was Edward Sheldon with Salvation Nell, then Eugene Walter with The Easiest Way, and then William Vaughn Moody and The Great Divide. This last was a revelation, since Moody was a professor at the same university that Clark was attending. Clark also mentions two specific drama classes – Robert Herrick, another playwright, taught Playwrighting and Modern Drama – but he does not say whether or not he took them.²¹

Clark had a precocious mind and was not able to focus on a conventional education in college classrooms, opting eventually for educating himself, as his father had done before him. Clark was at the University of Chicago from 1908-9 and later from 1910-12. When he was nineteen (1909), he was treated by his father to a trip around Europe, but he had to pay back the obligation by teaching voice culture "for two or three years" at the Chautauqua. He continued to teach there during the summer for at least five years. His European tour was built around study at a school on the Rue de la Sorbonne in the Winter of 1909-1910. He was ostensibly taking classes in French, but did not attend these classes regularly.²² He did attend the extracurricular lectures given later in the day, including a series on music by Romain Rolland. He did not start reading Rolland's books until about 1918, at which time he was impressed enough by his former teacher's writing that he began to translate several of Rolland's plays and his essay The People's Theatre.^{23*}

Clark had some early experience as a performer before he became a critic. At the University of Chicago he was part of a dramatic club and "most of [his] time [was] spent in seeing and reading plays and producing them in the Dramatic Club when the faculty weren't looking."²⁴ The members of the club were "riding high on the wave of what was then, but recently, the New Drama."²⁵ The club discussed modern drama and had occasional guest speakers (such as Eleanor Duse and John Galsworthy). As adoring followers of Shaw, the club performed You Never Can Tell and Press Cuttings, supposedly the first performance of this outside of Europe.²⁶ The club was supported by several members of the English faculty (Richard Vaughn Moody, Percy Boynton and Robert Herrick). After performing John Galsworthy's Joy in the winter of 1911-12, they

* Clark's reaction to The People's Theatre is discussed in chapter 4.

invited the playwright to meet their club when he passed through Chicago. Clark helped transport the playwright and his wife around town with an air of nervous hero-worship. Only after a few years of correspondence did Clark loosen up to Galsworthy as a person. This is evidence of his youthful notion that the drama critic was seen as the "enemy" of the writer, since the critic's job was not necessarily productive. Later on, when he became more comfortable with writers as ordinary people, he was able to turn his criticism to a more productive end.

Clark's last year of college was 1912; he did not complete a degree, but he continued his education in theatre by acting in The High Road (Edward Sheldon, 1912) with the company of Minnie Maddern Fiske. From its opening on October 14, 1912 in Montreal at His Majesty's Theatre until the end of that year, Clark was an actor and assistant stage manager for the production. What little Clark wrote about his time as an actor was given as a speech about Edward Sheldon during one of the Pipe Nights at the Players Club.* This speech was later revised and published in Intimate Portraits.²⁷ Clark was hired in August 1912 before the play was even finished, and he traveled from Chicago to the office of Daniel Frohman in the Lyceum Theatre, New York, where he signed on with Harrison Grey Fiske.²⁸ Mrs. Fiske had achieved such success with Sheldon's first major play, Salvation Nell, that she was quite willing to read a draft of his newest play when he brought it to her in April or May of 1912.²⁹ After this preliminary reading, Mrs. Fiske and her husband agreed to produce it, as long as Sheldon could finish it by the September 1, 1912 deadline, when rehearsals would begin.³⁰ Sheldon made the

* Clark was a member of the Players from 1924-1937.

deadline and rehearsals began for the show, which finally got its title two weeks into rehearsals.³¹

The High Road follows the life of Mary Page from the age of 17, when she is a down-trodden farmer's daughter, until she is 40 and the wife of the leading candidate for the presidency of the United States. Rather than taking the "low road" of staying a farm-wife, she chooses to pursue her dreams. After three years she is the unmarried companion of the artist who drew her away from the farm. Even though her companion Alan is now quite wealthy and willing to give Mary any material goods she may desire, she leaves to become a worker in a shirt-waist factory. Eventually, she unionizes the factory and becomes a powerful activist. The third act is eighteen years later and set in the office of Winfield Barnes, Governor of New York. Barnes is waiting to hear of the passage of Mary's bill for an 8-hour work week for her women. The bill passes, Mary goes to visit Barnes (who was, of course, a suitor of hers back on the farm) and the two decide to marry. The last two acts take place another two years later during the last few days of Barnes' campaign for U.S. president. Just when it seems the election is in the bag, Mr. Maddock, a very wealthy newspaper owner, threatens to reveal Mary's "sordid" past as the unmarried companion of Alan Wilson. Maddock claims that Mary arranged to add money gained from Wilson to the campaign funds of Winfield's party. After Mary convinces Mr. Maddock that she will publicly admit her past in order to clear her husband's record and prove that the money in his campaign did not come from her rich "keeper," Maddock steps down.

After the reasonable out-of-town trial of The High Road in October 1912, the show moved for three weeks to Chicago and then to New York at the Hudson Theatre on

November 19, 1912. The critical response to the play was politely respectful until it reached New York, where the critics and audiences were both enthusiastic.³² After nine weeks in New York, the play toured the country until mid-February 1914, with a break during the summer of 1913. Clark's professional acting career, in the minor role of Mr. Lawrence,* was only during 1912. As the assistant stage manager, Clark had many other duties besides acting a small role.³³ He not only handled the script and made all appropriate notations and changes during the six weeks of rehearsal, he also was a horse-wrangler, assisted the changing of sets, rang the curtain cues, "called" all the actors, and ran errands for the directors.³⁴ For all of this, Clark earned \$30 a week during both the rehearsal period and the run.

Clark used his experience with The High Road as a step towards his goal of being a critic. He described his fear of meeting Edward Sheldon as more terrifying than the prospect of working for the most famous of American actresses.³⁵ He "was afraid [Sheldon] despised [him]: after all, [he] was a critic, even though [he] had not yet published a word, and critics in the eyes of so-called creative writers are of no consequence."³⁶ What this critic learned in eleven weeks of rehearsal (six before opening and five after) was the "grind" of eight to twelve hours of rehearsal, seven days a week,³⁷ followed by about two hours watching book for Mrs. Fiske at the hotel. On the road, besides daily hassles with a different horse in each town, according to James Richards Hale, who took over Clark's assistant management for the last year of the tour, the tour was "lots of one-night stands, and plenty of cinders in my upper berth. But in 1913 you could get a reasonably acceptable room in a small hotel for a dollar, even seventy-five

* He also briefly acted in the role of Martin Denison, as well as continuing to assistant stage manage.

cents on occasion, and a good table d'hôte dinner for fifty or sixty cents."³⁸ Clark did learn from this. Harrison Fiske complimented his work on the production and hoped "that [his] practical association with stage work will prove of real benefit to you in your other work."³⁹ Mrs. Fiske sent a letter two weeks later saying she thought he was "laying a firm foundation for future work in the theatre & that [he was] laying it in the most sensible & practical way."⁴⁰

The money he earned from touring must have gone into Clark's second extended trip to Europe. He was in France as early as December 1912.⁴¹ He also used the profits of five articles to help pay for the trip, but they were unlikely to have funded almost two years in Europe.⁴² During the trip, he made connections and gathered material that he would work with over the next eight to ten years. He went home after briefly touring Great Britain to research some British theatre history and question British authors George Bernard Shaw, William Archer, J.T. Grein, and Granville Barker about theatre and drama at the end of the 19th century.⁴³ He used his tour around Ireland and England to research articles about William Butler Yeats, John M. Synge, George Moore, Lady Gregory, St. John Ervine, George Bernard Shaw and Harley Granville-Barker in The New York Sun, published late in 1918. Until the World War and its aftermath had changed the outlook of the modern mind,[†] it made more sense for Clark to write about English drama of the 19th century. It was closer to what his American readers could comprehend, because he was writing for people who saw and read mostly realistic melodramas.

* He left at the start of the first World War, at which time he was in Berlin.

† See Modris Eksteins' Rites of Spring: the Great War and the birth of the Modern Age (Houghton Mifflin, 1989) and Paul Fussell's The Great War and Modern Memory (Oxford UP, 1975).

Clark used his knowledge of French to translate realistic playwrights unknown in America.* Clark pointed out:

France is the only country of theatrical importance whose modern drama is practically unknown to English readers. The French plays that are regarded in their own country as typical are the work of authors whose names are for the most part new to those who are not conversant with present-day French literature.⁴⁴

He said that even the three modern French dramatists known by English speakers were not completely representative of the real France: Maurice Maeterlinck was Belgian, Edmond Rostand was atypical of the modern style, and Eugene Brieux was close, but not "essentially Gallic."⁴⁵ In Clark's view, the essence of Gallicism was found in the likes of Alfred Capus, Henry Bataille and Maurice Donnay. He translated plays which would be what "the Frenchman regards as the true exponent of his social order."⁴⁶ In 1913, he translated The Labyrinth and Modesty by Paul Hervieu[†], Indian Summer by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halevy, and Rosalie by Max Maurey. These plays sold as acting editions, except for The Labyrinth, which came out in a hard bound edition to the general public.

Clark was trying to bring to American attention the plays which he felt defined the realistic essence of "French-ness." He had a rather simplistic notion of what it was to be French, built on clichés about their addiction to passion, love and romance. These clichés were supported by the plays of Donnay, Hervieu, Brieux and Rostand that he was reading and translating at the time. The writers were focusing on these issues in an

* In many cases, he was able to meet them personally, which is how he finagled the rights to translate so many plays.

† His co-translator for The Labyrinth was Lander MacClintock.

attempt to philosophically problematize the restrictive society of France in the last half of the nineteenth century. They also appealed to Clark because they worked well within the bounds of Aristotelian structure. They were technically sound plays, which the young critic would later present to the Drama League of America as his ideal of good drama. These playwrights were more appealing to Clark, and they met his image of "Frenchness" more than the works of the new avant garde,* which would blossom as symbolism, dadaism, surrealism and absurdism. These new styles had not caught on broadly enough, and did not seem to him to be the essence of France, so Clark ignored them in his writing and translating. He appreciated plays that were part of a *former* avant garde in France, that of Andre Antoine and the Théâtre Libre. Much of the Théâtre Libre's early work explored aspects of Realism and Naturalism on the stage. Such stage techniques could be examined with critical theories of drama like neo-classicism more easily than the radical departures of non-realistic theatre.

The most common French cultural stereotypes in the plays Clark translated are based on love, sex and marriage. This created a problem for Clark, who was translating plays for the late Victorian mentalities of the Drama League of America.† In defense, Clark said "it is quite useless to criticize a work of art on the grounds that we do not like the material; it remains a fact that Donnay has gone to a certain section of French society and faithfully transcribed and lifted into the realm of art its chief concerns and interests."⁴⁷ Perhaps to fend off a charge of obsession with plays of love, he translated "The Subjects of Plays" by Alfred Capus,⁴⁸ in which Capus stated that love and marriage

* For instance Alfred Jarry, Aurélien-Marie Lugné-Poë and Guillaume Apollinaire had all staged seminal works in France.

† This is discussed in more detail below.

were not the subject of such plays. "The real subject consists in the characters and the social *mileu* in which the struggle takes place, as well as in the author's point of view and the manner in which he has treated the whole."⁴⁹ When a reader or audience member sees only the surface matters, he or she has "confused the skeleton with the muscles, nerves, and blood – with the intimate, the real object."⁵⁰ So love is essential to an understanding of French society. Plays about French society deal not with love, but with France. Removing the social taboo of sexual love meant that Clark could read a play in terms of technique and how accurately it communicated national essence and characters.

He used dramatic technique as a non-politicized, almost scientific means of discussing the merits of a play. A quality play is one that shows a layered depth, which allows the reader or audience to consider deeper matters of society. The playtext in this case is the medium and not the message. As a medium, believable creation is a key concern of drama, because it assists the clear perception of an issue. In Clark's approach, the issue exists outside the play, and to fault a play (or worse, a playwright) for its content is to ignore the qualities of the medium. Of course, to appreciate the complexity of such plays, the reader or audience member has to be at least somewhat cognizant of the society which was hinted at and talked of. A critic's role is to take his readers through the layers of technique in order to increase the depth of the reader's understanding. It was the playwright's technique that allowed him or her to create all of the layers (entertainment, social issues, philosophy, aesthetics, etc.) at once. The playwright's social, philosophical or aesthetic agenda should not matter in this technical approach, because the technique itself is only a tool, and not an agenda. Clark's use of technique to

explain the qualities of the plays he translated was most useful when he was associated with the Drama League.

Clark's father Solomon joined the League in about 1912, and Clark followed about three years later. The Drama League of America was founded as a women's club, but diversified as it grew. The original goal of the League was to create an educated audience base for the support of "good" drama.* The League initially tried to adapt the professional stage, but after several years it expanded to larger projects such as supporting amateur groups. It is this later support of amateur and "little theatre" groups for which the League is known; but in Clark's case, his early work in assembling study guides, translating reading copies, and writing educational essays on dramatists is more important.

The League was formed as a central organization that would administer to the needs of numerous previously independent women's drama clubs scattered throughout the United States. It was preceded by the incorporation, in about 1907, of a "Drama Club" in Evanston, Illinois. This single club, after three years, met to discuss the possibility of uniting with similar groups to accomplish broader national goals. On March 22, 1910 they held a meeting at the Congregational Church in Evanston. At this Preliminary Committee, they discussed "the power of the Theatre for good or for evil [;] the condition of the drama in America, which was far worse than in other countries [;] the willingness of managers to help in this movement for the betterment of conditions"; and of course the shape that the League would take.⁵¹ On April 25, 1910, delegates from sixty-three different clubs, representing a combined membership of about 10,000 individuals, met at

* The concept of "good" drama is discussed below.

the Art Institute of Chicago. The "Drama League of America" was officially formed soon after this at the Lyric Theatre (Chicago) on May 14, 1910. As the League grew it quickly incorporated many smaller women's clubs not formed solely for Drama study and appreciation. The latter might not even have a playgoing committee, but they would set aside a night each week or month for a group visit to the theatre based on the recommendations given by the League. Clubs that did have a play-going committee were formed as "Centers." They were important stops on theatre circuits, and they would bulletin the plays for other smaller stops along the way.

The speakers and writers of articles for the League gave very lofty goals to their organization at these initial meetings. Dr. William Norman Guthrie, speaking at the May 14, 1910 meeting said: "The drama is a tremendous social force. We are more impressionable when we get together in large numbers. Any act that inspires us to get together on a high plane is a social help."⁵² While other forms of literature were usually experienced alone, the experience of drama was practiced socially. The largest social forces of this kind were the syndicated touring circuits, and the League wanted to adapt them to its goals. To do this, the League needed the help of managers whenever possible. To bring the managers into their fold, they had to prove that "good" drama was economically sound. The League first had to define what "good" drama was, and then they could ask managers to produce such dramas by guaranteeing that their club members would create a large audience. The League articulated its mission in the November 1911 issue of The Drama:

To crowd out vicious plays by attending and commending good plays and building up audiences for them through study classes, reading circles and

lectures; to aid in the restoration of the drama to its honorable place as the most intimate, most comprehensive, most democratic medium for the self-expression of the people, still remains its object.⁵³

What exactly was "vicious" in the plays of the day is unclear. A distinction is made between "plays" and "the drama." The former is an entertainment of the moment, without the depth of tradition. A play is intended to tie into contemporary issues, stars and characters; the drama is part of literature and could claim relation with classical civilizations. Like classical drama, which stood the test of time, good drama would remain useful and interesting even beyond contemporary relevance. But perceived permanence was not good enough for the League; they also wanted to include examples of moral behavior in good drama, and use it to educate audiences about the virtues of a good citizen. This is why the League associated goals of political progressivism, in which citizens learn how to more directly control their government, with basic Christian virtues of kindness and respect to others. They also encouraged entertainments that depicted the lives of exemplary individuals like George Washington, William Shakespeare and the Pilgrim founding families. The League's goals of limiting "good" drama to texts that helped morally improve audiences conflicted with Clark's ideas of free use of subject matter. Clark solved this conflict of interests by saying that a properly formed play, using proven techniques, could express any subject matter successfully. In time, partly because Clark was such an influential member, the League relaxed its conservative values and embraced a more open use of subject matter in the theaters.

The League pursued its educational goals by forming two Committees (the Educational and the Play-Going) that contained a total of ten Departments, each with its

own focus. For instance, the Drama Study Department under the Educational Committee was headed by George Pierce Baker and worked on ways to provide educational material to the various club members. The Publication Department, also under the Educational Committee, was headed by Clark's father and arranged for the printing of magazines, bibliographies and related material.

The voices of the League were widely disseminated in the periodicals. The Drama was published initially by Charles Sergel, head of Sergel's Play Publishing of Chicago, and had an editorial staff in May 1912 that included: G. P. Baker, S. H. Clark, Brander Matthews, Thomas H. Dickinson and Stark Young. The Drama, started February 1911, was issued for the general public as a way to print significant plays and to talk about them in the proper League fashion.* The Drama League Monthly was the second journal launched by the League, in April 1916, and it was mostly for the use of League members, with minutes of important meetings, publication of the happenings at yearly conventions, outlines of study courses, and some articles of more general interest.† The third set of periodical publications by the League, similar to a journal, were the bulletins circulated among clubs that were put out by the Play-Going Committees. The bulletins were usually circulated from the various "Centers" to their subsidiary units, but New York's bulletins were occasionally printed in the Drama League Monthly.

Members of the Local Play-Going Committees attended the plays in area theatres, decided which were worthy of discussion, and "bulletined" them for the edification of

* It was a quarterly from February 1911 until May 1919, then a monthly from October 1919 until June 1924. After a three month gap, it lasted from October 1924 until July 1931 as The Drama Magazine, being released for 8 numbers per year. During the last six years, Clark was its critic of New York theatre.

† It was the Monthly Bulletin of the Drama League of America for a single issue, then existed as Drama League Monthly from May 1916 until May 1919 in a rather spotty fashion and was combined with The Drama, becoming a regular section within the journal starting in the November 1919 issue.

subsidiary clubs. The bulletins of the Drama League were one page long and contained a plot summary of a single play/production and a critique of the playwriting, acting and staging.⁵⁴ A bulletin of a production was not a review, because there was no attempt made to distinguish good from bad. Only "good" productions were worthy of a bulletin in the first place. Members of local play-going committees and Drama League Centers would go to every qualified show that came to town, then decide which were worthy of being "bulletined," with the understanding that club members would only support those that were bulletined. Play-going committees would not lower themselves to see anything but "legitimate" dramas. Mrs. Best describes this as a benefit to audience members in Chicago in 1914:

Last year in Chicago there were 150 plays- 100 of these were musical comedies, and, therefore, not noticed by the League. Of the other fifty, sixteen were approved by the League as worthy and bulletined. This will show a saving of attendance on thirty-four worthless plays, or more than two-thirds of all productions.⁵⁵

The Committee that saw all fifty of these plays consisted of five women and three men, and the bulletins they wrote were sent to the women's clubs affiliated with the Chicago "Center," to the Chicago Art Institute and to settlement houses in the area. The fact that bulletins were sent to settlement houses shows that the League was also concerned with socializing new immigrants and lower classes to the qualities that were most respected in America. Blair says:

In a survey of the impact of the Chicago bulletins, it was determined that the 687 members bought 17,182 tickets for fifteen plays, or forty percent

of the houses. In Philadelphia, the League claimed even greater successes, namely that sixty percent of ticket sales were due to League influence.⁵⁶

This means that the members of the women's clubs affiliated with Chicago went to or bought tickets for about 25 shows a year. If the Drama League of America could manage to get all of its thousands of members to buy 25 tickets a year to only shows that had its stamp of approval, then of course it could have a noticeable effect on the box office. But such frequent play-going was not possible for everyone.

It is also important to note that since each city "Center" had a local play-going committee, there were widely different opinions about which plays should or should not be bulletined. There was no accepted criteria that each committee should follow in judging plays, and there was no way to be assured that a single group in a central location could reasonably decide what would be good for the whole country. The closest that the League got to establishing a unified voice was either at the yearly conventions, or through the medium of The Drama Magazine, where the New York Play-Going Committee usually carried the most weight.

By 1914, the League had branches in all 48 states, four cities in Canada and a branch in England.⁵⁷ The goal of improving American drama through the auditorium continued as the central goal of the League into 1914 and 1915. By the 1914 National Convention the Educational Committee was in full swing. This committee's members had the goal of "awakening the general public to the fact that it alone is responsible for the plays upon our stage to-day, and establishing the fact that it is only as we increase the demand for worthy drama that we shall secure it."⁵⁸ In 1914 the Drama League started

two programs for education which Clark would later have a hand in; the Drama Study series of pamphlets and the Drama League series of plays. The study series was designed as a progressive series of study guides based around the drama of specific nations and occasionally around the better plays of a New York season so that completing the series would give a person a basic education in drama. The Drama League series of plays was an inexpensive set of play texts for *reading* and study. These two projects built upon each other and complimented each other's goals.

At the 5th Annual Convention in April 1915, both Barrett Clark and his father were elected to national positions for the following year. After returning from his second trip to Europe, Clark was living in Upper Montclair, New Jersey and serving as the chair of the national Education Committee, which by this time contained ten departments.*⁵⁹ Between the 4th and 5th Conventions, before Clark took the chairmanship, the Education Committee had been subtly adapted towards support of production in little theaters, rather than just reading plays. What was formerly the Teachers' Department was now split into a High School and a College Department. Also, what had been the Department of Plays for Amateur Acting was now divided into an Amateur Dramatics Department and a Play Reading Department. Besides chairing the whole Education Committee, Clark was one of the people helping the Amateur Dramatics Department in its new format.

Since the League wanted to keep the structure of American theatre the same but improve the material it performed, they were intimately affected by the increasing failure of the syndicated touring system in American theatre. The "Road" began to decline after about 1904 or 1905 as a viable form of theatrical business in America.⁶⁰ From that point

* Drama Study, College Dramatics, High School, Junior, Lecture Bureau, Festival and Pageant, Library, Amateur, Play Reading and Drama League series.

until the early 1920's there was an increase in the number of new shows opening in New York City and an average decrease in the number of shows that were available for booking in theaters on the touring circuits. The average number of available road shows in the season of 1914-1915 was one third of the number available in 1904-1905.⁶¹ If the League was trying to improve the quality of the theatre that was performed throughout the country, and the choices available to them through touring were declining, then it made sense for the League to change its tactics to suit the times. Starting in about 1915 and 1916 the League paid more attention to development of little theatres and amateur theatre groups. In spite of the direction the League was taking, Clark still focused most of his efforts on teaching League members how to understand drama as a field of literature, rather than production. By the 6th Annual Convention of the League in April 1916, the size of the organization had made another huge jump. According to the Secretary's Report, the League grew in one year from having 48 "Centers" and 17,583 total members to having 54 "Centers" and 19,354 total members.⁶² The program of the 6th Convention (St. Louis, April 26-29, 1916) suggested an even greater focus of the group towards little theatres. The schedule focused one whole afternoon session specifically on "The Future of the Little Theatre."

The morning session on Saturday, April 29, 1916 was devoted to the activities of the Educational Committee, of which Clark was the chairman.⁶³ He opened the fourth day of the convention with his Educational Chairman's Report, followed by a Supplementary Report given by Theodore B. Hinckley. Clark's Report had a short opening statement and then he read the prepared reports of the departments inside his Committee. The Drama Study Department Report was written by Alice C. D. Riley and

was read with interjections by Clark.⁶⁴ One of the most important traditional functions of the Educational Committee was the administration of the study guide program. Before Clark was head of the Committee, the guides were printed as part of an ongoing series (A through J). As each guide was printed, it would be distributed to the various Centers and clubs. At the time of the Convention only a few copies of the last few guides in the A-J series remained. Clark's Committee created a new series of study guides to cover, generally, the same material as series A-J. The focus of the new series, starting in 1915, was drama in the European tradition: three courses on Shakespeare, a course on dramatic technique before and after Ibsen, a course on *commedia dell'arte*, and a course on American drama. Added to these six study courses put out by the Education Committee in 1915-16, there were several more about to go to the printers: "Modern French Drama" (by Clark), pre-modern French drama, a course on structure, another on pageantry and community drama, and one each on "Modern Spanish Drama," "Modern Italian Drama," Ibsen, "New Ideas on Staging," and "Irish Drama." Another change instituted by Clark's Committee was that as the guides were finished they would be published in the Monthly, which was cheaper than publishing the guides separately.

After listing the topics already covered, and the topics still to be printed, Clark added his own commentary on the importance of study for the League:

It is not going to do very much good for your Committee to furnish this material unless it goes out to the members. It is not enough to send a copy to each of the Centers or to the very important Centers; it should be in some way placed in the hands of the members, who should be encouraged to get up their study classes and to work in earnest upon the

drama. It seems to me, as I stated, that the work of my Department is the foundation of the League; it will not matter how many successful Centers we have or how many receptions we hold for popular artists- if the study work is not done, we build on sand.⁶⁵

Clark, as the voice of the Educational Committee, was trying to remind the club that drama was at the center of the practice of theatre, rather than performance. Since the League was becoming more interested in amateur theatre and the vibrant little theatre movement, he had to remind them of what was important. He continued:

This work should be taken up first by small groups; then later some library groups may be formed. These groups may first be formed from circles which usually come together to play bridge. It is generally supposed that they must all be "literary persons," but that is not at all necessary. It is better to ask a group of your personal friends where each one will feel at home and perfectly at ease. It is not even necessary for them to be League members at first. You should not go at it with the idea that it is going to be a bore; for it will not be, if you do it in the right way.

The first six or seven people will gradually grow to 20 or 30; and then when the circle grows to from 40 to 60, it may develop into a library center. The idea would be to meet once in two weeks and read and discuss a play.

If you can get six groups of this kind started in each big city, there can be a central organization meeting once each month and a new or an old play. Then get little circles started out in the suburbs and the smaller

places; and you will establish a more vital and general interest than could be done in any other way.⁶⁶

This system, or something similar, had been done in New York City, so that several libraries gave space for use as League Discussion Centers where bulletined plays were discussed. After such a group had already been formed, Clark was chosen to lead the session.⁶⁷ Clark told how he tried to get the 75 or so people who showed up to actually talk about the plays. He started by making a patently false statement in order to force someone to contradict, which eventually got the whole group under way with some vigor. Clark wanted to shift focus away from the leader lecturing and towards active participation of the attendees. He managed to work the monthly session's attendance up to 100 regular members of which 70 or 80 of them ended up joining the League.⁶⁸

Clark's push for reading plays as a basis of the League also had a personal motivation behind it. Clark's Study Course #7, on "Modern French Drama"⁶⁹ was listed as "A study course on Augier, Sardou, Becque, Porto-Riche, Curel, Brioux, Hervieu, Lemaitre, Lavedan, Donnay, Rostand, Maeterlinck and Bernstein."⁷⁰ Of these playwrights, Clark had translated at least one work by each of his subjects with the exception of Maeterlinck, and of the sixteen plays discussed, he had personally published a translation of seven of them. Furthermore, the general references, the lists of related plays and further special references are packed full of plays translated by and articles or books written by Clark. Someone diligently pursuing these outlines would also find himself reading through the World's Best Plays series, which Clark started editing the year previous, and the Drama League series of plays.

Two of the key books mentioned in the study guides are Clark's outlines of European drama: The Continental Drama of To-Day: Outlines for Their Study (1914) and The British and American Drama of To-Day: Outlines for Their Study (1915). The intent of Continental Drama was to educate people or lead discussions on "the modern movement in drama" in schools, universities, and reading clubs:

Most of these plays have distinctive features or technique or characterization or theme, so that when the student has completed a study of the plays in connection with the Outline, he should have a very definite knowledge of the essentials of dramatic technique in general, and the modern movement in particular.⁷¹

This book was little more than an outline of material to be covered in a class on Modern European Drama.

Whereas his later European Theories of the Drama anthologized "manifestos," essays and treatises that shaped European dramatic technique from the Greeks to the 19th century, Continental Drama had only a brief overview of such treatises. It was unlikely that Clark's readers would have access to the actual essays from which Clark drew. If they were translated into English, it was usually in limited editions, or for the use of academics. His overview was mostly a genealogical narrative of who influenced whom, with Aristotle as the first theorist.⁷² Aristotle described his observations of the works of the classical Athenian dramatists who created archetypal masterpieces, then Aristotle "formulated the theory of that drama."⁷³ After describing Aristotle and his followers in brief, Clark shifted to the plays themselves and applied French and Italian Renaissance theories of Aristotle to modern plays. Renaissance theorists saw Aristotle as an arbiter of

what *must be done* to keep an audience believing a plot. A plot with unrealistic jumps of time or place would distract audiences from the higher goals of the drama. Clark applied the same thinking to modern drama. Since he was concerned with teaching how to make believable dramas, his approach was most successful for the realistic works of 19th-century Europe. Theodore Ballou Hinckley gave Continental Drama a mixed review. He commended the book's extensive bibliographical material and referred to it as a "Baedeker in Drama," which would help so many students to find the plays and their English translations. But Hinckley did not like the hastiness of Clark's judgments and his use of sweeping generalizations. He particularly faulted Clark for giving Ibsen only two pages, and Strindberg only six sentences.⁷⁴ The Symbolism and Expressionism of these Scandinavians did not fit with Clark's theories, but he at least spent a couple of pages on their skills at realism.

These outlines and guides represent the early state of dramatic education in America with the exception of a handful of young theatre and drama programs in universities. In schools and universities, dramatic education was subsumed under English departments or as part of Speech Education (in most cases). With the possible exceptions of Yale, Columbia, and Carnegie Tech; dramatic theory was taught in Classics and Philosophy departments or perhaps in Foreign Language departments, and these departments used the texts for purposes other than the development of dramatic knowledge. Clark's Continental and British and America Drama of To-Day were combined later into A Study of the Modern Drama: a Handbook for the Study and Appreciation of the Best Plays, European, English, and American, of the Last Half Century (1925), and his technically focused study of drama influenced not just women's

clubs, but any curricular unit that used it – mostly high schools, colleges and universities. In A Study of the Modern Drama Clark added or changed very little to the combined texts, but he did include a new section on Eugene O'Neill, who sits rather incongruously next to the likes of Augustus Thomas and Percy MacKaye. When Clark reprinted the 1925 text three years later, he added to the American section a long list of the young dramatists who emerged in the later 1920s. A Study of the Modern Drama was reprinted in 1928, 1933, 1934 and 1936. It was then published in a revised edition by Appleton-Century Company in 1938 and 1980. The two earlier books that led to A Study of the Modern Drama also remained in print as late as 1971.

The third and most important textbook Clark wrote about dramatic theory and literature was begun during the first World War, while he was working at Camp Humphreys. At that time, he began to research and translate the foreign dramatic theories to be published in European Theories of the Drama in 1918. Some of his research was published in journals such as The Drama of February 1917, where he translated Alexandre Dumas' (*films*) preface to Un Pere Prodigue.⁷⁵ Although this was a translation and not Clark's own words, it expressed the shape and direction of Clark's thinking. Dumas was strongly on the side of a drama that could be read successfully, and even went so far as to say that "the production is nothing but a reading by many people who do not care or know how to read."⁷⁶ Dumas was concerned with one of the primary structures of dramatic literature: that it is supposed to have permanence. He continued: "The play that we have no desire to read without having seen, nor to re-read after having seen it, is dead, no matter if it enjoys a run of two thousand nights."⁷⁷ Similarly, Dumas saw the successes of Eugene Scribe for what they were. Scribe was excellent at

constructing form that would live on the stage, but Dumas disparaged the depth of Scribe's thought.⁷⁸ For this reason, Scribe succeeded as entertainment, even though he has not really become an important part of our dramatic canon; Scribe became a legend of the stage rather than the page. A talented person could use technique in a masterful fashion to please an audience, but it eventually becomes only mannerism if it does not contain a strong expression of ideas that are important to the public. Dumas ended by saying that "the dramatist who knows *man* as Balzac did, and the *theater* as Scribe did, will be the greatest of the world's dramatists."⁷⁹ Clark remembered Dumas' lesson about the combination of ideas and theatrical technique, and recognized it when he saw it in people like O'Neill and Paul Green.

Clark finished European Theories of the Drama in 1918. It was republished in three later, distinct editions (1929, 1947 and 1967), and is still in occasional use as a textbook in universities. It has been useful to playwrights, critics, theatre historians, directors and performers as well as by the students who were intended as the main audience. The book became useful for teaching drama partly because Clark picked texts that focused primarily on descriptions of technique that could be applied to any time, rather than on the shifting views of period style. All of the essays and excerpts in the original edition fit within the boundaries of how to assemble the parts of a drama. Even though the materials chosen covered 2500 years of history and widely varying cultures, they all aimed at answering the same questions: What is drama?; What makes drama work well?; and How is drama made?

The oldest texts included in the book are poetics derived primarily from the tradition of Aristotle. The number of texts from each historical period becomes

noticeably sparse when Clark tries to represent the Middle Ages, and only after the first European publication of Aristotle's Poetics (1498) can a reader find enough to give a very complete definition of drama. The core sections of the book deal with the Italian and French Renaissance. Since all of the texts in the book are printed in English, and Clark was a seasoned translator from French, it is not surprising that the book relies heavily on French sources. It was during the Renaissance and into the 18th century in France and Italy that the "descriptions" Aristotle made of drama become transformed into "prescriptions." This was the period when the function of drama was codified and tied to governmental wishes for its people or to national self-definition. Renaissance thinkers, most often aristocrats and nobility turned the looseness of the Poetics into an essentialist rigidity of definition. For instance, Aristotle's Poetics describes the unity of plot – the best plays focus on just one story. By the 17th century in France and Italy, theorists commonly assured readers that Aristotle insisted on use of all three unities: place, time and plot. Clark may not have intended such a reading, but his European Theories leans towards the same rigidity of definition, because he did little to interpret the theoretical essays he included in the anthology. Clark surely knew about the radical challenges to Aristotle, as represented in Expressionism, Dadaism, Futurism and Symbolism, but he did not include them in the book. The recent avante garde styles of Europe often attempted to cut all ties with earlier theory. They were trying to start anew, but Clark was trying to continue established traditions.

There were attempts before this to publish important critical and theoretical textbooks in English in America, but Clark's anthology gathered together more than anyone before him. Of note are Brander Matthews' publications of various theoretical

works in pamphlet form through his Dramatic Museum of Columbia University.

Matthews was given a professorship of dramatic literature, the first of its kind, in 1899,⁸⁰ and at about the same time founded the Dramatic Museum, after visiting a theatre museum in the Paris Opera House.⁸¹ He used the Museum as a platform for publishing texts of important theoretical and critical works, which came out in 21 pamphlets during his lifetime.⁸² Some of the texts printed by Matthews were later used by Clark in his anthology.

In the Preface to his anthology, Clark said that all of the material together (both the texts included and the editor's comments and bibliographies) will establish "a summing up of the dramatic products of a particular epoch."⁸³ Also, his chronological arrangement, "will furnish the reader an idea of the changes in dramatic technique as they were gradually introduced from country to country, and century to century."⁸⁴ His goal of composing a summary of the development of dramatic technique created as many problems as it solved. The biggest problem was keeping costs down enough that it would still be affordable to students and schools. Some of the texts he included had been translated into English numerous times, but many of them were obscure enough that they only existed in the first language of their publication. Clark ended up using the cheapest sources rather than the best.[†] He used popular editions like the "Everyman" series of

*The publications of the Dramatic Museum of Columbia University were published between 1914 and 1926 in five series of four or five pamphlets each. There were a further two series in manuscript format upon Matthews' death. All were published in very limited editions.

† From "Everyman" he borrowed the texts of most of the English authors (two pieces by Dryden, one from Addison's *Spectator*, six pieces by Coleridge, and essays by Lamb and Hazlitt). From the Bohn editors, Clark used Buckley's translation of Aristotle, *The Poetic*, as well as some of the German theorists (Lessing's *Hamburg Dramaturgy*, Goethe's *Conversations*, and lectures from Schlegel). From the Dramatic Museum of Columbia, Clark used de Vega's "New Art of Writing Plays in This Age," Sarcey's "A Theory of the Theater," Brunetiere's "The Law of Drama," Pinero's "Robert Louis Stevenson: Dramatist," and Henry Arthur Jones' "Introduction to Brunetiere's 'Law.'" Clark used some materials from public domain. He used anonymously translated or edited versions of chapter forty-eight of *Don Quixote*, Saint-

texts, the "Bohn" and "New Bohn" libraries, and the Dramatic Museum of Columbia University publications. Clark also asked scholars and friends to translate for him. He asked ten people to translate one piece each, but it should be noted that Clark also did his share. He translated seventeen entries from French and one from Italian, with help from a previous translation by John Black. Many of these were here first put into English. H. B. Charlton, in a review of European Theories, complained that because of bad translations and of the use of odd texts, the book was not attractive to scholars,⁸⁵ but I do not think that was Clark's intention. The "scholars" that Charlton was thinking of are probably quite different from the "student-scholars" that Clark was targeting. The book was a collection of his own readings while he was educating himself during and after college, and the book was probably meant for a similar sort of student.

Besides the essays themselves, Clark included a system of preliminary remarks: biographical, historical and bibliographical. The whole book is roughly chronological in order, but also organized by nation/culture or language. Each chronological and cultural section is prefaced by a historical note that reads like a guide-book to the critics and theorists of that area. Clark also headed each individual essay with a biographical note and a list of books or articles for further reading. Each author has one paragraph of biographical information and another that explains how his theoretical or critical works can be summed up into a single manifest statement of purpose.

Clark's anthology shows a steady development, in five major stages, from Aristotle up to "modern" dramatic criticism. Clark expends more editorial effort on Aristotle and Horace than many of the later works, which indicates his own opinions of

Evremond's essay on "Ancient and Modern Tragedy," d'Aubignac's "Whole Art of the Stage," Voltaire's "Preface to Herod and Mariamne," and Schiller's "On Tragic Art."

their importance. They act as anchors for most of the later discussion, introduce basic terms, and together represent Antiquity or "the Classics." The period covered is the "Dark Age," which serves to prove the passage of classical knowledge into the Renaissance. Clark represents 1500 years with only two sources, making for a very Dark Age. This is followed by the Renaissance, which in terms of drama is shown as the translation and commentary of Aristotle and Horace. The fourth step in Clark's historiography is an examination of how classical knowledge and the development of Academies were used by people in power to define national languages and identities. The fifth and final step is Clark's elucidation of the make-up of "Modern" dramatic criticism and theory.

The anthology shows some of the methods used previously for creating nationally distinct dramas, so it is also a guidebook on how an American drama could be formed. If this was meant for the benefit of Americans creating a distinctly American drama, the book did not take very well. The American drama that did develop at the time that the anthology was published was formed outside of Aristotelian conventions, in a much looser way. It bubbled up from experimentation rather than from study and research of previous patterns, and it took Clark some time to make the shift to such an organic system of playwriting.

Two years after European Theories of the Drama was finished, Clark translated an essay by Alfred Capus that described a much more fluid idea of technique, suggesting that each playwright had his or her own rules of evaluation. Capus admits the existence of "laws of the theater," but warns playwrights against using them.⁸⁶ Capus' reasoning for why the laws of the stage no longer work as they were intended to work is because the

modern world is moving too fast for such a stability to be successful.⁸⁷ The stable characteristics of class and social structure of the early 19th century had started to break up, which meant that each character had to be developed separately, with his or her own unique, non-stereotyped characteristics. Clark's critical thinking was only starting to develop such a shape at this time, but was pushed further through work with people like O'Neill.

Clark's Early Contribution to Amateur Theatre

Clark, as the head of the Education Committee, had lectured the members of the League in 1916 to stay focused on the study of drama, but he still ended up contributing to the production of amateur theatre. *How* he contributed is important, especially to the notion of Clark as a dramaturg. Two of the most important roles of a modern dramaturg are translating/editing dramas and bringing important works to the attention of producers and audiences. Before he was translating theoretical essays, Clark translated and helped publish numerous plays for amateur use. Some were intended for the League and some for other venues, but all were eventually used in League projects. His translations and anthologies of drama were intended for the reader rather than the performer. Even after working with the League, it took a few years for him to come around to fully support amateur theatre and not just study.

In 1915, the League began to shift to the production of amateur and little theatre, rather than using economic manipulation of touring companies to support good drama. That was when the League Department on Plays for Amateur Acting printed a pamphlet containing a list of almost 200 plays suitable for amateur production. The League felt

amateur performance would allow good drama to be performed in areas the circuits did not visit regularly, or where they would not send quality drama. Clark was one of the fifteen members of the committee that wrote this pamphlet, and he included an ad on the inside back cover for his own World's Best Plays series, which was edited with a similar focus. The committee listed "chiefly realistic plays of modern life for adults,"⁸⁸ so that inexperienced actors would be able to relate to the characters more readily. Furthermore, the introduction points amateurs towards the use of "the one-act play, itself a new dramatic form. Here qualities of taste, freshness and general intelligence show best. Amateurs can often do single scenes well, but cannot sustain a long part. Their long plays are likely to drag because of poor [acting] technique."⁸⁹

Something that makes this pamphlet unique for its time is the way the plays are described in the bibliography. In order for the reader to have a fair idea of the suitability of each play for its group's needs, the compilers include the length of playing time, the number and gender of characters, and the ease with which the play could be performed ("Easy," "Moderately Difficult" or "Difficult"). Each title also had a paragraph-long note that gave an idea of the plot, any "traps" (for instance; complex lighting, dialects or settings), and perhaps a mention of its best qualities. Many of the large play publishing companies, Samuel French being the most obvious, had yet to advertise their plays in such an accessible way. Whether or not this was Clark's contribution, after he started at Samuel French the company's advertisements started to focus on the needs of the amateur performer in the same way the League pamphlets did. Before Clark was hired, Samuel French was still publishing and advertising plays in extended series. These series were made up of older plays that had succeeded on Broadway well enough to be in the public's

common knowledge. These were listed in catalogues by name only, with no indication of number of characters and no descriptions. So while the larger play publishing companies were still selling scripts of Shakespeare's plays cut for famous actors, the Drama League pamphlet was suggesting short, linguistically simple plays that could be done without much acting experience. After World War I, almost all of the play publishing companies had switched to selling plays for amateurs in the same way as the League.

Besides listing where members could find plays to read and perform, the League went into the business of publishing drama themselves. The "Drama League Series of Plays" made cheap reading copies of good drama available for study. For 75 cents in cloth or 50 cents in paper, a League member could purchase one of the texts suggested by the Educational Committee. The League faced problems getting copyright to the best and latest plays because "many dramatists contract for their work many years in advance, and the League therefore cannot secure their manuscripts."⁹⁰ The League used its connections, though, to interest some important playwrights. The first two plays in the series were Charles Kenyon's Kindling "in whose success the League played so prominent a part"⁹¹ and Percy MacKaye's A Thousand Years Ago. By May 1915 this series, published through Doubleday-Page & Co., had grown to include ten titles,* each containing a brief critical preface. A year later the Drama League series had grown to eighteen volumes, including two more translated by Clark: Paul Hyacinthe Loyson's The Apostle (vol. 15) and Francois de Curel's A False Saint (vol. 17). The last play in the

* The other eight were: The Great Galeoto by Jose Echegaray, The Sunken Bell by Gerhart Hauptmann, Mary Goes First by Henry Arthur Jones, Her Husband's Wife by A. E. Thomas, Change by J. O. Francis, Marta of the Lowlands by Angel Guimera, Patrie! by Victorien Sardou [translated by Clark], and The Thief by Henry Bernstein.

series translated by Clark was Eugene Brieux' Artists' Families, published four years after the series started. These along with his translation of Patrie (vol. 9) made up Clark's whole contribution to the project, outside of committee work.

Archibald Henderson reviewed this series, comparing it with "The Modern Drama Series"* published by Mitchell Kennerley.⁹² Henderson appreciated both series, but preferred "The Modern Drama Series" because it was cheaper and "less conservative." Kennerley's series showed more of "a glimpse of the ferment in the drama of modern Europe--- though only a glimpse"⁹³ and contained plays where "the subjects are bolder and the treatment freer."⁹⁴ What Henderson discovered was that the goals of the League and Clark were more "backward looking" than developmental. Clark insisted, with the curriculum of his study guides and books, that readers measure plays against theories codified over the previous 2500 years, even as European drama explored territory that escaped those boundaries.

At the same time Clark translated plays for the Drama League Series, he began editing the World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors series at Samuel French. His work on the World's Best Plays was started before he had a salaried position at Samuel French. He got an actual position there in 1918 and then became a "literary editor" in about 1920.† Much of his editorial work on this series was done between 1915 and 1918, but this group of plays was sold in series until 1927. After that, the plays were still sold by French, but no longer in series. Samuel French was one of the last play agencies to sell acting editions in series. To sell in series, they would place each new

* In 1915, Clark translated and edited Four Plays of the Free Theatre as part of the "Modern Drama Series."

† The year that Clark started working as a literary editor at Samuel French, Inc. is listed sometimes as 1918 and sometimes as 1920. Even Clark waffles on this date. When he talked about the date he started reading play manuscripts (as opposed to already published works), he lists the date as 1920.

script that they had bought or that they were controlling into a categorical series, such as French's Standard Drama or French's Minor Drama. The series defined where the play fit generically, where the play had originally been performed, or who would want to perform the play. For instance, French's Standard Drama was made up of plays originally done at legitimate theatres in England, and they were almost all conventional comedies, tragedies or romances. French's Minor Drama was everything that had originated at "minor" theaters in England, restricted to forms not seen as "legitimate." Plays were gradually added to their requisite series as they were bought by the company, so the higher the volume number that they were in the series, the more recently they were added. For the first sixty or seventy years of Samuel French's existence, plays could be purchased singly or by volume number, with each volume holding about six plays.

The World's Best Plays were advertised as "a new series of amateur plays by the best authors, ancient and modern, especially translated with historical notes, suggestions for staging, etc., for the use of schools, colleges, and dramatic clubs. Barrett H. Clark, General Editor."⁹⁵ A more accurate description of the series' initial content would be closer to: "the best 19th-century short French comedies and farces." Clark's own knowledge of French allowed him to crank out translations of fairly recent dramatists who were as yet unknown in America, like Francois Coppée, Paul Hervieu, Tristan Bernard, Emile Augier and Octave Feuillet. Clark had done some of the translations before editing the series, publishing them in journals and anthologies.

The early ads for the World's Best Plays explained that:

With the immensely increased demand for new plays for purposes of production by amateurs comes a correspondingly great demand for a

careful selection of those plays which can be easily and well presented by clubs and colleges. The plays in the present series have been chosen with regard to their intrinsic value as drama and literature, and at the same time to their adaptability to the needs and limitations of such organizations.⁹⁶

Clark's task was again affected by economic constraints, since the plays in this series were to be free from royalties to amateur groups. Initially, the scripts cost 25 cents each, or 50 cents if they were full-length. The prices were soon raised to 35 cents and 60 cents respectively (or even 85 cents for the longest). Samuel French would only earn profits on the cover price of the scripts.

The texts were edited as simply and quickly as possible. It is not hard to find errors in spelling, grammar, and pagination. Clark did not put much effort into correcting these errors after the type (or stereotype) had been set. To correct such errors would have cut into the already slim profits of the project. It is also evident that the choice of plays often fell to the shorter and lesser known works of well known authors. This is why Chekhov is represented by The Boor and A Marriage Proposal, Tristan Bernard is present as the author of I'm Going! instead of his later more philosophical works, and Aristophanes is represented by a drastically cut and watered down Lysistrata. With high school drama departments being the most likely users of the series, Clark found a version of Lysistrata with almost none of the bawdy humor of Aristophanes.

Clark's style of editing the 52 plays in this series was identical to the editorial guidelines of the Drama League series of plays. Most of the plays chosen for this series were melodramatic in emotion if not in form. Almost all revolved around love, and many

ended in the "proper" fulfillment of that love in a state of marriage, along with an inevitable financial correction. True to the intent of the League, he had formed a series that could teach correct behavior in terms of love and filial piety. Between 1915 and 1927 the series grew to 52 plays, each with a short preface by Clark, and most of them were also translated, adapted or co-adapted by Clark. He was translator of thirty-three of the plays, adapter of four more, and co-adapter of another. Of the remainder, Clark probably had a hand in preparing five of them. Only nine out of fifty-two were translated or adapted by people other than Clark, usually because they were in languages outside of Clark's range, such as Polish or Russian. From any perspective, Clark was a manic worker, getting almost four fifths of the series into print in 1915 or soon after.

Each of Clark's introductions for the series included one paragraph describing the author's life and his importance to the canon. A second paragraph dealt with the specific play, outlining its history and how it fit with the rest of the author's work. Clark was also careful to mention other works by the same author and indicate when a play was translated for the first time into English. As he had done with the study guides for the League, he advertised plays and translations that he had done in several introductions. His prefaces reflect that Clark's idea of how to adapt to the needs and limitations of amateurs was not very realistic. For example, Clark's preface to his translation of The Affected Young Ladies says that the play "requires a simple Louis XIV set. The costumes are of the period."⁹⁷ Similarly, his preface to The Legacy says the play, "is simple in the extreme. The costumes are eighteenth century and the scene a garden set."⁹⁸ Anyone who has ever tried to create eighteenth century costume or a garden set will realize it is far from simple. Only after the amateur and little theatres in the United

States started to produce strong new dramatists did Clark give them a little more credence.

At about the time the United States was entering the first World War, the little theatre movement in America began to catch Clark's eye. By 1917 or 1918 the movement, which had begun years earlier, had produced a significant number of unique American dramatists, like Eugene O'Neill, Susan Glaspell and Zona Gale. At this time, Clark was working as a book reviewer for the New York Sun, had started at Samuel French, and began personal relationships with O'Neill and Sidney Howard, among others. Just as he was becoming interested in American rather than European drama, Clark's status with the Drama League also changed.

After the end of World War I, Clark's work with the League shifted towards a combination of magazine editorship and work on the Board of Directors.* At the same time he remained the head of the Amateur Committee and was the chairman of the Food Conservation Play Contest Committee, a holdover from the war years.⁹⁹ Starting with the November 1919 issue of The Drama, the Editorial board changed the way the journal was issued, from a quarterly at 75 cents an issue to a monthly at 25 cents/copy and \$2.00 per year.¹⁰⁰ Theodore Ballou Hinckley was the head editor of the journal, and starting in November 1919 he was helped by two Associate Editors, Barrett H. Clark and Walter Pritchard Eaton. These editors were given the task of reshaping the journal to be of a "style more brief, crisp and popular."¹⁰¹ It was to include illustrations of important new designs, sets and theatre architecture. It was to emphasize new developments of American theatre and drama, but not limit that to what was happening on Broadway.

* Clark was elected to the Board in late 1919, following in his father's footsteps.

Furthermore, the magazine was to include sections for clubs, schools, amateurs, and Drama League activities. This latter department absorbed the Drama League Monthly, making it a magazine inside the magazine. Prominent was the need to make The Drama "an authoritative drama review."¹⁰²

The Drama League of America became less and less important as a national organization in the 1920s. Early in 1928, the League tried to start its largest push to "Save the Drama in America!" This project was grandiose in the extreme, but did nothing novel. Instead of the \$24,000 annual budget on which they had been surviving, the League figured that they would need \$75,000 a year to accomplish their goals. This was to be earned by the profits from a trust fund of one million dollars, called "The Drama League Fund to Save the Drama in America." They would use the extra money to do some of the same key things they had done in the past: bulletin plays, create subscription audiences for theatre, develop information centers for little theatres, and assist churches and schools in drama-related projects.¹⁰³ Clark was not directly connected with this project, but it fell apart within the next year or so anyway.

In October 1929, the Drama League of America, the Church and Drama Association, and the American Theatre Association merged into a single organization called the Church and Drama League of America. The reconfiguring of the League gave even more power to the conservative attitudes which used to be balanced by liberals like Clark and his father. The League was represented by the cumbersomely titled journal The Drama, In Combination with the Little Theatre Monthly and the Little Theatre News. It had its central office in New York and had a Board of Directors comprised of members from each of the three groups that had merged.

By the end of 1931, the League was in a much worse position than it had been in the previous twenty-one years. Drama Magazine discontinued publication, with its subscribers being offered a subscription to Theatre Guild Magazine, which became the League's official periodical. At the same time, local Centers were given freedom to pursue their own intentions. The League also stopped paying its staff, asking instead for volunteers. Remarkably, Clark was still involved in the League at this point. At the May 1931 convention, he was elected as one of the vice presidents, along with George Arliss, Mrs. A. Starr Best, Dr. Richard Burton, Frederick Koch and Mrs. Carl Morisse. Soon after this the League broke apart into local autonomous units, with the New York Drama League surviving until the present day, and Clark involved in it until his death.

Because of Clark's involvement with the Drama League of America, he learned to critique drama based on the success or failure of the techniques the author had used in writing the work. This was the system he needed to circumvent the conservative moral attitudes of his League readers, but it also prepared him to look at drama with the rudimentary tools of a dramaturg. The League had also given him a chance to begin his careers as a critic, journalist, translator, lecturer and respected voice of theatre and drama. During the same period in his life, he started working with play publishing by getting an editing job at Samuel French. He brought his Drama League sensibilities to publishing and started the changes in play publishing practice that would lead to the creation of the Dramatists' Play Service eighteen years later.

Chapter 2: Clark and Eugene O'Neill

Barrett Clark started a friendship with Eugene O'Neill sometime around 1919. Through the relationship, Clark learned how to productively critique young artists' manuscripts, focusing on the goals of the author rather than the critic. Prior to this, Clark had only worked with finished or published plays, where a critic is more likely to be concerned with readers and audiences. Clark's theoretical approach to that point was built on Aristotelian formalism, which was useful for describing and dissecting finished plays, but did not necessarily benefit a play in process. Working with O'Neill forced Clark to change his approach. O'Neill was averse to plays made by formula or design, which was too close to the style of his famous father's theatre. Clark eventually earned the playwright's trust and was able to read drafts of plays still in development. The relationship between these two men was occasionally difficult, but ultimately mutually beneficial. Clark learned how to use a supportive language and encourage a dramatist's exploration on the part of the dramatist, and O'Neill gained publicity, a confidante and a critical eye for his developing projects.

O'Neill was one of the first important authors with whom Clark had a reciprocal relationship. Previously, Clark tended to act the role of the inexperienced hero-worshipper when he met well-known figures. The best example of this was his relationship with John Galsworthy as described in Intimate Portraits. O'Neill was different because he was almost the same age as Clark, and both men were just entering their periods of greatest recognition. O'Neill did not need Clark as a mentor, as he later was to Paul Green, Lynn Riggs and E. P. Conkle. O'Neill could use an open-minded

reader of his scripts, whom he could trust to maintain a certain amount of confidentiality. Between 1919 and about 1935, Clark read O'Neill's plays before production, in manuscript, and then sent comments to the playwright, who did little to acknowledge Clark's suggestions. O'Neill's reticence probably motivated Clark to adapt how he examined plays dramaturgically. Clark was, however, one of the earliest to write in depth about O'Neill, and his published articles provided some of the earliest criteria for discussion and evaluation of O'Neill's dramas. Others had written about O'Neill critically and theoretically, but none as broadly as Clark, or with as much of O'Neill's trust. As Clark developed his career, he gained enough influence to arrange productions of playwrights' work at both amateur and professional levels.

Clark most likely was introduced to O'Neill's work when he saw In the Zone, which opened at the Comedy Theater, New York, Oct. 31, 1917. It was produced by the Washington Square Players and done in the space that they shared with the Morningside Players, a group that Clark helped found early in 1917. Soon after this Clark saw Ile and The Rope, done by the Provincetown Players in late 1917 and early 1918.¹⁰⁴ Although it is possible that he and O'Neill met while the two companies shared the theater, it is more likely that the two actually began a relationship in 1919, when Clark was gathering material for his review of the anthology Moon of the Caribbees. He told Grant Overton, the book editor at the New York Sun, that O'Neill looked like a good person to bring to the attention of the reading public. Overton said he had "heard fine things about the young fellow. Take all the space you need."¹⁰⁵ Clark wrote to O'Neill, probably in April 1919, to gather biographical information and also to obtain a review copy of Moon of the Caribbees. O'Neill sent Clark some biographical material, but worried in a later letter

that he was "making a Jack London hero of myself"¹⁰⁶ because the story of his life sounded almost melodramatic.

This biographical information shaped Clark's ideas about the playwright, and when he repeated it several years later in his biography of the playwright, it helped to start several O'Neill legends. Clark knew that O'Neill had spent time prospecting gold in Spanish Honduras, but he did not say that this was at the behest of O'Neill's father, who had bought the mine as a get-rich-quick scheme. Clark also mentioned the playwright's time on a ship to Buenos Aires, but did not explain that while there he lived as an impoverished alcoholic on the beach. Neither does Clark point out that one of the main reasons for O'Neill's trips to South America was to find a way out of his first marriage. Clark's intention was to discover some of the man behind the plays, but the picture was incomplete. Clark used biographical material to suggest the origins of characters that O'Neill presented in his plays, but Clark did not yet have the critical sophistication to think that some of the plays were self-portraits of the author. Clark was unaware that O'Neill was trying to portray the mystical underpinnings of life until the playwright told him so.

On May 18, 1919, Clark's brief biography and review of O'Neill's The Moon of the Caribbees, and Six Other Plays ran in the New York Sun. Clark said the book was "the most significant [collection of one-act plays] that has been published in this country."¹⁰⁷ He was impressed with the way O'Neill created vital, believable characters, who depicted "that segment of life which he knows and with which he sympathizes."¹⁰⁸ From a dramaturgical standpoint, this was an example of the basic misunderstanding between Clark and O'Neill. O'Neill responded to Clark's review, saying that atmosphere

was the central goal of these early one-acts. Creating atmosphere helped to explore the philosophical connections between humans and the mysterious forces behind life.¹⁰⁹

The critic and the playwright chose different "sea plays" as O'Neill's best work. It took correspondence and discussion to clear up this disagreement, and the two developed a friendship as a result. Not surprisingly, Clark's favorite play was In the Zone, a play that O'Neill found too technically conventional: "It is a situation drama, lacking in all spiritual import- there is no big feeling for life inspiring it. Given the plot and a moderate ability to characterize, any industrious playwright could have reeled it off."¹¹⁰ The fact that it had succeeded on the vaudeville circuit was proof enough for O'Neill that it was not exemplary of what he intended to achieve.

Whereas, The Moon of the Caribbees, for example- (my favorite)- is distinctively my own. The spirit of the sea- a big thing- in this latter play, is the hero. While In the Zone might have happened just as well, if less picturesquely, in a boarding house of munition workers. Let me illustrate by a concrete example what I am trying to get at: Smitty in the stuffy, grease-paint atmosphere of In the Zone is magnified into a hero who attracts our sentimental sympathy. In The Moon, posed against a background of that beauty, sad because it is eternal, which is one of the revealing moods of the sea's truth, his silhouetted gestures of self-pity are reduced to their proper insignificance, his thin whine of weakness is lost in the silence which it was mean enough to disturb; we get the perspective to judge him- and the others- and we find his sentimental posing much more

out of harmony with truth, much less in tune with beauty, than the honest vulgarity of his mates.¹¹¹

O'Neill wanted to take theatre in America to a higher level of expression than what his father had done. He wished to actually judge the rightness of human characteristics or actions in the universe. When they met in New York, O'Neill offered to explain to Clark "the nature of my feeling for the impelling, inscrutable forces behind life which it is my ambition to at least faintly shadow at their work in my plays."¹¹² Clark did not discuss the playwright's mystical intentions. Clark wrote:

At first sight the atmosphere seems to exist for its own sake, but on rereading it I am struck by the extraordinary artistry of the canvas, *as a background*. Here, amid the heat of the tropics, on shipboard in the harbor, is a scene of mad revelry; figures of men and women flit back and forth. Dim and insignificant at first, they gradually emerge just in time to play their petty parts and disappear.¹¹³

The atmosphere was not a character, as O'Neill wished, but a means to construct scenic images for an audience. Clark's review must have sounded a bit like a back-handed compliment to O'Neill. Clark applauded the very things O'Neill was fighting against, and barely understood what the playwright was actually trying to achieve.

A good example of Clark's ideas about dramatic technique at the time is a review the critic wrote early in 1918, just before he met O'Neill. As part of his book-reviewing duties for the New York Sun, Clark reviewed the fifth and sixth editions of Augustus Thomas' representative works. Clark was especially complimentary about Thomas' preface to Mrs. Leffingwell's Boots, which explained how each of the stories had been

constructed, piece by piece. Clark quoted for a few columns from the preface as a good example of "a body of dramatic doctrine of decided value."¹¹⁴ Thomas started writing this particular play around the idea of a dinner during a huge storm. His preface outlined his process as he thought the play into existence. He started by placing his characters in a sparsely furnished room and used a storm as a means to trap them in the space together. After describing the setting, he decided who would be the best characters for that setting:

Question: What is the best use to make of that set of conditions? Answer:
The exploitation of a person or persons who would like to get away and can't do so. What person would be the most effective figure under such constraint? A girl!¹¹⁵

Thomas then asked, rhetorically, why the girl wanted to escape and answered that she wanted to avoid meeting a specific man. The man to avoid would not be a bad man, but rather a good man that she used to love but wished to be away from. In Thomas' words, this was the form that the French explained as, "Act one: get your man up a tree. Act two: throw stones at him. Act three: get him down."¹¹⁶ Thomas was focused on action and character rather than expressionism and psychological exploration. Thomas valued the plot and its action above all the other elements of a play. He was a play-maker, a mechanic of sorts. Starting with a basic plot, he would add all the other components bit by bit until the plot best entertained the audience and maintained the energy of the play. Thomas was very successful with this approach, but it did not lead to a dramatic literature as much as a stage tradition.

In contrast to Clark, O'Neill complained about Thomas, and how he had built the plot of a play piece by piece for the edification of George Pierce Baker's playwriting class. The story of O'Neill's reaction to Thomas has been repeated in a few different ways by O'Neill biographers but, in a letter to Clark, O'Neill gave his own version: "I was one of the hardest-working students of the lot. But it's true that once someone started charting an Augustus Thomas play on the blackboard to show how it was built, I got up and left the room."¹¹⁷ O'Neill attempted instead to develop writing by building stories around emotion and psychology, and using images, locations and characters to resonate with a central emotion or psychological dilemma.

In return for Clark's letters and his review, O'Neill had his agents send a copy of Beyond the Horizon before the script had been staged. O'Neill asked in an April 19, 1919 letter if Clark would be willing to "give it a reading."¹¹⁸ O'Neill sent him what was then his "only presentable copy" of the text.¹¹⁹ Clark later referred to Beyond the Horizon as a turning point in American drama.¹²⁰ In 1919 he tried to excite interest in the play in the New York Sun. Because the play had not yet opened when the article ran, Clark could not go into detail without offending the playwright's sense of privacy. Instead, Clark wrote that he had been "privileged" to see Beyond the Horizon in manuscript, and that O'Neill was "well able to handle a striking theme and living characters in a long play."¹²¹ Only after the play opened successfully in New York did Clark cover it in more detail. The critic did send O'Neill what must have been a very appreciative letter.*

* O'Neill refers to the complimentary letter later on, but I have not been able to examine the letter in question.

About a year after Clark sent this letter, O'Neill wrote to him about other critics' opinions of his technical capabilities, fishing for Clark's support. Critics wrote that the production showed unsophisticated dramatic technique because it moved so slowly from scene to scene, but Clark had called it "an interesting technical experiment,"¹²² because of the way the play switched between interiors and exteriors to symbolize the tensions of the characters.¹²³ Each act of the play contains one indoor and one outdoor scene that Clark saw as a way to show the tide-like pulses of the human spirit, juxtaposing the indoor (human-constructed) and outdoor (nature-driven) world.¹²⁴ The play worked better as literature than on the stage: in the mind of a reader there was no need to wait for sets to be changed, but in production this literary choice made for slow scene transitions. Clark, seeing it as part of a possible modern American drama, appreciated the play as literature, even if other critics based their opinions solely on production values.

Clark saw the creation of an "adult"¹²⁵ drama in America, which he felt began with O'Neill's Beyond the Horizon. This play worked well as literature and dealt with American characters and issues. It even addressed pervasive national themes like the frontier and the self-made man, and it was written in American dialects. According to Clark, Beyond the Horizon was the dramatic "Messiah"¹²⁶ that American critics were searching for, at least in 1920. With the passage of time and the introduction of new experimental plays by O'Neill and others, Beyond became more and more out-dated. Early in 1927, Clark attended a revival of the play, and wondered whether the great feeling he had when it first came out was due to "the intrinsic qualities in the piece or the fact that it marked the appearance of a dramatic genius in our midst."¹²⁷ In retrospect, he

admitted that the play was one of O'Neill's "minor efforts" and was "a little too direct and obvious,"¹²⁸ but it changed Clark's ideas about what was possible in American drama.

During the seven years that separated his first reading of Beyond the Horizon, and his review of it as a "minor effort," Clark changed his mind about the whole field of American theatre and drama. From late 1921 until late 1923, Clark stayed in Europe, mostly in Germany and France. While there, he traveled to theatrical centers and compared them with America, discovering that European theatre had stagnated while American theatre had blossomed. He wrote to the New York Herald that "American Drama [was] Equal to Europe's,"¹²⁹ and then after visiting an exhibition in Amsterdam he reported that "America[n]s Lead in Stage Design."¹³⁰ In an article about the Swedish Ballet he wrote while still abroad in 1922, he realized that French theatre was dead even in 1909 during his first trip to Paris.¹³¹ More than a year after his return to America, he reported that New York City was twice the theatrical center of any major city in Europe.¹³² There was no turning back from there. Clark had been a passing supporter of American theatre and drama before he left for Europe, but after returning, he was especially avid in his praise and encouragement of it. This was helped by the amazing season of 1924-25, which included What Price Glory (by Maxwell Anderson and Laurence Stallings, Eugene O'Neill's Desire Under the Elms and Sidney Howard's They Knew What They Wanted. Clark said, "What a trio! I know of no country in the world that can boast three such good plays in any season, at least during the past few years."¹³³

Clark reviewed Desire Under the Elms in The Drama, December 1924. He called it the "work of a mature artist."¹³⁴ He said the play had: "scarcely a trace of O'Neill's earlier theatricality; there is (with the exception of the first twenty minutes) not a moment

lost in the elaboration of unnecessary detail; the whole piece is close-knit, unfaltering."¹³⁵ He appreciated O'Neill's literary skill, but said the performers were unable to work up to the level of the tragedy of the piece. Rather than blaming this on weak acting, Clark said it was "the one serious weakness in the drama."¹³⁶ The fault was that O'Neill, in his need to examine deep psycho-social and philosophical ideas, had forgotten the basic technical needs of a live play. Clark began the same article by defining an old school of criticism that focused on actors and their skills and viewed a play as only the framework to uphold performance. He argued that if the critics would stop looking for the "Big American Play" along the lines of Ibsen, Shakespeare or Gerhart Hauptmann, they would realize that several "Big American Playwrights" existed in O'Neill, George Kelly, George S. Kaufman, Marc Connelly, Laurence Stallings, Maxwell Anderson and Rachel Crothers.¹³⁷ They just had to be seen on their own merits, as fulfilling what goals they attempted to achieve.

Clark's relationship with O'Neill, his change of heart about European drama, and the American season of 1924-25 led him to a greater focus on American drama. His book-length biography of O'Neill was an extension of this interest. Clark was the first to write such a biography of the young playwright. It was initially called Eugene O'Neill, and was published in 1926 for the Modern American Writers series through Robert M. McBride and Company. The next year, in a revised version, it was handed out as a bonus for those who bought orchestra seats at the revival of Beyond the Horizon.

At about the same time that Clark was writing the O'Neill biography, he realized that the playwright was "writing ahead of us."¹³⁸ His Great God Brown had just opened at the Provincetown, and Clark tried to think more like the playwright in his review and

suggest what the play was "about." Clark encouraged readers to think of O'Neill as a "poet" and discussed how this play "is permeated by the dramatist's sober opinion, by his belief, or rather his emotional conviction, that the beauty and meaning of life are perceptible and attainable only through what is commonly termed tragedy."¹³⁹ Clark passed over the chance to dissect this play in terms of the technique O'Neill used. Instead, he described The Great God Brown as a Nietzschean discussion of "becoming" one with nature. The strife towards the ideal self was done with tragedy, because that was the "best" possible way to represent ideas from the mind of the poet to the mind of the audience. Clark learned about Nietzsche from the playwright, and then used it to fill in the gaps created by the presence of god-figures like Dion (Dionysus) and Earth (Cybele). Clark created a language based around the demands of this specific play and on his knowledge of O'Neill, rather than relying on structure as the only carrier of meaning. This is especially interesting because a year earlier, in a review in the same journal, Clark wrote:

Plays about politics, marriage, sanitation, religion, about anything indeed save human beings, have a habit of boring me, because I believe that the art of the drama is in the last analysis an art that is best suited to the exhibition of humanity and not the ideas or theories of this or that philosopher, reformer, or scientist.¹⁴⁰

Clark had grown as a dramaturg through his relationship with O'Neill. He no longer imposed outside philosophies of dramatic technique on writers. He learned how to evaluate a dramatist's work based on the intentions of that dramatist.

Similarly, Clark adapted his biography of O'Neill to the needs of the dramatist. He sent a proof of the book to the playwright for his comments around April 1926. The playwright sent back changes, dealing mostly with the history and very little with the criticism, and Clark used most of the changes in the book. O'Neill was very warm about the critical part of the biography, saying: "the main part of the book is excellent in every way- a damn good piece of work- real criticism!"¹⁴¹ About the initial, biographical, part of the book, he said it "seems to me to sort of fall between two stools."¹⁴² He felt that it was too long for the amount of material it contained. More importantly, due to Clark's anecdotal style and O'Neill's public reticence, this section did not seem true.

And when all is said and done- and this is, naturally, no conceivable fault of yours- the result of this first part is legend. It isn't really true. It isn't I. And the truth would make such a much more interesting- and incredible!- legend. That is what makes me melancholy. But I see no hope for this except someday to shame the devil myself, if I ever can muster the requisite interest- and nerve- simultaneously!¹⁴³

O'Neill felt no qualms about making a significant number of suggestions "even to the extent of suggesting word changes."¹⁴⁴

By 1926, many legends about O'Neill's life had already been circulating, some of them due to Clark's 1919 biographical article. In the 1947 revised edition of Clark's biography of O'Neill, Clark talked about these legends and truths. Carlotta Monterey O'Neill had told Clark that she tried to clear up with her husband some of the anecdotal information about the playwright's past, but that O'Neill was willing to let the legends remain. O'Neill figured that the more legends existed, the more privacy he had about his

life. At the least, legendary information established a story of O'Neill's life that would suit the better understanding of his plays. O'Neill said that he would possibly clear it up himself when he felt brave enough to do so.¹⁴⁵

Paul Green stopped by the Clarks' house in Briarcliff Manor, at about the same time Clark was finishing the biography, and wrote to his wife about O'Neill. Green was a friend of Clark, but it was hard for Green to see O'Neill in a friendly light, as he explained in the letter of June 10, 1926:

Barrett and I went over the proofs of the O'Neill book last night, reading his [O'Neill's] corrections, letters, etc., and I was terribly disappointed in the man's attitude. He is careful, contrary, sore-tailed and a lot of things. He certainly is very anxious not to have people think bad of him. He had Clark to cut out a lot of his punk poetry, etc.

Why in the devil didn't he say, "go ahead and write what you think of me. It'll all come out anyhow. It's your judgement"? He ought to have kept out of his biography, I think.

(...)

I thought he knew too much about this living business to bother about what certainly was he in the days gone by. I hope to see him when I come back through here from the Colony. Of course I'm not keen about bothering him.¹⁴⁶

Green describes the relationship between the biographer and the author as built on careful propaganda on O'Neill's side. Even in the biography as published, Clark is carried along

in O'Neill's wake, and the resultant book is not entirely accurate, but it shows the extent to which Clark was willing to sublimate his opinions to those of the dramatist.

By 1930, even as O'Neill was getting more and more private in his relationship with the world, Clark had remained a trusted friend. Clark was part of the "confidential" circle of O'Neill's correspondents, meaning that O'Neill would let him know what he was working on, what success, or lack of success, he was having, and what his intentions were for each piece. He would then add a superscript to his letters saying to "Keep the above confidential."¹⁴⁷ For the most part Clark did just that, but occasionally he bent the rules if he thought it was in the best interest of the playwright. Clark used his friendship with O'Neill and his position at the Theatre Guild to try to get a production of Lazarus Laughed for the Guild. Clark wanted the Guild to stage the first professional production of Lazarus, but O'Neill was very concerned about how they would do it. He told Clark that he was worried that the Guild could not find a good actor for the lead role, referring back to the success of Irving Pichel when he played Lazarus at Pasadena Playhouse.¹⁴⁸ He also was concerned with the music that the Guild would use to give the play a "religious ceremonial aspect."¹⁴⁹ In the end Clark could convince neither O'Neill nor the Theatre Guild to work together, and the play received no more than a semi-professional production at the Pasadena Playhouse in 1928, with a revival in 1929.

Just as Clark was finishing his work at the Theatre Guild, O'Neill sent him a copy of Mourning Becomes Electra ("The Trilogy").¹⁵⁰ Clark enjoyed the play but sent suggestions that the dialogue needed greater motivation and less repetition. O'Neill was aware of this and told Clark he was using the summer to correct such errors. But the playwright was surprised at Clark's suggestion that there were strong Freudian intentions

behind his play.¹⁵¹ O'Neill, who had undergone psychoanalysis, once again tried to cover over the truth in favor of the legend. He replied:

Taken from my author's angle, I find fault with critics on exactly the same point- that they read too damn much Freud into stuff that could very well have been written exactly as is before psycho-analysis was ever heard of. Imagine the Freudian bias that would be read into Stendhal, Balzac, Strindberg, Dostoevsky, etc. if they were writing today! After all, every human complication of love and hate in my trilogy is as old as literature and the interpretations I suggest are such as might have occurred to any author in any time with a deep curiosity about the underlying motives that actuate human interrelationships in the family. In short, I think I know enough about men and women to have written Mourning Becomes Electra almost exactly as it is if I had never heard of Freud or Jung or the others. Authors were psychologists, you know, and profound ones, before psychology was invented. And I am no deep student of psycho-analysis. As far as I remember, of all the books written by Freud, Jung, etc., I have read only four, and Jung is the only one of the lot who interests me. Some of his suggestions I find extraordinarily illuminating in the light of my own experience with hidden human motives. But as far as influence on my work goes he has had none compared to what psychological writers of the past like Dostievsky, etc. have had.¹⁵²

It is hard not to find Freud in some of O'Neill's plays, and it seems disingenuous that the playwright would not admit it, even to Clark. Nonetheless, this is an example of how far

Clark had grown as a dramaturgical thinker. This letter to O'Neill is one of the very few instances that Clark even mentioned Freud in connection with a script, and it is likely that he never would have done so if he did not perceive O'Neill's conscious intention. He was looking at the play in a manner that was so close to the playwright that it was too close for O'Neill's comfort.

Although O'Neill did benefit from Clark's support, Clark himself gained more from O'Neill's ideas about the direction American theatre could take. Clark learned that the creation of plays was more than just a vibrant hanging of ideas onto the structure of dramatic technique. He started his relationship with O'Neill as a decided supporter of drama written by proven formulas, such as the "Well-Made Plays" of Scribe and Sardou or the styles created at the behest of powerful American producers or touring stars. Ten years after they started their relationship, Clark had learned how to understand the goals of the author and encourage the creation of a dramatic form around authorial intentions, rather than trying to bend the author around prescribed forms.

Chapter 3: Clark and Sidney Howard

The relationship between Barrett Clark and Sidney Howard was always mutually supportive. It not only benefited Howard by giving him a resource for honest criticism of his works in progress; it also benefited Clark. These two thought similarly about the role of theatre in America, especially regarding the experimental outlets of the little and amateur theatre. The most important outcome of their relationship was the creation of the Dramatists' Play Service, which supported writers and aided amateur theatre groups looking for mature and exciting plays to produce.* Before the Dramatists' Play Service, the friendship between Howard and Clark resembled a mutual support society between two young playwrights. Only after Howard achieved success as a playwright and Clark started to discover the young folk dramatists (around 1924-25) did their relationship change to one of dramaturg and dramatist. Howard managed to survive mostly by writing, translating or adapting plays for production in the United States, and this encouraged Clark to try the same thing. It took a few years of watching and helping Howard for Clark to discover that he was a much better reader and critic of other people's work than a writer or adaptor.

Their relationship started in 1919. In January, Howard finished two and a half years in the military for the French and the American armies. He had been an ambulance driver and later a captain of a bomber squadron. After the Armistice, he returned to playwriting.† In New York, he supported himself by working for newspapers and

* Covered in chapter 7.

† Before the war he had completed George Pierce Baker's English 47 course.

magazines, and translating or adapting plays. William Fennimore Merrill, a friend of Clark, had known Sidney Howard at Harvard. Clark lived with Merrill briefly when he first moved to the East Coast, and Merrill talked about Howard to Clark and was a catalyst for their meeting.¹⁵³ Merrill had met Howard in Coblenz just before Merrill was killed, and he made Howard promise to look Clark up. One day after the end of the First World War, Howard introduced himself to Clark by letter.¹⁵⁴ Clark and Howard agreed to meet in New York at Browne's Chop House. Afterward, Clark was able to tell his wife that Merrill had in fact been right about Howard as an individual.¹⁵⁵ The day after their first meeting, Howard and Clark returned to Browne's Chop House and started work on a dramatization of James Branch Cabell's The Rivet in Grandfather's Neck, continuing into the evening at Howard's apartment.¹⁵⁶ Even the manic Clark could barely keep up with his co-author's energy. As a result, Clark saw the play as "six parts Howard, one part Cabell, and three parts me."¹⁵⁷

Writing continued through Howard's visit to Walter Prichard Eaton at Cambridge, where he tried to solidify ideas.¹⁵⁸ He would not just write to Clark, but call him at Samuel French, and leave ideas with the secretary¹⁵⁹ in order to get Clark's response. By May 1920, the two had written a draft good enough to send to Cabell. They had already received his blessings on the dramatization, and Cabell was "in a whirl of amazement and admiration over this miracle which you and Mr. Howard have wrought. The thing is certainly a play, and to my partial judgement a very good play; and there was certainly no play in the novel."¹⁶⁰ The play, as Howard and Clark had written it together, was never staged, even though they tried to do so through Harold Freeman, Howard's agent, who sold it to Frank Conroy.¹⁶¹ Based on their collaboration on this project, Howard called

Clark a "marvel" and pointed out that they were still "seemingly friendly both socially and professionally."¹⁶²

Howard's own earliest plays, before World War I, were pageants and masques in the style of Percy MacKaye, and he continued in a romantic, poetic vein after the war. Before his first New York production, Swords, in September 1921, Howard wrote a farce called Ride a Cock Horse. Clark realized his potential, after reading Cock Horse, and told him as much.¹⁶³ Howard nonetheless set the script aside and returned to writing Swords for Clare Eames, and the play was produced by Brock Pemberton in New York. Swords was a romantic melodrama about Renaissance Italian political struggles, written in verse around a strong central female, a common pattern for Howard. It was climactically and melodramatically structured, allowing the lead female to win against the forces of wrong at every turn. Ludwig Lewisohn reviewed the play in The Nation¹⁶⁴ and appreciated that it reached a poetic level, but felt that the audiences might be better served by plays dealing with situations of everyday life. This play's romantic orientation was partly due to Howard's love of the Paola and Francesca story from Dante,¹⁶⁵ and partly to his developing romance with Eames. Howard, Clark and George Pierce Baker went together to the opening of the play, on September 1.¹⁶⁶ Baker and Howard agreed at the time that verse was not Howard's strongest suit, but Clark kept his faith. With time, Howard's approach to writing drama changed from melodramatic romanticism to what Lewisohn suggested: everyday life. From this early project on, Clark was constantly in touch with Howard, and read all his plays and manuscripts.

Clark left for Europe soon after the opening of Swords, and the next letter from Howard reached him in Paris in December 1921 "a few weeks after [he] arrived there."¹⁶⁷

Because of inflation in Europe at the time, it was easy to travel cheaply, and Clark supported himself, his wife and his daughter (born in Berlin) by writing articles for London and American periodicals. While in Paris, Clark helped Howard research a play idea about the singer Augusta Holmès. Howard's play was to be dramatically driven by Holmès' love life and Clark picked George Moore's brains about her. Apparently, Moore had been her lover, but was not optimistic about the success of such a play. This may have been the impetus for Moore and Clark to start working on a dramatic adaptation of Moore's novel Esther Waters,* which was Clark's own next attempt at playwriting. Clark sent all the research he gathered for Howard, but the Holmès play never came together.

Even though Swords was not successful on stage, it did have two positive outcomes. First, Howard wrote to Clark that he had married Clare Eames. This was a bit of a surprise. They had been engaged the last time he had visited the Clarks at Briarcliff Manor,¹⁶⁸ but Howard had not mentioned it. The other positive outcome was that the script helped Clark to get some translation work for Howard. After Paris, the Clarks went to Salzburg, where he met several times with Hugo von Hofmannsthal. Clark wanted to translate or adapt Hofmannsthal's play Grosse Welt-Theater (Clark's third attempt at playwriting), which had been staged in Salzburg by Max Reinhardt. Clark was not fluent enough in German to be able to translate the poetry of the play, and his idea of an adaptation was to let someone else do a translation into English that he would then turn it into a workable play. Clark suggested that Howard do the translation of Hofmannsthal's "soft Italianate verse" and that Clark finish it off.¹⁶⁹ In order to interest

* For more information about this, see: Davis, Wendell Eugene. The Celebrated Case of Esther Waters: the collaboration of George Moore and Barrett H. Clark on "Esther Waters: a play." Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984. This also contains Clark's version of the play in question.

the Austrian in the project, Clark said that Howard should send his play Swords to Hofmannsthal. Even though Swords was dripping with "soft Italianate verse" itself, this may have been just an attempt to salve Howard's unhappiness with the poetic form. Howard agreed to send the play to Clark, but not to Hofmannsthal.¹⁷⁰ Clark passed a script of Grosse Welt-Theater on to Howard, and apparently convinced Howard to let him send Swords on to Hofmannsthal. Clark also boosted Howard's ego by saying that he still believed in the farce Ride a Cock Horse, if it could be adapted slightly. He felt the premise of the play would be more believable if the whole thing was thrown "into a mystical key,"¹⁷¹ but Howard destroyed it.

In the same letter, Clark commiserated with Howard about his own struggle to work with George Moore on a dramatization of Esther Waters. Between Clark and Moore, they had two different manuscript versions of the play. Clark felt that Moore had borrowed heavily from Clark's version and they were trying to straighten out the issues of rights to the play and which version was the "correct" one. Moore wanted his version sent to the United States, but Clark said:

I won't let him till I've tried to sell mine. So we've compromised: I have till Feb. 1 to sell my version. I saw Moeller here & submitted the MS in N.Y., but the Guild turned it down. As a makeshift, & having no time to do otherwise, I turned over the matter to Alice Kauser, explaining everything to her.

If you will read the MS (Miss M. will send you one) & can suggest any actors or manager to Miss M., or any way of disposing of the play by Feb. 1, you will hear my eternal gratitude. Naturally, I'd like your reaction

on my version, but there's no time for revision now. What is needed is a suggestion regarding the sale of the MS.¹⁷²

Clark also included his congratulations on Howard's marriage and remembered that Clare had debuted in Mother Nature, a play by Gustave Vanzyne that Clark had translated and "overhauled" for production.¹⁷³

Howard followed the Clarks to Europe in 1923, and sent a long congratulatory letter to them after the birth of their first child in August 1923. Howard was in Geneva and sent along a fifty Swiss-franc banknote, which Clark wrote "was welcome indeed—we were living on seventy-five dollars a month."¹⁷⁴ Howard had just come from Salzburg, where he saw The Imaginary Invalid performed at Reinhardt's villa. He also met with Hugo von Hofmannsthal, who, thanks to Clark's good words, was quite willing to allow Howard to be the official American translator of Grosse Welt-Theater.¹⁷⁵ This took Clark out of the picture as co-translator, but it did give Howard something to work on. Between Swords and They Knew What They Wanted, Howard's only staged works were translations or adaptations, but he was still doing better as a playwright than Clark. Hofmannsthal worried about the prompt book for Grosse Welt-Theater, but he was willing to send it to Clark in Berlin, while Howard went to Prague. Howard would see the prompt book when he visited the Clarks in Berlin,¹⁷⁶ but the meeting did not work out, so Clark mailed it on to London, and both couples left for the United States in the last months of 1923. In recompense for helping Howard get permission to translate the Hofmannsthal play, Howard suggested that they share the project equally.¹⁷⁷ After all the effort, neither Howard nor Clark finished a translation of the play.

Their friendship was not one-sided, as Clark also used Howard as a critical eye for articles that he was writing. Clark's visit to Europe had produced some articles on the general state of Germany as a nation, as well as some reviews of European theatre and an article about meeting Maxim Gorky. Howard said that the Gorky article was strong, but suggested that Clark temper the anti-German flavor of the pieces. Howard felt that it needed to be "emotional[ly] objective" about the obvious "decay of the German character" after World War I.¹⁷⁸ At the same time, Howard apparently contacted Dudley Digges and Augustin Duncan on Clark's behalf. Howard felt that they might want to produce Clark's version of a new play that Gorky had given him to translate.¹⁷⁹

Howard's fame was finally established with the production, in November 1924, of They Knew What They Wanted, his first staging since Swords, outside of adaptations or translations. It is hard to prove that Clark helped with this play, but it is likely that he at least discussed the plot and characters while Howard was writing it. Its first written mention by Howard was in 1921, when he told Clark that one of the plays he was going to write was "laid on a California ranch."¹⁸⁰ It is unlikely that it never came up in conversation or correspondence over the next three years. Howard wrote to Clark of "an unpretentious little comedy about some California people I knew and liked, with just the glimmer of an idea behind it."¹⁸¹ Clark later identified the strength of the play as Howard's writing about people he had known in his early years in California. Instead of trying to make breathing versions of historic types of distant Italy, Howard found enjoyment in the workers and humans of California wine country, people he had actually observed. He then put these workers in a heightened dramatic conflict and allowed them to react.¹⁸² This play was built "for the exhibition of human character,"¹⁸³ something

Clark often lauded. Clark wrote a small review of They Knew What They Wanted, which Howard said was "the very best thing the play has had." He took serious consideration of Clark's suggestion to cut back the character of Joe.¹⁸⁴ Joe made the play more about a triangular love affair and less of a "little treatise on the obsessions which make the world go around. The woman's [Amy] obsession for security- the man's [Tony], for a dynasty."¹⁸⁵ Howard had already done some cutting of the character, because it tended to offset the importance of the central characters, Tony and Amy. What Clark was drawn to in Howard and later in the folk playwrights was skill with character. Clark said that They Knew What They Wanted has "scarcely a trace of 'theatre' ... it is a compression of passionate life. Instead of plot there is a subtle interplay of character upon character."¹⁸⁶

After working with Eugene O'Neill, Clark realized that plays did not have to be written by formula, and plays like They Knew What They Wanted demonstrated this. The play focuses on the marriage of Tony and Amy, a young waitress from San Francisco whom Tony has wooed through letters and convinced to marry him. Tony has enlisted his young foreman Joe to help him write the letters and has also sent to Amy a picture of Joe in his stead. When Amy arrives for the wedding, Tony is brought in on a stretcher after just surviving a car accident. Amy does marry Tony, in spite of the misrepresentation of himself to her, but that night she sleeps with Joe. She and Joe decide to run away, especially since she is now pregnant. Amy tells Tony that she is leaving, and in the resulting discussion, this play shows its unique features. In a conventionally-plotted American play of the period, the expected resolution of the play would be the young woman running off with the young man she loves, and the old man fading from

the picture or even dying, to tie up loose ends. Howard, though, a fan of portraying human choices on stage, ended the play differently. The characters make choices based on their own wants and needs. Amy wants the security of a marriage and Tony wants a child (but was made impotent by the car crash), so they decide to remain together, in spite of the difficulties of this choice. This is not a thesis play that suggests the same resolution in all similar situations. It is not even necessarily the best choice for these individuals, but it is the choice that these characters have made, and it feels more believable than an Augustus Thomas-style emplotment based on convention.

Clark's contribution to the play came after the play was a success. Howard was accused of plagiarism, and he called on Clark as a resource and witness. In general, Clark felt that plagiarism of plays was more rare than the cases that attempted to prove it.

There are people (I have seen them at plagiarism trials) who insanely believe that men like O'Neill and Howard go about furtively reading unproduced manuscripts and privately printed books, and set themselves the dangerous and extremely difficult task of building plays out of characters and plot ideas which they have not 'invented.'

If your plot is so original that you fear someone will steal it, you will either be able to dispose of your play to a manager, or find a collaborator who can make good use of it. If that doesn't work, then you might just as well give the idea away- if anyone else wants it. It isn't ideas (though without them you are nowhere) that make a play.¹⁸⁷

In the 1920s and 1930s, Clark worked in support of several playwrights, Howard and O'Neill most prominently, as an expert court witness on plagiarism cases. As a

voluminous reader, he was able to suggest works, especially those in the public domain, that carried the supposedly plagiarized ideas. If the defense could prove that the ideas stolen were already commonly available, the charge of plagiarism lost most of its impetus.

Clark was eager to help Howard's court defense. The part of the play that was supposedly plagiarized was the story of a woman who is unfaithful to her invalid husband. Clark, in order to show that the play was not plagiarized, dug through his memory and his library to find examples of the same or similar plots in other plays. Over the last couple weeks of July 1925, Clark fired off letters to Howard listing plays that had a similar plot point. Clark came up with at least nine other plays, in English, French, German and Hungarian that could be useful, and then worked to get copies of them to Howard and his lawyer, Ernest Angell.¹⁸⁸ In the courtroom, Clark identified plots of French farces from the 15th and 16th century that made the plot in question obvious public domain. According to Clark, his stories were bawdy enough that the judge had to stop him.¹⁸⁹ Howard won the plagiarism case, and also survived a second case that never made it to court.

Two years after They Knew What They Wanted, Clark made one last attempt at playwriting, before deciding that he was more of a critic or literary manager than a dramatist.¹⁹⁰ He returned to the script of The Rivet in Grandfather's Neck that he had written with Howard. At the time that he was on the Board of Directors of the Beechwood Players at Scarborough-on-Hudson, Clark tried to interest Howard in helping him rewrite their earlier play for sale to the Players. Discussions went slowly, and on March 25, 1927 Howard wrote to say he was not willing to revisit the script.¹⁹¹ He gave

up his share of the property, claiming it was mostly Clark's project anyway, though he was willing to be an adviser. Clark tried once again to share the project with him, but Howard wrote in April 1927 saying more firmly that it was all Clark's now. This was Howard's way of getting out of an inferior play. Clark forged ahead, at times writing in the apartment of Knowles Entrikin, director of the Beechwood Players, which provided relief from the noise of his children. After Clark's revisions, the play was presented for three performances in May 1927 as The House of Musgrave.*

Clark reviewed his own play in The Drama¹⁹² and gave himself the same valuable advice he had given to so many other playwrights: "if Mr. Clark would only forget what he knows about technique and sit down and write what he knows about people, he might turn out a play far better than this first attempt. He is never weary of telling other dramatists to do this very thing."¹⁹³ Howard, in reference to Clark's self-criticism, said that it proved that Clark was a good critic. This was the last time that Clark tried to be a "serious" playwright. He took Howard's compliment to heart, and focused on critique and development of the plays of others.

After his success was established, Howard continued to solicit Clark's opinion on drafts of his plays on an informal basis. Clark was not the only one to do this for Howard, but Howard respected the critic's opinion enough that he tried to pay Clark for his dramaturgy (which Clark refused).¹⁹⁴ In spite of the respect and friendship between the two, Howard was touchy about his ego, and would hold off replying to Clark's criticism until his temper had cooled. Clark continued to send out long critical replies to

* Clark also wrote a third play version of the same story under the title of "Patricia". The scripts for "The Rivet in Grandfather's Neck" and "Patricia" are in the archives and special collections of the University of California, Berkeley library, and "The House of Musgrave" is in the Barrett H. Clark papers at the Beinecke Library at Yale.

every draft he received although he received no immediate thanks for his help. But Howard did read and consider carefully whatever Clark said.¹⁹⁵

An example of this exchange is the discussion about When Half-Gods Go, which began in June 1929. Howard's purpose in the play was "to get down some of American womanhood's revolt against marriage, kidded of course, but still pretty much as I see it."¹⁹⁶ Howard described the play as an example of his goal "to dramatize what these people of ours are thinking about, not in a critical sense, but as it is, heightened by some kind of intensification that comes automatically with dramatic condensing."¹⁹⁷ Howard sent Half-Gods to Clark and his wife Cecile in August 1929, and the two responded by the next month. Clark said that he and Cecile appreciated the "half-symbolical farce scene ("Keystone Comedy)" and felt it was one of the best parts of the play.¹⁹⁸ This was of course exactly what Howard wanted to hear, a positive response, and, as a result, he responded comparatively quickly to the comments of Clark and his wife.

Besides the couple's general response, Clark sent a specific response to Howard in a running commentary. This was not uncommon with Clark, who would jot down notes on whatever was handy as he read a play and later craft them into a more reasoned response that went to the dramatist. Clark was drawn in at the start by the comedic nature of the play's opening scene, but felt that the second and third scenes slowed the pace because the play here shifted to a pattern of didactic examination of the theme of marriage. Once he was used to the shift, though, he was engaged for the duration. Clark wrote Howard that the play was "a combination of true drama and sociological discussion" done in the form of "an animated treatise."¹⁹⁹ Using such a form did have its

difficulties, and Clark complained about Howard's use of a "*raisonneur*"* in each scene to observe the action from an outsider's point of view. The *raisonneurs* had some excessively didactic speeches that Clark recommended cutting or rewording so as not to overdo the effect.²⁰⁰ In summary, Clark suggested that Howard shift the play back towards the presentation of human beings and away from a philosophical discourse in dramatic form. This was Clark's way of reading the play in terms of what the author intended to achieve. Clark reminded Howard of his own statement that:

the writing of plays was a matter of getting sufficiently excited over people. In this play I think you are more excited over your ideas than over the human beings, and for this reason your thesis is not quite strong as it would be if you told your story a bit more through the medium of human beings who were more human than even you have made them.²⁰¹

The notion of reading a play organically and critiquing it based on the dramatist's intentions is derived from one of the earliest dramaturgs (Goethe) and is also a central pattern in modern dramaturgy.

Although Clark refused to get paid for editing Howard's work, he did ask that in return Howard read the work of young playwrights and clients of his. Howard carefully read all of these and in many cases helped the playwrights write or even gave them money. Clark wrote that Howard did this "with clients of mine, when I was in the agency business."²⁰² As part of his job, Clark would read scripts and pass on those with promise to Howard. When Howard also saw potential, he would react instantly to help the playwright.²⁰³ In Intimate Portraits, Clark mentions several instances of Howard helping

* A character in a play that gives expression to the author's message or philosophy (I corrected Clark's misspelling of this term.

out young playwrights, directors and managers in any way he could, specifically Howard's assistance to Michael Blankfort, Virgil Geddes, Lynn Riggs and Susan Glaspell, all of whom also had help from Clark. Clark relied on Howard in this role until Howard's death in 1939.

Clark occasionally used his connections as a member of various reading committees and boards of directors to help out friends like Howard. In 1931, before Clark left the reading committee of the Theater Guild, he got a letter from Howard that mentioned a new project: to turn the meetings of the Versailles Peace Conference into a play. Howard had heard that Emil Ludwig was also writing a play about Woodrow Wilson, which would create marketplace competition. He wrote to Clark that he had "discussed it with no one and I ask you to keep it to yourself."²⁰⁴ Clark did not keep the secret, but passed the news to Theresa Helburn so that the Guild would not buy the Ludwig script when they could hold out for the same topic by Howard.²⁰⁵ Howard forgave Clark for not keeping the secret, but worried that he would not be able to finish the play now that the world knew about it.²⁰⁶

By 1932, Clark was in a period of transition. Since The Drama had folded in 1931, he could no longer publicize his favorite playwrights in print. Clark had also left his position as head of the Theatre Guild reading committee, and had seen one of the last iterations of the Provincetown Players fall apart. He worried that the country did not have enough sites for the development of new drama and production. He wrote to many of his friends, including Howard, for support in a plan he wanted to implement, which took advantage of the little theatres, college theatres and university theatres. He wanted to induce some of the more established American playwrights to open new shows at focal

points throughout the country.²⁰⁷ If this worked out, it would draw the attention of managers and producers to the valuable work done at those sites. At the same time, these local centers would work on projects by the best of the young folk dramatists, who were not getting seen by producers and directors of note. Clark knew as much as anyone about the amount of quality work being done by companies outside of New York. He solicited commentary and support from the more important playwrights and little theatre managers. He also sent Lynn Riggs to talk to possible supporters of the plan, such as Howard.²⁰⁸ According to Riggs's explanation of the plan to Howard, Jasper Deeter's Hedgerow Theater was to be the first site for this experiment. Howard saw it as similar to "what the Provincetown outfit offered O'Neill."²⁰⁹

Howard was behind the plan and felt that if it had any benefit, it would be to help to cure the jaded feelings of the New York playwrights and actors. In Howard's view, the little theatres responded to the needs and intentions of the community in which they existed better than New York productions did in their community.²¹⁰ Drawing New York directors and producers to locally relevant productions would help explore national identity through drama and develop a more "American" drama. Howard told Clark that the scheme would get bright new playwrights away from jaded Broadway actors and that "the country needs other lying in wards than Broadway. The alleged native drama is going to become a great deal more native when it sees the light and takes its first steps in hardier neighborhoods and under a more selfless tradition."²¹¹

Clark, who had been searching for some quotes or even a whole essay in support of the project under Howard's name, could not find enough substance in his note, and asked Howard for some more ammunition. Howard responded:

I wrote you in that letter just what I thought. If I were to add anything it would be this. The theatre cannot enjoy its proper lease on life unless it is a part of the public's life. I am not one who feels that it is dying in New York, neither am I one who feels that New York is all of America. The great virtue of the Little Theatres and their value to the drama at large is that every Little Theatre is a part of the life of its community. That seems to me the largest value of your scheme.²¹²

In the same letter, Howard also questioned Clark's use of the word "experimental." Some of the plays that Clark saw as experiments, such as Cherokee Night by Lynn Riggs, were more accurately "un-tested," especially compared with some of the really experimental work written in Europe during the first three decades of the twentieth century.

Clark had limited success with his project of opening important plays outside of New York, and he continued to look for ways to get important playwright's works performed in little and amateur theatres. This would of course benefit the playwrights, but it would also help to combat the simplistic skits that were the main product of amateur theatre groups at the time. His chance to do this came through Howard, who was elected as President of the Dramatists' Guild of the Author's League of America, right at the point that the group was trying to negotiate a new Minimum Basic Agreement with the organizations representing theatre managers (1935). As the president of the Dramatists' Guild, Howard also attacked the bad conditions imposed on writers by powerful movie studio executives. Howard wanted playwrights to get the same profits for movie rights as the novelists usually got. This contract was negotiated and agreed upon in 1936. It allowed playwrights to decide the price of their own goods and to

receive a minimum of 60% of the fees for their plays, while the managers got no more than the remaining 40%. Previously, it had been 50/50.

While Clark was helping dramatists like Howard on a personal basis, he was also employed by a company that showed a very different attitude toward dramatists. Samuel French saw the works that they were representing as property from which to profit by selling it to the highest bidders and by cutting out as much cost as possible. In order to restrain Samuel French from this sort of activity, Howard created a second big company, the Dramatists' Play Service, working in the same field of non-professional rights, but to the benefit of dramatists. Unlike Samuel French, DPS would charge set fees to the playwrights and would try to get the amateur rights out to the buyers as soon as possible after the play was first performed. DPS would be a specific service for the members of the Dramatists' Guild, built to ensure not the profit of the service as much as the profit of the dramatist. All business of DPS would also be conducted under the Dramatists' Guild Minimum Standard Contract, which supported the playwright's position against the powerful New York producers.

By Clark's account, the letters passing between Howard and himself decreased after the early 1930s, but the two saw each other in New York quite often:

I had seen a lot of Sidney, usually in the office at the Dramatists' Guild, and once at his country house at Tyringham, and we met frequently as members of the board of the Dramatists' Play Service, the result of a pet scheme of his which he had brought to life in the summer of 1936.²¹³

The last five years of Howard's life (1934-39) were not filled with successes on the stage, but he did succeed as a screenwriter. His most memorable screenplay was Gone With the

Wind, which he never saw due to his untimely death. He was one of the best paid screenwriters of his time, but ironically also battled against the movie industry taking financial advantage of playwrights in general. Howard tended to go to Hollywood in short stints in order to work on specific tasks, and then return to the East coast and his life as a "legitimate" playwright.²¹⁴ The dividing line for Howard between these movie scripts and his playwriting was the owner of each medium. Movies were obviously not "owned" by the writers who wrote them, but rather by the producers and production companies that filmed the scripts. Plays for the theatre were more strongly linked to their writers. This distinction is what drove so many of Howard's negotiations for the Minimum Standard Contract and the enhanced rights it gave playwrights over previous standard contracts.

Even while Clark and Howard developed a business relationship, Clark still did his best to encourage and promote Howard's writing. Clark wrote to Howard on December 3, 1937:

Without in the least trying to console you for the slap the critics gave you, and without being in any way influenced by personal considerations, I want to tell you that Cecile and I were profoundly moved and consistently interested by The Ghost of Yankee Doodle. When the curtain fell, we agreed that we could sit through the entire play again without further intermission and would have done so if the cast had been ready.

If the play has serious shortcomings, and I don't think it has, they are not evidences of weakness but simply prove that you didn't try to do a

lot of things that the critics evidently thought you should have tried. It is simply absurd to claim that the play is all talk, that the intention is obscure, or the views inconclusive. The play is so clear that I can't imagine a highschool [sic] youngster misunderstanding it. Besides, the thing is full of excitement-- provided one can understand plain English forcefully written.²¹⁵

Besides sending Howard a letter expressing his opinion, Clark also wrote to the editor of the New York Times as a "minority report" about the qualities of The Ghost of Yankee Doodle.²¹⁶

Howard died just before the start of World War II, when he was crushed by the tractor he was trying to start in his shed. Clark broadcast a brief memorial to him on national radio on September 2, 1939. It is ironic that their friendship which started with a letter from Howard sent on the day after the end of World War I, ended on the day after the start of World War II.

Chapter 4: Folk Drama

Near the end of World War I, the little theatre movement in America succeeded in producing new dramatists and less conventional writing styles. Barrett Clark recognized the shift in individual dramatists such as Eugene O'Neill and Sidney Howard, but within years that followed he noticed a larger trend – "folk drama." There had been American movements in novels, poems and painting that explored local color, but the movement in drama developed in a distinct manner. Many of the young dramatists that fit into this movement were educated in some of the earliest playwriting programs in American colleges and universities. Many of these programs were either post-graduate, like George Pierce Baker's Theatre 47 Workshop, or part of an adult education/extension program, like the one at Columbia University. This gave them more freedom to teach writing through experiential methods rather than via Aristotle's elements of drama. The movement's first plays were published in anthologies produced by the same schools.*

Clark heard about the writing and production of these young dramatists through his extensive connections to schools and their little theatres. Folk drama was a microcosm of Clark's hopes for the future of American drama. This chapter examines Clark's perception of this folk drama movement† in America as well as its reception on a larger scale. Much of what has been written about "folk drama" has focused on Broadway successes such as In Abraham's Bosom, Porgy and Green Pastures, but Clark

* For instance: Carolina Folk-Plays, Plays of the Theatre 47 Workshop, University of Washington Plays, Dakota Playmaker Plays and Copy 1924-1930.

† There were groups of authors both before and after this that could be called American folk dramatists, but I am referring to a rather loose tradition that had its heyday between the World Wars and was intimately connected with the little theatre movement that had given Clark his start in the profession of drama.

saw the movement pervade American drama on a much wider scale. For him, some of the best folk dramas written between 1919 and 1939 were staged outside of New York in front of the same people that the plays portrayed. After Clark discovered the movement, he began to look for the best qualities of folk drama in plays outside of the genre, and subsumed many different types of plays into the genre, including worker's theatre, African-American drama and, of course, dramas written in American dialects.

Clark never specified what his outlines of folk drama, but most of the dramas he lauded at the time shared six traits: they explored American ideas or stereotypes, i.e., freedom, frontier determination, self-reliance and democracy; they eschewed overused stage conventions; they portrayed realistic characters who spoke in recognizable dialects and idioms, even if the playwright experimented with styles like expressionism or symbolism; they used dialect to create poetic language; and they examined the struggle to survive in a harsh world. By using such a broad definition for folk drama, Clark could support plays like O'Neill's Beyond the Horizon and Maxwell Anderson's Gods of the Lightning and still brag about the immature works of young but promising authors. What Clark called "modern American drama" was an extension of the best qualities he saw in "folk drama," and in his writing the terms are mostly interchangeable.

The concept of "folk drama" has dropped out of the common understanding of American theatre, largely because it did not succeed on Broadway, but linking the value or even the definition of this movement to box office success in New York is a misunderstanding of "folk drama." A good prime example of misrepresentation due to ignorance of the goals and patterns of the movement is Jordan Y. Miller and Winifred Frazer's definition in American Drama Between the Wars: A Critical History. A group

that would create a folk tradition "are those who have developed and preserved through several generations a body of knowledge, beliefs, and customs passed on by oral tradition. Furthermore, they have remained over time removed from the main body of society by geographical or socioeconomic conditions that tend to prevent intrusion from the outside world."²¹⁷ It is difficult to find any but the smallest pockets of the youthful America that would fit this understanding, especially as it pertains to mythological patterns and local superstitions. Miller and Frazer build their discussion of "folk drama" from their idea of "folk" above. They compare American drama to the "folk dramas" of Japanese Bunraku or Javanese shadow theatre, which have "descended from a remote past."²¹⁸ Bunraku and Javanese wayang are more collections of stage conventions than of dramas, and even these conventions have changed over time. The notion that Japan and Java are or ever have been entirely isolated from intrusion is an orientalization. Similarly, the playwrights who began to write about the people around them in North Carolina, North Dakota, Wisconsin and Oklahoma did not do so because they had been left unchanged and naive in a benighted backwater. What made their work part of a whole called "folk drama" was their decision to pursue a different subject matter.

Miller and Frazer focus on folk plays that were successful in New York, but ignore the movement's benefit to smaller, rural communities throughout the United States. Frederick Koch, the "Father of Folk Drama," both at the University of North Dakota and later in North Carolina had students write their plays for performance in rural communities near the university. These venues brought theatre to the most important audiences for folk drama, the play's subjects.

Clark could not have put so much energy into this new dramaturgical focus without the positions he held as a reviewer for The Drama and as an editor for Samuel French. By about 1925 or 1926 he had a solid understanding of technique, but had learned from O'Neill and Howard how it could be ignored with great success. Working as a reader, he saw most of the plays sent to New York and could extract the most promising. He knew many producers and directors, both in New York and the rest of the country, which allowed him to suggest the venue most appropriate for the play rather than choosing plays for a specific venue. In 1928, Clark described the motives he used in reviewing plays in his regular articles in The Drama. This "confession of faith" is a good summary of his approach to American theatre between his return from Europe in 1923 and the founding of the Dramatists' Play Service in 1936. This was one of the most productive periods of his life, and he spent his unquenchable energy almost entirely in support of American drama. He asked rhetorically: "Why go to the bother of writing down the impressions made upon me by each new theatrical offering I go to see? Does anyone read what I write, and if he does, what is its effect on him? Do I write to prove anything, to convince or persuade anyone? What, in a word, is my ultimate purpose?"^{*219} Clark's answer to himself was simply that he had an "inclination" towards criticism: "[I am] impelled to write my opinion of the new shows because I am sufficiently interested in them to want to tell others what I think."²²⁰

The Drama gave Clark the freedom as a critic to follow his inclination. He was not hindered by constant deadlines, as when he reviewed books for the New York Sun, and he was given freedom to see whichever productions he felt were important. He did

* The part of this article that is his "confession of faith" is Appendix A.

not have an editor insisting that he review a show because it had an important actor in it, or because a certain producer was pressuring the journal. And, even though he was writing for the main journal of a rather conservative group, he wrote: "If I feel so inclined I may shout hosannas in the very temple of Communism, and there is no one who will tell me to vote the Republican ticket or get out."²²¹

Clark thought like a dramaturg, very like Lessing in fact, when he wrote criticism in The Drama. He saw the critic, under the best of circumstances, as a rather objective tyrant for his own opinion. He felt that readers should not be given a repetition of the public's evident opinion about plays, but rather the critic's honest, informed ideas. Clark was able to critique productions that may already have closed by press time, and also talk about productions that his readership outside of the New York metropolitan area might never get a chance to see. In many cases, he had read the plays before they made it to the stage, perhaps even helped rewrite them. So, unlike a newspaper reviewer who wrote almost entirely about the previous night's show, Clark acted like a dramaturg controlling the direction he wanted American drama to take before, during and after production.

Clark expressed the core of his goals as a critic:

My own aim in writing these periodical reviews is first to tell the truth- my own truth, personal, prejudiced, warped as it may be- about all the plays I see. But the truth, especially when I try to discover it in my own mind, is exceptionally hard to see. And it is perhaps harder to put down in black and white when I do see it, or think I see it. Still, this is my confession of faith and work, and I might as well put it down and get it out of the way. Here it is:

I dislike plays that set forth to reform, convince, persuade, or improve me or anyone else.

I dislike, in most of its forms, "good theatre." By this I mean plays deliberately written to make an effect. Good plays aren't made that way.

I dislike and do my utmost to combat every effort to curb the dramatist in his choice of subject or treatment. Censorship, in whatever guise, is a stupid and mischievous thing.

On the other hand.

I welcome every new play (no matter how poor it may otherwise be) that treats a "forbidden" or delicate subject or employs words and phrases that have not yet found their way into the theatre.

I am at present more interested in American plays than in the plays of any other country, because (a) there are more of them worth seeing than ever before, and (b) because many of them are not yet given a fair chance of success, and (c) because I am an American, attracted not only by what is familiar to me, but because I confess I see in our country more potential material for drama than is to be found anywhere else.

Hence.

I make it my business to seek out among the new plays of each season every indication of talent, of a desire to discover

and interpret any phase of our national existence, in the belief that it is better to encourage a young dramatist with something to say than to patronize the dramatists of the past at the expense of the newcomers.²²²

Clark's approach was neither complex nor scholarly. He wrote for casual readers, as opposed to scholars, in a light essay style. He cared passionately about what he was supporting, though, and used his "tyranny" to encourage readers and audiences to support the new and experimental playwrights that America was producing.

One of the fullest outlines of Clark's understanding of American drama between the World Wars was An Hour of American Drama, which describes the best qualities of the folk and socialist dramatists of America. His book, without specifically labeling its topic as "folk drama," is about dramatists who:

... appear on the horizon, who cannot be linked with the past history either of our theater or our drama, young men who spring up from nowhere, who have little or no knowledge or experience of theatrical matters, who take it into their heads to create their own kind of plays out of material found in the most out-of-the-way corners. (...) Of the writers who really count, none has had any long or very close connection with the theater business.²²³

In ten pages of the introduction Clark deconstructs the technique-written dramas of people like Dionysus Boucicault, Augustus Thomas, Augustin Daly and David Belasco. By so doing, he dismantles his own earlier beliefs about how to create good drama. Clark fixes February 2, 1920 as "the beginning of our era of adult playwriting" because that is

when Beyond the Horizon opened at the Morosco Theater.²²⁴ From O'Neill's first full-length hit, Clark outlines, biographically, the big names of modern American drama: Elmer Rice, George Kelly, Sidney Howard, Phillip Barry, Susan Glaspell and Maxwell Anderson. He identifies what makes them similar: little or no background in theatre, the attempt to portray the "truth" of the human condition, a poetic sensibility and a passionate energy. Many of these "big names" studied dramatic theory or even playwriting, but they were not performers or directors before they became dramatists. Clark draws a fine line, but he does it in order to relate the "big names" to those who followed: Paul Green, Daniel L. Rubin, Martin Flavin, Burdette Kinne, Marie Baumer, Em Jo Basshe, Michael Gold, E.P. Conkle, Virgil Geddes and Lynn Riggs. These younger playwrights used simplified plots, subtle characters, local subjects and discussed the struggle of humans in an awesome, almost mystical world.

The folk drama style started in little theatres where writers were encouraged to write for local audiences, rather than for an ideal New York audience. One of the earliest groups to use this style of writing was started by Frederick Koch at the University of North Dakota. Koch was a dynamic young instructor of dramatic literature, who had completed his education at Harvard before going to North Dakota. He arrived in 1905 to a campus that had no theatre other than skits and farces, and immediately started directing Sheridan's The Rivals and Goldsmith's She Stoops to Conquer, which the university toured to any local communities that could be reached by train.²²⁵ After starting with classics, he formed the Sock and Buskin Society, a university dramatic club of which Maxwell Anderson was a founding member. In order to be admitted to the group, students had to write an original play for performance or reading, or present an

extended scholarly article on the subject of modern theatre and drama. This group presented plays monthly for the student body. Koch's idea was not to focus on established historical scholarship and criticism, but rather to do all he could to instill appreciation and enjoyment in the hearts of his students by participation. He did not regularly teach playwriting there until after his post-graduate education. He studied with George Pierce Baker at Harvard and then returned to North Dakota to form a group of regional dramatists, who wrote "folk dramas"* developed from their own surroundings.

In 1940, Clark explained his early perception of Frederick "Proff" Koch in an informal biography. He remembered seeing Koch at several of the early Drama League conventions, where Koch would energetically pass out flyers and memorabilia from his Dakota Playmakers. Clark joked that he thought that Koch was some radical revolutionary, passing dangerous literature around the audience, and Clark called the police to pick him up. Koch eventually cornered Clark at a convention where Clark was going to give a talk on "The Influence of Ibsen Upon Bernard Shaw," and talked *at* him all night. Clark succumbed to Koch's persuasive energy and the Ibsen/Shaw talk turned into a summary of the goals of folk drama instead.²²⁶ Clark continued to see Koch at other conferences, grew very close to him, and became affected by his energy and proselytizing:

Now, as year after year skipped by, as convention after convention came and went, as my weekly mail groaned under the burden of great batches of decorative papers from the Father of Folk Drama, a strange thing happened. I who in my earlier years had gone on periodic

* Koch invented this term for what his students were doing.

pilgrimages to France and Germany, Italy and England; I who sat at the feet of Shaw and Gordon Craig and Hauptmann and the rest; I who wrote books and articles on the Europeans and the English and the Irish, came home at last to find at about the time the World War was over that we had begun to have an American drama of our own. This strange, lanky O'Neill fellow, for instance- and a little later a youngster named Anderson (...) who actually used verse in his plays- and Howard and Green and Riggs- and others- were there. Could there be a real native drama? It looked like it. Wholly American in subject matter and background? An overalls and gingham drama?²²⁷

At about the same time that Koch reached North Dakota, plays that would fit Koch's definition of "folk drama" were being written and performed in Wisconsin. In 1910, the Wisconsin Players were formed as the Wisconsin Dramatic Society in Madison. Anticipating the emerging form of American drama, co-founder Thomas H. Dickinson wrote "that the new art, when it comes, will go below the 'culture line,' that it will reach fundamentals, that it will aim at substance rather than form, and that it will be throbbing with life and grandly unconscious of itself as art."²²⁸ During the first several years, the members of the Wisconsin Dramatic Society wrote and performed plays mainly for their own members and the citizens of Madison. In 1917 they had a month-long engagement in Chicago and were booked on tours through the South by the Pond Lyceum Bureau.²²⁹ The Chicago engagements were the first time they had performed outside of their own theater, with the exception of one or two performances a year at a larger venue in Milwaukee. Besides writing their own plays, they also performed their own translations

of plays from French, German, Russian, Italian, Swedish and Norwegian. These plays were performed on the fourth floor of a converted house, in an 80-seat theater. The group was founded by Dickinson, a professor at the University of Wisconsin, and Laura Sherry, who a former member of Richard Mansfield's company.

Zona Gale, in an article in Theatre Arts, describes the philosophical grounding that guided the company:

Whatever one may feel about the ultimate effect of democracy on art, democracy, when it comes, is going to have its art. This art is going to be what art has always been: the interpretation of truth. Every true interpretation of a thing serves as an intensification of that thing. The art of democracy will intensify democracy.²³⁰

Madison had plenty of Progressive supporters, similar to the Chicagoans who started the Drama League, but this Society was much more internally focused than the League. They both wanted to encourage reading good plays and publishing good plays in translation, and "to raise the standard of dramatic appreciation in the community."²³¹

The success of their work is evident in the national publication of Wisconsin Plays, in two series, 1914 and 1918. These plays were written by, for and about Middle-West locals, and included works by Gale, Dickinson, Howard Mumford Jones and others. Clark's review of the second series was laudatory. He admitted that some of the plays were not the best ever written, but that was not the point. Rather, it was "a question at present of how far they depict American life. They do depict a section of it, and depict it well. Far better to print a volume of plays dealing with Wisconsin men and women than

a play of Rostand or Maeterlinck."²³² This statement was as much an acknowledgement of the Wisconsin Players as it was an indication of the shift in Clark's thinking.

The Carolina Playmakers

Stark Young suggested in 1910 that the South would be the perfect place to build a localized drama to offset the cultural dominance of New York. He saw plenty of material in Southern history for plots and historically-based characters, but more importantly, "the temperament of the people that must always be the matrix of drama."²³³ Since the old South and the new South were still battling, there were numerous political and racial ideas that could easily motivate dramas. He also mentioned the lack of emotion and vibrancy in the "standard" stereotyped characters of American drama (e.g., the urban, Anglo-Saxon businessman) compared to the still potent emotion of the new immigrants to the United States.²³⁴ Young was suggesting that if America was to create a drama that was not just a compilation of the stage conventions of previous generations, the dramatists needed to pay attention to the energy and emotion of the "common people."

Frederick Koch took his North Dakota experiment with him to the University of North Carolina in 1918. He followed Young's suggestion by setting up the Carolina Playmakers, but took it one step further. Koch not only wanted to portray the "common people" of North Carolina, he wanted the people to try portray themselves. Under his direction, the folk drama of North Carolina was written by university student playwrights who were "united by a common interest in the establishment of a native folk-theatre. (...)

The materials are drawn from experience and observation- from folk-tales and the common tradition, and from present- day life in North Carolina."²³⁵ Although Koch did not think playwriting to be a teachable skill, he believed that it could be improved through practice. He felt that it should be a natural expression of the world and folk surrounding the playwright. After the author put down ideas, descriptions and characterizations of the people he or she knew well, the play could be adapted from this material and improved for the stage.²³⁶ Since the plot was only secondary this meant using strong characters, possibly based on actual individuals or representatives of folk stories. As a way of teaching drama, technique was "the big bugbear of the beginner"²³⁷ and kept the author from trusting the human instinct to create and dramatize.

Koch did have a system for teaching playwriting, though. He started his students with one-act plays. In order to give them some idea of what was intended, the students would read a one-act play, preferably from a volume of Carolina Folk-Plays and then respond in writing. They read simpler amateur plays rather than professional plays, and they wrote about their own "honest impressions of the play- its subject matter and form."²³⁸ After reading and commenting on the play as literature, the students produced a staged reading in the classroom in order to learn the distinctions of performance. They continued reading and performing short plays to practice dramatic form in a practical sense, rather than hearing lectures. In order to find material for new plays, the students wrote in detail their own life stories.²³⁹

Ultimately, Koch's goal was to have formal concerns grow out of the organism of the story and the characters. The playwright "is reminded again and again that the structure of the play he is writing must grow logically out of familiar scenes and from

characters intimately known to him. That *himself* is the most important element in the play he may write, that there is something elusive beyond structure of the play, beyond the technique."²⁴⁰ One of the most important patterns of Koch's process was the fact that plays were "communally rewritten," meaning that from the first expression of a story or character, the whole class discussed the work. The openness to suggestion was extended to the audiences who came to the initial performance. The author would be allowed a curtain speech before the play and the audience would be given a chance to respond in a group discussion after the show.²⁴¹ This system of constant discussion and group evaluation was used by George Pierce Baker at Yale, and it is now a standard system of playwriting at modern programs.

Once written, the best plays were toured around North Carolina. In the 1923-1924 season, the group toured to twenty-six towns and played to about 25,000 people.²⁴² The tour was conducted with two vehicles, a bus carrying the cast and crew, and a truck carrying set pieces, properties and costumes. They traveled to larger towns like Durham and Winston-Salem, and to villages with less than twenty citizens if they were in the middle of a populous rural community.²⁴³ Touring created enough interest in drama that the Extension department of the University of North Carolina teamed up with the Playmakers to create pamphlets and bulletins with instructions for putting on performances and to build a circulating extension library of approximately 1,000 volumes. After ten years of existence, the Playmakers had produced 59 plays written by 42 of the university's students. Paul Green was the greatest discovery from this first decade. He had no less than eight of his early plays performed by the Playmakers. But Green was not alone. Novelist Thomas Wolfe began as a playwright in the Playmakers,

moved on to work with George Pierce Baker in the Theatre 47 Workshop, and only later turned to writing novels. Lula Volmer also came out of this group, and her play Sun-up became one of the hottest properties for amateur production in America in the 1920's and 1930's. Hatcher Hughes and Anne Bridgers also got their start in North Carolina.

After stabilizing their playwriting program and establishing a strong touring circuit of student plays, the University of North Carolina hosted the first Southern Regional Conference on the Drama April 4-5, 1928. This was held in "the first state-supported playhouse in America, devoted to its own native drama."²⁴⁴ Besides the visitors with connections to the program, like Koch, Green and Archibald Henderson, there were representatives of Actor's Equity, the New York Drama League, the New York Times (Brooks Atkinson), Yale University (George Pierce Baker) and Samuel French (Barrett Clark). There were also seventy-five other leaders of professional and little theatre in attendance.

Even though folk dramatists were not lectured on dramatic technique, they did write drama with identifiable patterns. The patterns of folk drama in turn shaped the technique that Clark encouraged in playwrights. This is how "folk drama" became the guiding theory in most of Clark's dramaturgy after about 1920. The first precept of folk drama was to forget technique and ignore any theatre experience one may have had. This was something Clark repeated *ad nauseum* in An Hour of American Drama. It shows up in correspondence with playwright after playwright, and is even something he told himself when reviewing his own play.²⁴⁵

A corollary to ignoring the technique of the past is to write about what you know. In 1953, Paul Green collected several of his articles into Dramatic Heritage, including some that dealt with his ideas on folk drama. He defined the "folk arts" as "the soul and inspiration of a people's life."²⁴⁶ He paraphrased a conversation with an unnamed Irish poet, who said that "beauty is only to be found (...) where one can cherish the object, feel and know the sources and tokens of beauty, can endow them or depict them with his own imagination, can know and sense them closely and intimately."²⁴⁷ It was not just an attempt to create a Broadway hit. To people like Green, Riggs and Conkle, the audiences for whom they were writing were also the sources of their material.

Folk drama also tended to use subtle of characters and simple plots. Although it was probably not intentional, the complex, detailed characters in simple plot situations were the opposite of the worst 19th-century American melodramas. Melodrama used complex plots as a means of maintaining interest and enabling impressive scenic effects. Folk dramas were performed under strict budget constraints, and could not have the luxury of scenic brilliance. They were often one-act plays with a single set. Thus, simple plots made more sense and the material of the play was mostly character development. A good example of subtle characters and simple plots are the early one acts of Paul Green, as well as his play In Abraham's Bosom. The majority of Green's early plays were single-set interiors of cabins that were sparsely furnished. He also limited the number of characters on stage so that little got between the audience and the issues discussed. Green worried about overproduction of his plays, and he wrote to Clark about his intentions:

I'd like to help produce Potter's Field and bring out the subtle tones and intonations that show the unbelievable mystery of so-called folk conversation. Quite commonplace statements when spoken true to life and situation are quite otherwise. (...) The more I think of the "folk" the more I know that their lack of book knowledge does not affect their subtlety. Their characters are not less complex than Hamlet. It happens that those who have tried to record their lives have been more or less of the Hamlet environment.²⁴⁸

The characters and their speech drive the plot rather than the other way around.

Folk drama was also part of a larger patriotic movement and therefore drew on important heroes and legends to bolster national pride. Paul Green commented on this same pattern in Aeschylus's trilogy, calling him a folk playwright. He attributed the greatness of the work to the fact that the dramatist "loved Greece and the heroes of his country's past. And in writing about his native land and these heroes, with the devotion he did, he the more kept alive the greatness and importance of both."²⁴⁹ Green suggested using drama to describe American heroes like Franklin, Washington and Jefferson. In the same book, he included character studies of folk heroes he saw as most worthy of remembrance. E.P. Conkle was particularly interested in this type of writing. He wrote plays about legendary figures like: Paul Bunyan, Judge Roy Bean and Kit Carson. These heroes and legends, just like the everyday characters, were written as "common folk."

The human subjects of plays were another defining feature of folk drama. Paul Green's defined "folk drama" for the National Encyclopedia of 1932:

Folk-Drama, a term designating a type of drama which deals with less sophisticated people, usually rural or primitive folk. The protagonists and characters of such dramas are generally depicted as being close to the conditions and processes of nature and lacking in the more cultured refinements of a higher society. The manners, ethics, religious and philosophical ideals of such people are considered to be more nearly derived from and controlled by the ways of the outside physical world than by the ways and institutions of men in a specialized society.²⁵⁰

Although scholars such as E.K. Chambers define many of the medieval *structures* of drama – moralities, mystery cycles and mummings – as folk traditions, Green pointed more specifically to *subject matter* as the defining characteristic of American folk drama.

Koch reiterated Green's definition in a commencement address delivered at the University of North Dakota in 1935. Koch added that "the ultimate cause of all dramatic action that we classify as 'folk,' whether the struggle be physical or spiritual, may be found in man's desperate fight for existence."²⁵¹ Koch's idea of folk dramas were some of the realistic and naturalistic plays of social struggle, like Strife by John Galsworthy, The Lower Depths by Gorky, and The Living Corpse by Tolstoy, not because of their style of writing, but because of their subjects and the focus on struggle to exist.²⁵² In America, Koch pointed to William Vaughn Moody's The Great Divide as "the first important American folk drama."²⁵³ Koch also labeled many plays of social protest in his understanding of "folk drama," specifically: They Shall Not Die by John Wexley, Peace on Earth by George Sklar and Albert Maltz, and Stevedore by Paul Peters and George

Sklar.²⁵⁴ Because these socialist writers not only wrote about common individuals, but set them into "struggles for existence," they also became folk drama.

Clark's Work with Folk Drama

Clark's own approach to folk drama started with his reading and translation of Romain Rolland's The People's Theatre.^{*} Clark knew about Rolland as a lecturer on music in 1909, when he spent a year traveling in Europe. It was only later that Clark connected the music lectures he had enjoyed with the Nobel-Prize-winning novelist and theorist. Rolland's book encouraged participatory performance of drama, outside distinctions of class. The whole community should help create theatre and drama, not just have it done for their entertainment by specialists. The drama of the community would deal with popular stories, folk heroes and histories that helped shape a certain culture or nationality.

Rolland described two ways to bring the theatre and "the people" together. One way, preferred by governments, was to keep theatre and drama unchanged but make it more accessible to the people.²⁵⁵ The other approach was to reinvent theatre and drama to make it more entertaining and educational to more people. Rolland and Clark preferred the second approach.²⁵⁶

After describing most theatre and drama to the end of the 19th century as unsuitable to a modern people's theatre, Rolland suggested something better: the people's theatre must be entertaining.²⁵⁷ It must be "a source of energy" as well as "a guiding light to the intelligence."²⁵⁸ Rolland was not asking the theatre to be a guiding light to virtue,

^{*} Clark translated this in 1918. Rolland wrote the articles which became chapters of this book between 1900 and 1903.

as the Drama League of America wanted, but rather an instigator of thinking. Finally, Rolland outlined some dramatic types which were to be encouraged for people's theatre, including melodrama, because it was most successful at mixing tears and laughter and therefore provided the greatest release, and historical drama, with its sweeping ideas that offered opportunities for pageantry and civic participation. The last chapter outlined four "other types of People's Drama:" the social play, rustic drama, legends and tales, and the circus. American folk drama, in Clark's view, took these four types of drama and combined them into a single style. Clark's protégés focused even more on what Rolland called "the rural drama": "... the poem of Earth, impregnated with the odor of the fields and overflowing with peasant humor an rich language, is a precious mine. It preserves what is poetic in the life of the small communities and records for posterity their vanishing individuality."²⁵⁹ In America, Clark saw the work of Percy Mackaye as the closest American version of Rolland's "people's theatre."²⁶⁰

As Clark executed most of his translating and anthologizing with European plays, only a few of his anthologies are of folk dramatists. In 1929 he published One-Act Plays (with Thomas R. Cook), and in 1930 he published The American Scene with Kenyon Nicholson. Clark, Nicholson, and their editor at D. Appleton and Company discussed by letter the theme of The American Scene and which plays were to be included. The anthology was started late in 1928, and due to the two editors being on the opposite ends of the continent, it took two years to come up with a final list of plays. What makes the anthology so intriguing are the intentions of the editors:

It is our intention to choose one-act plays that reflect the life in virtually every section of the United States. (And from a preliminary search we

find that such material is available in abundance-- material of genuine literary and sociological importance.) Although the book is to be made up of plays, and can be used as such by prospective producers, the primary object of the book is to present a highly colored panorama of America. The usual bald stage directions will be omitted to a great extent and both dialogue and stage directions so re-arranged and re-written as lead the play-reader on from play to play as though he were reading a connected narrative.²⁶¹

The editors wanted to combine the individual, local descriptions in folk plays and weave them together to create a unified whole, a panorama of American life.

Nicholson and Clark did not think that they could accomplish their goal with less than 30 plays, so this was meant to be a rather significant collection. The selected authors were recognizable figures from the little theatres and Broadway. As a reader and literary editor, Clark had access to the plays and passed his favorites on to Nicholson, who did the second round of readings.²⁶² After making choices, the editors wished to work together with the dramatists to adapt the plays into a cohesive whole, almost like creating a group-written novel of epic scope. In the end, the main adaptations to the plays were to remove all stage directions but those that described emotion or gesture. The actual shaping of the anthology proceeded more slowly than expected, partly because Nicholson was busy writing movies for Pathé Studios in California, and did not have enough time to read the plays Clark sent him. Clark did most of the selection, and obtained permission to include and adapt all the plays he found.²⁶³

Connection between folk drama and the little theatre movement

Besides reading and publishing folk drama, Clark had enough influence with little theatres in the late 1920s and 1930s to occasionally get "experimental" folk dramas produced. The second season of the Detroit Playhouse is a good example. During its first season, 1928-29, the Playhouse gave eleven productions, one-acts and successful Broadway plays, but drew very small audiences and stood a chance of failing. The Playhouse decided to take the drastic step of producing only "experimental" new American plays. Under this approach, in the following season, they produced: Crick Bottom and Dobey & Sons by E.P. Conkle; Behind the Night and So Late Begins by Virgil Geddes; This Present Greatness by Knowles Entrikin; A Lantern to See By by Lynn Riggs; Tabloid by Roy Chanslor and Henry Paynter; The Road to the City by Martin Flavin; and Incident by Rose Kohn. The company saw this as such a radical change that three fourths of the members resigned, but it was a policy that increased their audiences from about 50 per night to 600 in the course of two seasons.²⁶⁴ Two of their best plays were by Virgil Geddes.

It was through officers of the Provincetown group that the Detroit Playhouse first heard of Geddes and through them that we seriously took up the case of American playwrights, entering upon this work at the time the famous old MacDougall Street organization was giving its farewell performances in the Garrick Theatre.²⁶⁵

Clark was working for the Provincetown Playhouse at the time that the Detroit Playhouse changed its policy, and he was also acting through Samuel French as an agent for most of these same playwrights. He had encouraged Provincetown to stage these plays in their

space, but as the group fell apart, Clark probably tried to assure his playwright friends of some production and therefore contacted the Detroit Playhouse.

Worker's Theatre and Other Socially-Motivated Styles

Besides the folk play movement, the 1920s and 1930s were also an important period for politically motivated thesis plays, dramas of propaganda and plays fomenting revolution. The worker's theatre movement is important to examine for two reasons. First, Clark did not distinguish plays by political agenda, and he included most socially motivated plays in the folk drama genre. Second, many of the worker's dramatists started as folk dramatists or borrowed from folk style. Importantly, both movements shared a distinct attempt to relate the art of the theatre to the life of the people. Folk plays did this by holding a mirror up to the population around them; the worker's dramas tried to guide audiences with a lamp to a new realization of their strength and community. Worker's drama, like folk drama, was defined by the subjects it described, often had simple plots and dealt with the struggle for existence. However, worker's drama sometimes employed less subtle and more stereotyped characterizations in order to keep the politics clear, which differentiated it from folk drama.

The introduction of more overt socially motivated plays forced critics and readers to invent new ways to talk about them. This was happening not just in the worker's journals or in meetings of radical communist groups, but in the general public press. Meyer Levin solved the problem for himself by saying that the difference between socially motivated and non-socially motivated playwriting was the intention of the playwright. A writer who started with the intention of constructing art, according to

Levin, would write a play that one would not immediately characterize as "social."

Levin used the examples of Potter's Field by Green, The Hairy Ape O'Neill, What Price Glory by Maxwell Anderson and Laurence Stallings, and Machinal by Sophie Treadwell.²⁶⁶ These plays would be understood first in terms of their interesting form and only secondly as discussion of social issues. Levin made this distinction in order to ask for the combination of the two: "the great proletarian writer must be one whose sense of beauty is a sense of justice, whose instinctive form is a form of protest."²⁶⁷ The way that a play succeeds in this is to create believable well-rounded characters who impress the audience first as humans, and only secondarily as tools for the thesis of the author,²⁶⁸ exactly the qualities Clark supported in dramatists like O'Neill, Green, Howard, Anderson and the folk writers. For playwrights unable to achieve realistic characters, there was also the possibility of using poetic sensibilities as a sort of crutch to make the play resonate artistically. In this last grouping Levin places Elmer Rice's The Adding Machine and John Howard Lawson's Processional. In such stylized plays, "the opponents are never presented as humans; opposition is a formalized concept, capitalist in a high hat. The big boy is not represented in the flesh and blood of realism, but rather as a sort of snow-man who may be pelted with impunity by the well-behaved prize pupils of the proletarian model school."²⁶⁹ The realistic playwright, though, should let only the issues of the day occur to characters naturally. If the playwright starts with the idea of protest and then writes a play around it, the result is forced. The audience sees the outcome too easily, and cannot identify with the characters.

Clark, trained in avoiding political controversy, did not separate out the plays with a social motivation. Clark was enthusiastic about both plays that Levin saw as lacking in

subtlety. He described the hero ("Mr. Zero") of Adding Machine as a "cypher": "he is not sentimentalized by the author, and he is not offered as an object of pity: he is ruthlessly exhibited as a victim of our particular brand of social and economic regimentation, a system which kills the individual."²⁷⁰ About John Howard Lawson's Processional, Clark admitted Lawson's left-wing focus, and then complimented the play as managing "to express excitingly a part of the American scene- its tempo, its color and vigor- that had not yet been brought into the theatre."²⁷¹ Clark does not avoid stating that the playwright has an agenda, but he is more interested in skillful writing.

Clark similarly approached the work of Ernst Toller, whom he may have visited in jail in the early 1920's and with whom he had corresponded. He wrote an article about the playwright when Toller's Masse-Mensch was produced at the Theatre Guild in 1924. Even though Clark titled his article "Ernst Toller, Dramatist of the Proletariat," he commented that "his play is not a propaganda piece [because] the poet shows no way out of the labyrinth; he can therefore have no purpose other than that of expressing what he feels."²⁷² Clark was fully aware of the radical nature of the play and how it could be read as dangerous, but he wanted to point out its laudable qualities,. It took a great amount of self-assurance for Clark to write about a man who was in jail for being the leader of the brief Bavarian Soviet Republic. After defusing the obvious politics of the dramatist, Clark analyzed the structure and strengths of his plays. He isolated the driving idea behind Masse-Mensch as the need to "struggle because we are men." This was evidence that Toller wanted us to avoid complacently sitting by as people starved or suffered uselessly: "[H]e asks for no revolutionary party to set him free; he demands nothing more than spiritual freedom for mankind."²⁷³

Clark saw the "radical" philosophies underlying the labor theatres and workers' theatres as important because they provided motivation for certain playwrights. He compared this to the story that Schiller did his best writing with rotten apples in his desk. Clark thought it wise of Schiller to know what motivated him. "Communism has been the motive power to a score of our playwrights, yet I believe that the Cause has been little helped by their plays- our theater, however, *has* been helped, and that is what matters."²⁷⁴ The political and philosophical backgrounds of some of the playwrights helped them, in Clark's eyes "to write courageously, and honestly, and sometimes brilliantly."²⁷⁵

Clark supported folk drama because it provided a way out of the technically-forced plays of the popular New York stage. So many of the folk dramatists did not have a very well developed experience with technique, but they were able to portray the souls of Americans and the problems of humanity in America. Since these plays were by Americans, about American issues, and exhibited an American style of writing, they were much more important to Clark than the cosmopolitan slickness of European plays. They provided the chance to take American theatre in a new direction, and Clark took on the cause with vigor, usually by directly supporting young folk dramatists.

Chapter 5: Clark's Protégé Playwrights

Clark placed the creation of "a body of unmistakably American drama" in the early 1920s.²⁷⁶ However, by stating this he was not discounting the playwrights writing in America since its European discovery. In fact, at the time that he made this claim, he was at work on the "America's Lost Plays" project to publish many of those early plays for the first time. But it was in the early 1920s that American dramatists started "to bring something of the life of their time within hailing distance of our theater" and "reveal something of its breadth and variety- and even occasionally to comment on it."²⁷⁷ Clark was working with the best known young playwright of the day when he helped O'Neill get greater recognition in 1919, but after that he shifted to helping playwrights with less experience and fame. Clark had a direct hand in bringing many young dramatists to public and professional attention. This chapter focuses on his work with three of his most important protegés: Paul Green, Maxwell Anderson and Lynn Riggs.

As an introduction to these collaborations, I would like to summarize Clark's style of working with dramatists. He treated almost all playwrights in a very courteous manner, encouraging them with his friendship, business skills and connections. Clark was very careful to keep his personal life out of the public eye and to avoid imposing himself on the people with whom he worked. He rarely talked about what he did as a reader for Samuel French, the Theatre Guild, the Provincetown Playhouse and others, but it was in these roles that he helped developing playwrights. Clark began professionally reading manuscript plays around 1920,²⁷⁸ and continued until his death. As a "reader for a manager, as associate manager, as agent, critic and observer of the theatre,"²⁷⁹ Clark

read about 1200-2200 new manuscript plays every year. He wrote reader's reports on most of these plays or discussed them with his employers. I have been unable to read any of the readers reports he wrote for specific organizations, so this research is based mostly on his correspondence with the playwrights themselves.

For the Theatre Guild specifically, from 1929-1931 Clark read 1000 plays a year and wrote reports on them, which were all sent to Theresa Helburn. Whenever he noticed an above-average play, he wrote the report on a special kind of paper and sent a copy to the other artistic directors of the Guild as well as to Helburn.^{280*} He did his reading for the Guild at the same time that he was working for Samuel French[†] as a literary editor. Just prior to working for the Theatre Guild, he was also on the Board of Directors of the Provincetown Playhouse, where he read an additional 300 plays during 1929. Helburn most likely recruited Clark for the Theatre Guild because she recognized him as a broadly connected person. He was familiar with almost all of the playwriting sent to or done in New York City, and he knew most of the playwrights as well as members of most production units.

The number of "good" plays a reader could glean from the thousands of plays read was quite small. Early in 1931 Clark said: "having to read some 800 new long plays and 1400 short ones by would-be dramatists every year (...) I speak with authority when I say that 95 out of every hundred manuscripts I read are ludicrous; I also think that at least ten per cent of the authors whose plays I read are stark mad."²⁸¹ A thousand plays read to one of value was not unheard of, and the story is told of Winthrop Ames reading 10,000

* These reading reports may be in the uncataloged Theatre Guild correspondence at Yale, they may also be divided up by playwright or manager in various collections.

† From 1920 to 1936 he was a literary editor at French, for whom he also wrote play reports.

plays in ten years to find only two plays by unknown authors that fit his standards of quality.²⁸² Clark did not need to be as picky as Ames, since he was looking for plays to suit several different groups and audiences. Clark thought about his play reading dramaturgically, trying to find appropriate production or publication for any play that showed a modicum of skill. The combination of finding good plays for specific producers and finding good producers for specific plays made him one of the best connections a young playwright could have.

Another anonymous "Reader for a Prominent Broadway Producer"* said that out of 700 manuscripts sent in, only two would offer possibilities for production.²⁸³ This "Reader" listed some of the reasons plays were not suitable to the needs of the producer. At the top of the list was lack of appeal in subject matter, which the "Reader" said was due to lack of experience or craftsmanship, rather than whims of the audience of the day, or the important issues in the newspapers. "Appeal" could also be described as "personality," which could be adapted or improved by a skilled playwright. The "Reader" mentioned other matters of technical weakness (flat characters, no interesting plot, inability to fit the genre or "an abundance of narrative and paucity of drama") but ultimately, if the play lacked skillfully constructed "appeal" it had a deadly flaw.²⁸⁴ The "Reader" said that appeal was more important than anything else, because the audience did not "think" with its mind, but rather with its emotions. Clark similarly favored the emotional result of a good drama, encouraging it wherever he could. Clark avoided giving preference based on political or ideological grounds, as long as the playwrights could appeal to human emotions dramatically.

* Most likely not Clark, based on the style of writing.

The plays Clark read were often sent directly to him along with letters of introduction. As he read the plays, he would jot down notes, sometimes on the back of the dramatist's correspondence with him. These notes could then be passed on to a secretary or typist, who would turn them into letters for Clark to sign. He would suggest ways to adapt a play dramaturgically to create better appeal, and therefore a better chance at production. The suggestions Clark made benefited the play's overall chance of survival in the market. He critiqued the plays "organically" to improve the quality and appeal that was already there. He rarely discouraged a writer, but tried to encourage them based on what emotional reaction could be sculpted from what was given. I think this "sea change" is what Clark learned from his work with O'Neill.

Between playwrights and producers, Clark always favored the playwrights. Many of the people for whom he worked at Samuel French and even at the Theatre Guild prized the *business* of theatre first. Clark appreciated the *relationships* with dramatists. He saw them as the impetus and drive of the theatre and drama. This was perhaps an extension of his idea that the purpose of theatre was to examine the needs, dreams and desires of humanity. Nonetheless he was also in constant touch with amateur and professional directors interested in new plays. He was a one-person clearinghouse of information for the theatre community of America. Since he worked at the largest English language play publishing company in the world while he was promoting Anderson, Green and Riggs, he had the opportunity to interest amateurs in their plays as well as professionals. But amateur companies did not always take his advice. For example, in 1930 Clark lamented that the various companies entering plays in the Little Theatre Tournament did not pay attention to his suggestions:

When I think of the really original and interesting new plays I offered to little theatres for this very competition, I could weep: Lynn Riggs' "Lonesome West"; three plays of E.P. Conkle, five of Virgil Geddes, two of Leo Pride- to mention only a few. The poorest of them had a dozen times the vitality and spontaneity of the play that carried off the Theatre Arts Monthly Cup and Samuel French's thousand dollars.²⁸⁵

Whether or not Clark received a share of profits for the lease of these plays, he definitely pushed them. Like his father, he was never wealthy, nor did he seem to care to be. It seems that tried to sell the work of so many young playwrights out of friendship and concern for the development of American drama rather than for his own financial benefit. Clark called himself an "agent" a few times, and he is defined as such by some of his acquaintances, but he never opened an office or publicly advertised himself as one. The title of "agent" was for the most part his term for himself at Samuel French and later Dramatists' Play Service. American play publishing was a combination of agency work, publication, support of the arts, and sales of goods needed for amateur performance. It is therefore hard to filter out when, or if, he was an "agent" receiving commissions personally and when he was a literary editor for a play publishing company, pushing the plays for his employer. If he was ever earning an agent's percentage for any playwrights, it was most likely for a handful of young folk dramatists, including Paul Green, Lynn Riggs, E.P. Conkle, Virgil Geddes, Leo Pride and George O'Neil, and mostly during the 1920s.

Dramatists first benefited from Clark's support through basic encouragement of their writing as an occupation rather than an experiment or avocation. His support and

encouragement extended beyond surviving a single play and was focused around building careers, because he was more interested in the art than the business of theatre. If a single play showed potential, Clark would emphasize the dramaturgical benefits of the author focusing energy on writing more plays. Both Conkle and Riggs admitted that they were encouraged by Clark this way. E.P. (Ellsworth Prouty) Conkle was one of Clark's most frequent correspondents, after Paul Green and Lynn Riggs, but unlike the other two, he never reached the same level of dramatic success. But Clark remained unfailingly kind, helpful and supportive. Just before Conkle started at the Theatre 47 workshop with George Pierce Baker, he checked in with Clark. Conkle wrote:

I cannot tell you how much I appreciate the interest you have taken in my work. I have been taking a serious inventory of myself lately. Heretofore I have written merely as a pastime and have not taken myself at all seriously. I have always considered that my ability is of the most ordinary kind. Through your interest, and the fact that I was able to make 47 with Mr. Baker next year, I am beginning to consider a life of writing. I shall probably go on teaching school until I can sustain myself through the art.²⁸⁶

Similarly, in the late 1920s, Riggs thanked Clark:

After your word on Big Lake I'll have to get down to work and deserve it. That's the way I feel. I'm a little abashed even at appearing in the same paragraph with the lords of the American drama. But I'm shameless too [sic] I'm afraid- it gives me a nice warm glow of delight. Thank you for this- and for your continuous encouragement and help.²⁸⁷

Another playwright/theatre worker that Clark motivated with his exceeding generosity was Emanuel Jo (Emjo) Basshe, who wrote:

What I wanted to say to you at your office and just couldn't...what I wanted to write to you and balled up by saying so much...

Well I'll condense:

Your consistent kindness, generosity and feeling... Really, I just can't find the words to express what I mean.

But- I wrote you letters, called at your office, telephoned you; I knew I was almost getting to be a nuisance.

Never once did you make me feel that I was encroaching upon your time or energy, never once impatient, never once was I shoved aside because there was too much of me.

Of course I'll repay the loans so graciously offered. But I'll be darned if I know of a way of repaying the rest of it.

Well, I'll just keep on writing, maybe I'll write a line or two that'll compensate you somehow.

But it makes a guy feel good to know that besides the former corset manufacturers, ex-prize fight managers etc in the theatre there are also B.H.C's.²⁸⁸

These are only three of the countless shows of thanks that Clark received for his generosity of spirit. Other examples are evident in books dedicated to him. Even if it

was not printed in the text itself, innumerable playwrights sent warmly inscribed dedication copies of their books to Clark, mentioning his support in their endeavors.*

One of the very few occasions that a dramatist did *not* get along with Clark, was when Clark treated Lewis Beach as a business prospect rather than as a friend. The situation involved Beach's attempt to write a sequel to his play The Goose Hangs High. Goose, which had been very popular with amateur groups, and the author used the possibility of a sequel as a means to play the Dramatists' Play Service and Samuel French against each other for the best deal for the rights to the new play. Beach sent the first act of the sequel (One American Family) to Clark in 1939, asking for him to "PLEASE BE UTTERLY FRANK" in his responses to it. Later in the same letter he stressed that he would welcome "any and all suggestions from you."²⁸⁹ Beach wanted to know if Dramatists' Play Service, after reading one act of the play, would be willing to take the whole play. He felt that he understood why Goose was so popular with amateur performers, and wanted the sequel to follow that pattern while still appealing to new audiences. Of course, more than anything, he wanted to sell the play, and offered to "not mention it again to Sheil" at Samuel French, if Clark would take it at Dramatists' Play Service.²⁹⁰

Clark read the act that Beach sent and replied in a manner that hit at his artist's ego rather strongly. Beach did have a slightly inflated opinion of himself at this time, and he appears to have had similar run-ins with other readers of his manuscripts. For example, in a letter of July 10 Beach hinted that some of his plays had not been accepted

* As a book collector, I am still able to find books inscribed to him offered for sale from all over the country. Many other inscribed copies can be found in research libraries, such as the University of Washington Library and the Beinecke Library, Yale.

at Samuel French because of a man named Duggan who worked there. After Clark read the first act, he sent a reply, containing his "UTTERLY FRANK" opinion on July 26, 1939. Since it was so strongly worded, Beach felt that he would not have written the second act at all if the letter had arrived sooner, and reading it had put him off writing the third act.²⁹¹ Clark had not found any humor in the act that was sent, something that Beach had worried about, and he tried to encourage Beach to write the sequel with high school production in mind. In order to give Beach an idea of the sort of play Dramatists' Play Service would sell to high schools, Clark sent a copy of The Adorable Liar. Beach was not pleased with Clark's understanding of where the play would sell, thinking that he had written a Broadway work, or at least a work for high quality little theatres, and he was repulsed with the play that Clark sent. "That you expected me to write a typical high school play. I got no such idea from our talks. And I couldn't write such an abortion if I would- God forbid that I should ever attempt to."²⁹²

To defend himself against the anathema of having written a high school play, Beach reminded Clark of the success he had achieved. "Six volumes of me have been published; I'm in four anthologies I recall instantly; and individual scenes are quoted in books about the drama."²⁹³ Beach tried to blame Clark's response to the play on Clark's personal feelings, thinking that, because of Clark's personal dislike of the play, he could not see it in the light of what it could be, once it was finished. Ultimately, the play was not sold to Dramatists' Play Service, but not from lack of concession on Clark's part. Because Beach did not think Clark was giving the play an accurate reading, Clark passed it on to other readers who worked for him. Beach was not amused. "When you finally sent me Mesdames Pyle and Hoffmann's criticisms and I learned that I was expected to

go to school to them, I knew that we could not carry on further."²⁹⁴ Beach sold the play to Samuel French, and gloated to Clark that "the book will be out in about six weeks."²⁹⁵

Clark also had to deal on occasion with hiring a play doctor to finish someone else's play. The screenwriter/playwright William Bowers was unable to finish his play Where Do We Go From Here (1939) because he had to focus his time on film-writing. In a letter to Clark dated February 1, 1939 (with Clark's draft of a reply written in pencil on the back of the second page of Bowers' letter) Bowers began to hammer out the details. Bowers was moving from Twentieth Century Fox to Goldwyn and could not get around to finishing the play he had started. Clark saw quality in the play, and suggested to Bowers that they hire a play doctor to finish it. Bowers agreed.²⁹⁶ Having the play doctored allowed Bowers to focus on Hollywood. Bowers also felt it advantageous that Clark could remain in continuous contact with the play doctor in New York, which was better than shipping scripts and letters back and forth across the country.²⁹⁷ Bowers would pay a lump sum for the doctoring, which would come out of the first money the play earned, but he wanted to see the final script before it went to press in order to give it his go ahead. Aside from these two stipulations, Clark was given complete authority over the play.²⁹⁸ Bowers was not offended at Clark's intervention. In fact he was flattered and ended his letter with: "I want to thank you for the obvious care and time you took in reading the play and criticizing it. I showed the letter to Dwight Taylor, and he told me that I should feel quite flattered that you had evidently spent so much thought on the matter."²⁹⁹ Clark agreed to "test out two or three writers here, & find the best."³⁰⁰

Initially, Clark tried to interest Kenyon Nicholson in the job, but he was unable to do it. Clark then approached Howard Lindsay, who had Bowers' full support.³⁰¹

In addition to reading plays, helping playwrights shape their plays, and creating connections for theatre artists, Clark gave ongoing support to many young American playwrights through his articles and reviews. There were many American reviewers reporting and rating performances for audiences, but Clark had a unique approach. When he went to a performance, he reviewed the script rather than its production. His monthly reviews in The Drama, from late 1924 until late 1931, were a way for readers to watch the rise, development and, sometimes, fall of America's young dramatists. He said that he did not necessarily have to comment on the work of playwrights like Ibsen, Chekhov and Shaw, because:

what is over and done with, what is perfect of its kind, or complete of its kind, leaves the critic a little out of the spotlight: he has only to stand aside and perhaps tell you how to look at it. (...) What is new or in process of becoming, requires explanation, demands appreciation, and calls aloud for publicity.³⁰²

Even when times were financially difficult for these young playwrights, he was consistently supportive in publicizing their quality.

Each year around time the Pulitzer Prizes were announced, Clark would print in The Drama his own list of the "finest [plays] of the season," regardless of their box office success. His three best plays of the 1926-1927 season were: In Abraham's Bosom (which ran for eighty nights), The Field God (which was yet to open in New York, but did not show a profit when it did) and Philip Barry's White Wings (which lost a lot of money in a

three week run). Two of these playwrights were just getting their first plays on major stages, and Clark rightly predicted their success. Clark then added to this list seven other important plays from the season by young American playwrights: The Silver Cord and Ned McCobb's Daughter (both by Sidney Howard), Big Lake (Lynn Riggs), Daisy Mayme (George Kelly), Saturday's Children (Maxwell Anderson), Juarez and Maximilian (Franz Werfel) and The Barker (Kenyon Nicholson).³⁰³ Clark complimented them for their freshness (as compared to the "Owen Davis-Sardou-Bisson-Pixerecourt-Crebillon"³⁰⁴ school of technical melodrama), their ability to create three-dimensional characters, and "the intensity and purity of the human emotions aroused."³⁰⁵ These were playwrights who showed understanding of folk situations and wrote plays in a sort of poetic realism about concerns of American society. Clark was worried about the survival and encouragement of the dramatists who could revitalize the spirit of American theatre. For these playwrights to succeed, either the theatre had to turn them into the central money-making concerns, or the American theatre needed to rethink its addiction to business before art altogether. Some of the young playwrights Clark encouraged became, even if only for the moment, the biggest money draws in their field.

From start to completion of plays, Clark was involved personally in the development of American drama from about 1920 until 1953. He was a welcomed influence and respected critic, through a voluminous correspondence with hundreds of playwrights. He treated them as friends first, professional writers second, and finally as business associates. The extent of his involvement in the lives of American playwrights can be seen in the brief summary of the following three playwrights.

Paul Green

Clark's collaboration with Paul Green was one of the most influential relationships he had with a dramatist. Without Clark's help, it is likely that Green would never have exceeded his status as an important local playwright and respected University of North Carolina philosophy professor. Clark was impressed the potential of Green's drama upon first encounter, and did much to befriend Green and connect him with publishers, producers, directors and funding sources. After Green's plays became available in print and on the stage, Clark put effort into promoting him to the broader American public. Finally, as Green gained national recognition, he and Clark worked together to support and encourage the next group of young playwrights. During this last period, Green continued to inform Clark of his play ideas and received in return encouragement and criticism of the plays in manuscript, publication or production.*

Their relationship began after Green had been writing plays for a few years and Clark saw one in production. At the request of Walter Hartwig, Clark served as a judge for the third annual Little Theatre Tournament in New York in May 1925. He judged 19 productions, and was so thrilled with the whole tournament that he immediately offered to judge the following year, even though there were scheduled to be more than twice as many productions.³⁰⁶ Clark was most excited by a production of the first Green play he had seen. The Dallas Little Theatre brought a production of Green's No 'Count Boy, which was strong enough to win the Belasco Cup for production values. Green's play was not awarded one of the two Samuel French prizes for writing, but Clark saw its

* I have reconstructed as much of their correspondence as possible. Paul Green's letters to Clark are in collections at Yale and the University of North Carolina, as well as in print. Clark's responses are similarly split between different collections.

possibilities nonetheless. He called it a "sketch" that showed that Green "was a potential force in our theatre" and "second to none."³⁰⁷ The play is a character sketch of a dreamy wanderer who attracted the affection of a North Carolina farm girl.

After first hearing about Green, he read all of his plays over the next six months.³⁰⁸ He also corresponded with Green after the Tournament on behalf of Samuel French, as a potential client of the company. Clark requested some basic biographical information from Green³⁰⁹ and began a friendly correspondence with him. In his October 1925 review of the Little Theatre Tournament, Clark announced that he was going to write an article specifically about Green in The Drama: "[In the] meantime I take this occasion to assert in all confidence that in two years Paul Green's name will be known far and wide throughout this country."³¹⁰ This came true with the production of In Abraham's Bosom at the Provincetown Playhouse in 1926, leading to a Pulitzer Prize for Green.

Without Clark's intervention, Green would not have come to the attention of the Provincetown Playhouse. Early in the summer of 1926, Green stopped in New York City on his journey to the MacDowell Colony near Peterboro, New Hampshire. While in New York, he visited the Clark family at their home. He reported back to his wife on June 10, 1926:

I am back in the mezzanine of this Times Sq. Hotel, after spending the night out with the Clarks at Briarcliff Manor. I had a lovely time there. They have a very simple little place, everything informal, Barrett jumping up from the table to make coffee, etc. Mrs. Clark is *charming*. I

* Green had about ten short plays published by that time, mostly in journals.

like her a great deal. Nancy, the little 3 year old, is of course spoiled and yet pleasant. She looked at me and said, "I like 'at man." We sat up until quite late talking and hearing Cecile (Mrs. Clark) play the piano. She is sending you a bit of her "real maple sugar cream." They both deplored your absence. We must have them down to Chapel Hill. You'd like her and their way of living. It's like ours.³¹¹

Before Green could actually get to the Colony, his wife telegraphed saying that his father had died. Green returned home for the funeral and then took a train back to New York. Again, as he passed through New York City, he spent a night at the Clarks in Briarcliff Manor. The next day, he cashed a check at Samuel French and finally reached the MacDowell Colony on June 21, 1926.³¹²

At about this same time, Clark tried to interest the Provincetown Players in two of Green's plays, The Field God and In Abraham's Bosom. According to Green, they were going to do The Field God first, but production was postponed until April 21, 1927, when it opened at the Greenwich Village Theatre. In the meantime, Clark sent In Abraham's Bosom to Eugene O'Neill to read.³¹³ This was only after the two plays "were sent in MS. to every producer who might conceivably have been able to use them."³¹⁴ It is likely that the visits by Green to Clark's home were as much working meetings as social meetings. Almost from the start of their relationship, Clark helped him in the process of writing.

As Green's agent through Samuel French, Clark could promote Green to people he did not know. By the tone of his letters to his wife while he was at the Colony that summer, Green was not terribly impressed with O'Neill as a person, but he trusted Clark to make the right choices. Green related that O'Neill "has taken Abraham home to read.

He led Clark to believe that if he [O'Neill] said for the G.V. (Greenwich Village) theatre to do it, they'd do it."³¹⁵ After Green had been working at the Colony for a little more than a week, he received a telegram from Clark, asking him to come to New York City to talk with the directors of the Provincetown Players about producing In Abraham's Bosom. He left the colony on July 4 and stayed in New York discussing the play for three or four days. The production opened December 30, 1926. It earned Green a Pulitzer Prize and helped establish his reputation among the wider American public. In the same theatre season, Edwin R. Wolfe, an unknown newcomer to New York production, produced Green's The Field God. Even though both plays had fairly short runs, they established Green as the most successful of Frederick Koch's Playmakers. In only a year and a half, Clark had pushed Green from a local experimenter to a Pulitzer Prize winner.

Clark reviewed the production of In Abraham's Bosom – favorably, of course – in the February 1927 The Drama. As with all of his reviews, Clark wrote about several different plays and productions, but the article carried the subtitle "With Notes on Paul Green's First Long Play":

[W]ith the utmost simplicity, sincerity, and more than a touch of genius, Mr. Green has given us a deeply moving tragic play depicting the efforts of a North Carolina negro to educate himself in order to educate his people... [H]is concern is with the manifestations of beauty: the world is to him a spectacle of wonder, and not a social machine to be tinkered with. He is still young enough to be able to stand reverently in the presence of tragedy, and be moved by it not in spite of the fact that it has to do with

terrible and pitiful and heart-breaking things, but literally because of that fact.³¹⁶

The latter half of this review was a quotation from Clark's own dramaturgical note in the Provincetown Playbill for the show. His review reflected little about the production, other than to compliment the use of a cast of almost all black actors and to say that the directing was a little too deliberate. Clark was obviously "puffing" this play, but he did mention weaknesses in the script: that it was "a little too earnestly written" and that Green "might well have varied his scenes more than he did."³¹⁷

While Clark was facilitating productions for Green, he was also lining up publications. Clark introduced Green to Frank J. Sheil, president of Samuel French, in November 1925.³¹⁸ Green was traveling in New York City looking for funding for The Reviewer, of which he was editor. The lunch with Sheil, Clark and Green must have been immediately successful, because Green met with Clark again on November 7, 1925 "to straighten out the French business." The result of that trip to New York was French's arrangement to copyright several one-act plays by Green, which were published as acting editions and leased for amateur production. Besides individually printed acting editions, Clark also arranged for Green's The Man Who Died at Twelve O'Clock to be printed as part of the second series of One Act Plays for Stage and Study.*

The third branch of Clark's work on Green's behalf was to promote him to the public that would make up his audiences. True to his announcement in the Drama review

* I have not been able to discover whether Clark was the first editor of the One Act Plays for Stage and Study series. This series was printed into the 1940s in ten volumes, and as many as the first five of these volumes show a lot of Clark's thinking in them. The brief introductions of the playwrights were obviously taken from the autobiographical surveys that Clark sent to all of the playwrights with whom he worked. Furthermore, the choice of plays and playwrights followed the suggestions he made in his review articles in The Drama. Each volume of this set of books was introduced by a different playwright or scholar, and no overall editor is mentioned.

of October 1925, Clark wrote a brief biographical introduction of Green to the readers of The Drama in January 1926. This was a dramaturgical note, such as would be inserted in a program, but done in a national magazine.* Clark mentioned to his readers where they could find his plays in print, encouraging them to get back-ordered copies of the magazines which carried his plays, while still possible. One of the earliest, Granny Boling, was published in The Drama, but he also had six or seven published in Poet Lore and one published in Theatre Arts. Besides journal publication of his plays, Clark mentioned three recent books with Green's plays in them, including The Lord's Will and Other Plays, Green's first collection of plays. Clark summed up the playwright's biographical details and then added generous compliments:

[That] he is a dramatist by conviction and not an experimenter; that he is already past his apprenticeship; that he has a clear and independent mind; and that he is an utterly sincere and fearless artist. He will be attacked by the Puritans; he will shock the evil-minded. But knowing him as I do, I am positive he will go on his way rejoicing. For he is a man who exults in life, who can render beautiful the pain and ugliness of human struggle, who delights in the superabundant vitality and grossness of nature, and at the same time understands the subtle refinements of civilized beings.³¹⁹

Clark described In Abraham's Bosom "as the finest work of its kind that has yet been written,"³²⁰ seeing particularly Green's ability to universalize local characters and themes.

Raising such young folk dramatists to the level of the universal understanding of

* Clark also published dramaturgical notes, in the form of focused articles about Eugene O'Neill, Sidney Howard, Phillip Barry and Lillian Hellman. These are only the American playwrights. During his "European period", he wrote at least 20 similar articles about non-American playwrights.

humanity was an important part of convincing the play reading and producing community that Clark's protégés were worthy of first-rate New York productions.

Clark tried to prove the universality of Green's work by describing In Abraham's Bosom as "remarkably free of bias."³²¹ The playwright was not "concerned over the pros and cons of our negro 'problem' as a separate phenomenon" because he "sees life through the eyes of an artist; his passion for life is evident in every line he writes."³²² Clark's definition of universality is that a work has the ability to transform characters into "figures that appeal to us all."³²³ The universality that he saw in Green's plays is very dated, and cannot have caused the same reactions in all of its readers, irrespective of race or background. Many of his characters, especially the African-Americans, now seem more like stereotypes than real depictions of a universal human situation.

Clark appreciated the way Green's plays worked organically, with the author setting the rules for each play depending on the needs of the story or themes. "In reading him I am stirred by no formal pattern of art or rearrangement of human characteristics: Wide Fields and In Abraham's Bosom seem to be direct transcriptions of the lives of men and women whose hearts are laid bare in all their simplicity."³²⁴ Green's lack of artifice may have come from the fact that the first play he saw was his own one-act in his freshman year at the University of North Carolina. Unlike O'Neill, he had no preconception of what conventions and mannerisms made up the artificiality of the stage. By his own claim, Green had only read one complete play, Hamlet, and part of another, Julius Caesar, when he wrote his first one-act. He then went away to fight in World War I and only returned to plays in 1919, when back at Chapel Hill. Since Frederick Koch,

who educated him in theatre, started training his playwrights without extensive lectures about play technique, Green was a *tabula rasa*.

After he was established as a playwright, Green continued to work outside of the normal conventions of the time. The organic nature of Green's writing is more obvious in his plays from the 1930s, but he also gives an example of it in letters before that to Clark. He was thinking about writing a farce of the rich American capitalist:

I see him waking in his bed, his monologue, his going about, schemes, vanities, romanticisms, fads, etc., etc. How would a scene on his lawn [do] and he smiling amid a gang of theosophic neophytes- a long-robed fakir out of India fattening on him, spiritualism, or a scene in his home with a phrenologist measuring his skull with a pair of calipers and chanting- "This organ is situated at the inferior and posterior or mastoid angle of the parietal bone, upwards and backwards from the external opening of the ear. - It marks a considerable endowment, such endowment being indispensable to all great and magnanimous characters," etc.? I mean a real Moliere farce with pageantry, music, and show. Well, there is plenty of fun to be had.³²⁵

Starting with the idea of a capitalist; instead of outlining the parts of a plot, or even deciding how characters fit together, Green jumped directly to images that would support the one idea he had, "a rich American capitalist." As he had done when writing small one-acts of African-American life, Green built characters out of the situations that showed their reactions to the world. His one-acts were usually no more than these brief situations or portraits, but his process did not change when he started work on longer

plays. Even in its most complete version, In Abraham's Bosom showed evidence of being a combination of several one-acts. Green's creation of workable theatre, based on believable portrayal of American characters without intensive study of dramatic techniques, meant that "folk drama" could lead to a truly *American* theatre. Clark could see several other dramatists writing in a similar vein, and it is these by whom he was most intrigued, and into whom he poured most of his support.

All of Clark's help as an agent and publicist still did not ensure that Green could live on his writing alone. In order to do that, an American playwright would have to have a steady income from royalties based on publication and production. At Clark's suggestion, the young playwright applied for and was awarded a Guggenheim fellowship to travel in Germany, mostly to provide funding to survive while he wrote. The Guggenheim allowed him to stay in Germany and visit England, but it did not pay enough for his whole family to live for the entire year. As a result, he had to request a loan for \$250 from Samuel French. He did so by sending a telegram to Clark, but it was Frank Sheil who approved the line of credit. In return for Green being able to borrow against future royalties from his plays, the company would receive a greater percentage of his royalties.³²⁶ From London, Green wrote to thank Clark for his help on October 4, 1929: "First to acknowledge receipt of \$250 from French which saved my face, and for which I return the proper appreciation of thanks. I must do something in return to the 'boss' someday, though what I don't now know."³²⁷ Clark knew that the best way to help dramatists write was not just to pat them on the back, but to support them in a way that allowed them to *live*. He told most of his protégés about the grants given by the Guggenheim Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation. Clark most likely also had a

personal draw with the Guggenheim committee, and when Clark was leaving Samuel French in 1936, the Rockefeller group considered employing him.³²⁸

Clark worried about the effect that traveling on a Guggenheim grant would have on Green. Perhaps he worried that it would take the country out of the boy and change the direction of his dramatic output, but the distance did Green a lot of good. Writing from Europe, Green told Clark of his worries about the effect of the dialect of his characters on the performance of his plays. Because the dialect carried some of the meaning and poetry of the plays, from Green's perspective, how his plays were intoned was crucial.

I'd like to help produce Potter's Field and bring out the subtle tones and intonations that show the unbelievable mystery of so-called folk conversation. Quite commonplace statements when spoken true to life and situation are quite otherwise. (...) The more I think of the "folk" the more I know that their lack of book knowledge does not affect their subtlety. Their characters are not less complex than Hamlet. It happens that those who have tried to record their lives have been more or less of the Hamlet environment.³²⁹

The distance from North Carolina actually helped him to imagine the dialect as part of a larger poetic possibility inherent in his writing.

After the production of In Abraham's Bosom, the Pulitzer Prize, and the Guggenheim fellowship, Green's life changed significantly, and he used Clark as a sounding board and guide for his early publications. Green was anxious to get his plays in print, but he delayed publishing The House of Connelly because the Theatre Guild

wanted to publish it as part of their "Theatre Guild Library," a set of paper-bound acting editions that accompanied Guild production. Even though he needed the money, it made more sense to hold off publication so that he could stay in good relationship with such a powerful producing organization as the Guild. After all, even though Clark was on the Guild's Reading Committee, and constantly pushing Green's plays to the Guild, the board of directors kept House of Connelly on their list of "upcoming" productions for about three years. In 1931, he also wanted to publish an edition of the revised versions of In Abraham's Bosom, The Field God, and Potter's Field, now that he had seen them to significant productions in New York. The first two of these had already been published in 1927 through McBride, in a single edition, dedicated to Barrett Clark "who has helped me over some rough places." After four years without significant publication, printed versions of the plays would garner critical attention for performances to come.³³⁰

During the 1930s, Clark and Green continued to correspond as much as ever, but their relationship grew into one of mutual support. Green now had a national reputation as one of America's best dramatists, but he still told Clark of his progress on play ideas. Green continued to experience financial challenges, raising a family and paying off his house. At a high point of his career, Green still needed to pick up any extra work he could find – teaching, writing and editing – while trying to progress dramatically. Green was an example of Clark's worries about the inability of American theatre to support experimental American dramatists without their resorting to movie script writing, and he once again helped his friend get extended credit from Samuel French. Green got enough money to make his last house payments by selling further percentage of his plays to Samuel French. After this sale in early December 1931, French owned 40% of the rights

to The House of Connelly.³³¹ But Green still had to accept an offer to go to Los Angeles for his first screenwriting job in February 1932.

Clark kept this Broadway "brain drain" by Hollywood in the public eye via his articles. For the October 1933 issue of Panorama, Clark wrote an article called "Success and Failure on Broadway," which used Green as an example, since he had written only movies for two years.³³² Clark sent Green an apology for this, saying that it was not personal criticism, "only weeping."³³³ Green responded, saying that he was not offended at all. He admitted that theatre was in transition, and that it was hard to tell what would happen in the future. In the meantime, "theatre-minded people" had to continue to look for "living conclusions." In the same letter, Green admitted that he was considering helping Fox again on the film version of The House of Connelly.

I have here in my study two or three plays almost ready to offer for "production" in New York- a production which I'd prefer to all the movies, movies now being what they are. But, God wot, it is not what we are but what we shall be, as was well set forth in more ancient times. I think I am going to accede to the Fox request and go to Hollywood for a few weeks, though I don't want to.³³⁴

Even though Clark and Green had a "mutual weeping" over the way so many playwrights were forced to Hollywood, it did not change quickly. Two years later Green still earned more from movies than from the stage.

By 1935, movie companies were funding numerous productions on Broadway *and* turning the play scripts into movie scripts. Letting movie companies fund stage productions even had an advantage over selling options to professional stage companies

like Theatre Guild. The Guild would not produce more shows than their company could perform or their stages could hold. So, the success of one show at the Guild kept other plays still on option from production. A movie company, on the other hand, would just need to track down a space and a director. They were not necessarily tied to a single theatre or a certain group of artists. Green wrote to Clark on May 8, 1935:

As to The Laughing Pioneer- I've sold it to MGM, but with the reservation of all dramatic rights. The price was rather small so far as movie things go, but at Mr. Sheil's suggestion I closed with them. They have paid \$1,000 down and are to pay the remaining \$4,500 on or before October 15. My agreement with them is to go out and spend two or three weeks touching up the script, for which duty they will pay me more than the price of the book. Both Mr. Sheil and I thought it unwise to pass up this deal despite Sam Byrd's interest in doing the play on Broadway. And since it seems now that Tobacco Road will run forever, I am sure we did the right thing. Still I am working out the stage dramatization- for Sam primarily, and will send it along to you shortly to pass on to him. I have instructed MGM to send the remaining \$4,500 to French when due.³³⁵

Mr. Sheil had fewer scruples about sending playwrights to good-paying movie gigs, especially those playwrights who had run up their debit accounts from Samuel French so far. As the head of Samuel French's New York branch, he had to think like a businessman, and leave aesthetic understandings to literary editors like Clark. This discussion between Green and Clark about the financial support of dramatists was not

just a mutual concern. It was shaping the direction of Clark's thought about the entire profession of play publishing, and the Dramatists' Play Service.*

Clark's correspondence with Green about financial survival also worked in the other direction. As Clark and Sidney Howard began incorporating a new play publishing company, Clark wrote to Green about the possibility of being without support if the Dramatists' Play Service did not survive after he had left his eighteen-year position at Samuel French. As a result, he enlisted Green's help in finding a back-up. Green sympathized with Clark's situation and mentioned that Samuel French "would be fools and vastly poorer if you were let go."³³⁶ Green felt that the people who ran Samuel French were business people first and concerned about theatre second. "They are so busy diving for mortgages, dollars and bonds that they never realize the power and direction of the stream's current until it's too late and they are swept over Niagara or some such disaster. That is, the nature of their intent is necessarily shortsighted."³³⁷ At the same time, Green was working for the movie companies and offered to find Clark a job there.

July 1936, after much behind-the-scenes preparation, Sidney Howard sent out a leaflet making the Dramatists' Play Service public news. The following letter, from Paul Green to Clark, dated July 30, 1936 congratulates Clark on the founding of DPS and thanks him for the work he has done. It represents the respect that Green had for Clark after ten years as a friend, dramaturg and public supporter:

I've just got your letter and also the news from Sidney Howard's leaflet that you are now launched on the new business. Elizabeth sends her love and her wishes for the venture and I add mine and the belief that you will

* The founding of the Dramatists' play Service is covered in chapter 7.

do a great thing for all of us playwrights. Naturally there will be problems to solve, but I'm sure you'll do that. So, Barrett, we are all behind you. So you know I am still hooked up with Mr. Sheil [of Samuel French, Inc.], but whatever poor help I can offer apart from the business of writing plays please call on me for it. You know my feeling for you and my appreciation for what you have done for me, but I want to tell you-- something you already know, no doubt-- that every American playwright I've ever met up with seems in some curious way to be indebted to you. So from our point of view and our camp you will have nothing but helpfulness, I'm sure.³³⁸

The rest of the letter turns back towards Green's use of Clark as a personal dramaturg and critic, as he outlines his almost finished play about World War I for editorial commentary:

Johnny Johnson is now written through and I am revising[?] for a group [Group Theatre] reading this coming Sunday. I've been in it so long that I've lost my perspective almost. Cheryl [Crawford] seems to think it's very good and important, but perspective or not, I'm far from satisfied with it. I can say this however: It's a very original piece and has offered me a chance to try my heart's desire in a musicalized theatre. The idea I have tried to develop is the placing of a very humble but intelligent man against the process of modern civilization and the meaning of that civilization by him. The business of the piece has mainly to do with the principle of democracy versus war. Johnny Johnson (the most common

name in the army) is a disguised Woodrow Wilson. I am one of these who along with Johnny believed and still believes that Wilson's League of Nations was the way out for a war-worn weary world. So my humble tombstone cutter sets forth like Don Quixote to end war and make the world safe for democracy (a world of peace and open covenants openly arrived at, etc.), and the play is the biography of his endeavor. (In that biography- it resembles Abraham in structure.) Well, we shall see what comes of it.³³⁹

Johnny Johnson was a step towards his idea of a "symphonic" drama, but it was also built on the same things that Clark saw in Green's plays back in the mid-1920's. As Green admits, the center-point for understanding of a world issue is the perception of a single country boy, who represents the "Every-soldier" and Woodrow Wilson's idealism.

Johnny Johnson also has the same poetic realism that appealed to Clark about Green's first plays. From the point of the founding of Dramatists' Play Service until his death, Clark continued his friendship with Green, but their relationship moved beyond that of mentor and protégé to one of equals – friends and colleagues.

Maxwell Anderson

While he was a student at the University of North Dakota, Maxwell Anderson received his first significant push towards a career in theatre. His dramatic literature instructor was the same Frederick Henry Koch who later taught Paul Green. Koch did not start teaching playwriting in North Dakota until after Anderson had left, but the two formed a strong relationship nonetheless, and Koch kept careful track of him for years to

come.³⁴⁰ Just after Anderson started at the University of North Dakota, Koch left for Harvard to complete his master's degree, and met George Pierce Baker. Inspired by Baker's work with playwriting, Koch returned to North Dakota, formed a group of regional dramatists, and helped them write "folk dramas" based on situations in their own lives. After this initial exposure, Anderson got some formal instruction in playwriting while working on his master's degree at Stanford during late 1913 and early 1914. Anderson wrote some one-act plays at that time, but no full-length plays until about 1922.³⁴¹

Clark indirectly influenced Anderson's turn to full-length plays before their direct contact. During his undergraduate years, Anderson worked on The Grand Forks Herald, composing headlines and editing incoming news items wired to the office.³⁴² He continued using journalism to support himself by freelancing in San Francisco³⁴³ and as a staff writer on the Globe and Commercial Adviser in New York. While he was working at the Globe, a copy of Barrett Clark's European Theories of the Drama was sent to the office for reviewing, and it pushed Anderson to rethink some aspects of modern theatre. In 1925, he got a chance to thank Clark for writing European Theories, which Anderson had reviewed in the New Republic in March 1919. Anderson said "one of your volumes has been an almost constant companion of mine since it came out- European Theories. It's the most valuable book on the theatre I've ever found."³⁴⁴ Anderson later wrote to Clark that he "might not have written any plays if European Theories hadn't come into the Globe office for review. And that might have been a very good thing, according to some."³⁴⁵ Even Anderson's wife Mab sent her compliments on Clark's anthology: "I'd like to add a personal note to say that your book, European Theories of the Drama, is the

most important and comprehensive book on the subject I have ever come across, and that I consider it of the greatest value to all who are interested in the theories of the theatre."³⁴⁶

Anderson's use of language differed from Clark's folk dramatists. He structured his drama around the needs of poetry on the stage and put a heightened diction in the mouths of his characters. The "folk dramatists" tended to use a lower-class diction in comparison, which they then shaped to show poetic word choices and symbols. Clark appreciated both of these types of poetry in drama. Anderson believed that poetry was the appropriate speech pattern for tragedy, and he built the character's words inside that framework. For Anderson, theory and dramatic technique were foundations of playwriting. Unlike O'Neill, Riggs or Green, Anderson had no intention of discarding the past techniques of writing without first studying them intensely.

Anderson initially compared plays that he felt were successful since "antiquity" to discover commonalities. In his biography of Anderson, Alfred Shivers lists the following eight rules for drama that Anderson found by identifying commonalities:

1. The play concerns the mind or heart of a person, not mainly external events.
2. The story is about a conflict between forces of good and evil inside a single human being. The audience from age to age will define what good and evil mean.
3. The protagonist, who represents the good forces, must win; if he represents evil, he must yield to the good forces and acknowledge defeat.

4. The play's protagonist cannot be perfect, else he cannot improve; and he must emerge at the close of the play as more admirable than at the start.
5. The protagonist must be exceptional; or, if he is a man in the street, he must epitomize qualities of excellence that the audience can admire.
6. Excellence on the stage must always be moral excellence. The hero's struggle to improve his material circumstances does not make interesting drama unless his character goes through a trial and comes out better than before.
7. A healthy moral atmosphere is essential. The audience will not permit evil to triumph on the stage.
8. The theatre audience likes these human qualities on the stage: man's positive character and strength of conviction, woman's fidelity and passionate faith. The audience especially dislikes these qualities: man's cowardice and refusal to fight for a belief; woman's infidelity.³⁴⁷

This development of a philosophy of drama from the needs of the audience is one of the core theories in Clark's European Theories of the Drama. Clark's selections illustrate several of Maxwell's rules.

Early in the 1930s Clark followed up his previous biographical pamphlets with Maxwell Anderson: The Man and His Plays, which contains only the slimmest of biographical information. Clark had Anderson's respect as a theorist, but that did not help him get enough information from the playwright to write a short biography about him, as he had done for Green and O'Neill. Anderson only gave eight interviews during

his life and was guarded about his own biographical information. He sent Clark a letter saying that he thought most biographies were inaccurate, and they were also tied up in other issues, such as publicity.* True to the letter itself, Clark, as his biographer, misquoted this letter about the inaccuracies of biographies.³⁴⁸ Also true to the letter, Clark's short biography admitted, in a sideways fashion, to being written for publicity for Samuel French.³⁴⁹ Perhaps because he had so little else to talk about in his biography, Clark mentioned his reasoning for writing biographical material about the playwrights he respected: "any writer who interests us can be understood a little better when we know where he came from and how he began to work."³⁵⁰

Clark's biography of Anderson shows the dramaturg and the dramatist as two men with the same goals: the creation of a memorable American drama.³⁵¹ Clark's biography of Anderson compliments the playwright's understanding of the "color and shape of words."³⁵² But, unlike some of the folk dramatists, Anderson had "form: the young author [knows] just where he is going."³⁵³ Clark also saw, in What Price Glory, that Anderson had a political opinion, but that it was secondary to his "art." Anderson, and his co-author Laurence Stallings, wrote about a long-term feud between two soldiers over a French girl, and the ugliness of war was only "a background that revealed character in its bare essentials."³⁵⁴ This paralleled Clark's traditional attitude of politics and social conventions being secondary to the workings of the play and the portrayal of the human

* Here is the letter in full from Avery's publication of a collection of Anderson's letters: "Dear Mr. Clark- /I'll be in New City [New York] for a few weeks beginning next Monday. Our address in town is 323 W. 112th St. The telephone is Monument 3130. /I hope you won't think me discourteous if I am niggardly of information about myself. This modern craze for biographical information leaves me cold for many reasons. For one thing it's always inaccurate; for another it's never possible to be sure that it's relevant. For another it's so bound up with publicity and other varieties of idiocy that it gags a person of any sensibility. For another, to be heralded is to become a candidate for the newest list of "the busted geniuses of yesteryear" of whom I hope never to be one. /But I'd like to meet you and talk with you. /Sincerely Maxwell Anderson."

condition on the stage. What Clark respected in What Price Glory, he found lacking in Gods of the Lightning (1928). Gods of the Lightning was based on the Sacco and Vanzetti trials, and Clark felt that the social and political ideas were stressed to the detriment of the basic human concerns of the characters: "so, I must regard Gods of the Lightning as a noble contribution to the cause of humanity, but a failure as a play."³⁵⁵

Once Clark managed to complete the very brief biography of Anderson, he sent the playwright a copy for his perusal. Anderson was more pleased with it than he had expected, but he still saw it as a kind of crass publicity: "[M]y horror is of having myself held in higher esteem than my work is worth- and though you may be slightly guilty in that direction I don't think the booklet can be considered a puff.- I should appreciate it if you would send a copy or two to my mother, Mrs. W.L. Anderson, c/o Maxwell Anderson, New City, N.Y. She'll get a thrill out of it."³⁵⁶

Even though he had difficulty getting information out of Anderson, Clark had no trouble getting the playwright to release his scripts, as shown with Clark's attempt to arrange a performance of the unpublished play The Sea Wife in 1930. When it came to his writings, Anderson was more than generous about sending copies to Clark. But Anderson had a hard time tracking down an extra copy of The Sea Wife. Anderson did not feel that the play was going to be very easy to present on stage, but sent it anyway, saying: "I can locate only one copy and therefore ask you to take good care of this one."³⁵⁷ It took Anderson two months to find another copy of this play, but Clark took still longer to convince anyone to do it. It was finally performed at the University of Minnesota in December 1932. Incidentally, Clark did "take care" of the script, and perhaps even had it mimeographed, to keep in his personal collection. Ten years later, in

1941, he gave a mimeographed copy of the play to the University of Washington School of Drama. Four years after that, he sold a second copy of the play to the School's library for \$1.50. Clark formed a huge personal library of manuscripts along with his collections of published works.

Later in Anderson's life, after he established himself as a dramatist, he wrote some speeches and essays that outlined the theories behind more than 25 years of playwriting, theories which were incited by Clark's anthology of European dramatic technique. In "The Essence of Tragedy," written in 1938 for a Modern Library Association session, he focused on "why the performance of tragedy should have a cleansing effect on the audience, why an audience is willing to listen to tragedy, and why tragedy has a play in the education of men."³⁵⁸ By his own report, he had some rather accidental success early on, but he still could not "take the gamble out of playwriting" and find a sure way to write a successful play.³⁵⁹ He had read Aristotle and the standard essays on dramatic structure first in 1918, in Clark's anthology. At about the time he started writing modern poetic tragedies he reread the same theoretical essays. What he saw in them this time was the importance of the "recognition scene."³⁶⁰ The best recognition scene takes place just before the climax of the play, and involves the main character in a self-discovery that completely alters the structure of the character's life. Anderson writes: "a play should lead up to and away from a central crisis, and this crisis should consist in a discovery by the leading character which has an indelible effect on his thought and emotion and completely alters his course of action."³⁶¹ For this to work, the main character, who experiences the recognition and reversal, must also be imperfect, so that the change can be for the better (an already perfect character who experiences a reversal can only change

for the worse). This character learns through suffering and reaches a higher nobility by the end of the play.³⁶² Anderson ends his essay by explaining what the audience gains from tragedy. For a play to be successful, it must "conform to some aspiration in the audience."³⁶³ The main aspiration of the audience in tragedy is to be assured that there is something in humans that is noble and godlike, and not just animalistic.³⁶⁴

Clark provided Anderson the theories to shape his approach to modern poetic tragedy on the American stage, and his relationship with the playwright was one of private friendship and public support. Anderson gave Clark access to any script he desired, and Clark even read early drafts of Anderson's plays. The two had similar ideas about the possibilities of American theatre in terms of its drama, and both worked to this same end. Even though Anderson was reticent about the publication of his private life, he did allow Clark to write a thirty-page biography of him, with which he was surprisingly pleased.

Lynn Riggs

After Paul Green, Lynn Riggs is the playwright who gained the most from his friendship with Clark. Maxwell Anderson obviously had more success than either of them, but Riggs, like Green, was a close protégé of the editor early in his career, and a friend and associate for all of Clark's life. Clark helped Riggs in many of the same ways as he had Green: as a critical reader, a publicity factory, and a means of accessing the support needed to keep writing.

Riggs's life is an interesting intersection of roads. He was born and raised in Oklahoma with one-sixteenth Cherokee background. Oklahoma was still called Indian

Territory, and only gained statehood when Riggs was seven years old. His mother died while he was quite young, and his father remarried. In several of his plays, there is a tough father and an unpleasant stepmother, which is likely an expression of his own youth. Riggs left Oklahoma after graduating prep school in 1917. He supported himself with odd jobs, like reading proof for the Wall Street Journal, and playing as an extra in cowboy movies being filmed in New York. He returned to Claremore, Oklahoma to weather an illness, but then continued farther West and worked again as an extra, in cowboy films in Hollywood. In 1920, after making some quick money selling a newspaper story about a bombing he had witnessed, he returned home and entered the University of Oklahoma as a fine arts major. His eyewitness article made him enough money to let him start college, but he had to mortgage some inherited land in order to pay off the rest of his education. While at the university he wrote a lot of poetry, some of which was published in Smart Set and local literary journals. After the woman he was pursuing eloped with another man, he became depressed and fled to Santa Fe to recover, befriending radical members of an artists' colony in the 1920s: Mabel Dodge Luhan, Witter Bynner, Carl Sandburg, George Pierce Baker, the Lawrences (D.H. and his wife), and Ida Rauh (Eastman).

In Santa Fe, under the encouragement of Ida Rauh, he wrote his second one-act play, Knives From Syria, early in 1925, and Rauh helped get it produced by the Santa Fe Players. In Santa Fe, he also wrote a three-act play (The Primitives, which he destroyed) and the shorter play Sump'n Like Wings. He soon built up enough courage to move to Chicago and work towards a more permanent career as a playwright.³⁶⁵ While in Chicago he wrote Big Lake, which was performed two years later in New York by the

young Laboratory Theatre under the direction of Richard Boleslavsky and Maria Ouspenskaya. The production ran just long enough to assure publication of the play with a preface by Clark in mid-1927. Clark identified Big Lake as the first of Riggs's plays that he read, but he did not initially find anything in it. Only after Winifred Katzin introduced the two did Clark read more of the young playwright's manuscripts, and re-read Big Lake, changing his mind about it this time.³⁶⁶

Big Lake was Riggs's first solo play publication. It had been preceded by the printing of Knives from Syria in One Act Plays for Stage and Study, series 3. Clark wrote the Big Lake foreword to tell the public what Riggs "was trying to do" since the critics of the production had not clarified this, in Clark's opinion. He wrote that Big Lake "is that rarest of things, a poetic drama that is at once poetry and drama."³⁶⁷ He saw Riggs's poetry as constructing a certain joy of life in the characters through their seemingly intuitive expression, which was different from the playwrights who merely observed and described the characters from the outside. Furthermore, Clark indicated the way that Riggs "has taken the folk-material and the idiom of his native district and skillfully made of them a rich medium of expression," which was then reproduced so that the poetry was not on the page, but rather in the mouths of the actors during the performance.³⁶⁸

The story of Big Lake could have easily been a melodrama. A young man and woman hurry out to the Big Lake for a school picnic. They arrive early and in the cold morning seek comfort and warmth in a nearby cabin. The cabin is the home of Butch, an attempted murderer, and Elly, his live-in girl. Elly wants to get Butch out of trouble and suggests pinning the murder on the young man, Lloyd. Riggs' treatment is distinct in that

the characters and speeches, rather than the plot, are the central focus of the play.

The character choices lead the play moment by moment. In the melodramatic world, the actions and emotions of the characters would be predicated on the direction of the plot and the eventual outcome of the story. In Riggs's play, the plot is secondary to motivations and the characters' passions as expressed in their words and dialect. This leads to a more subtle and personal construction of character.

After the young couple have left the cabin, Butch and Elly debate between running away to Texas or blaming the murder on Lloyd. The sheriff breaks in with two deputies, and Butch and Elly make up a story that the murderer was Butch's crazy brother who then captured a young girl and rowed out onto the lake. Butch convinces them that the only safe thing to do is to shoot the young man in the boat to save the young girl. The second act continues the discussion of youth, when Lloyd and Betty talk about the woods as they try to decide whether to take the boat out onto the lake. Betty insists on taking the boat, so that she can be away from the woods, which are "busy, busy a-doin' sump'n I can't understand!"³⁶⁹ The play also takes surprising turns; from focus on character into an almost mystical philosophy. The mystical influence of the woods, the flirtatious intentions of Lloyd, and the guilt of their sneaking around unchaperoned all work to create tension around Lloyd and Betty's decision to go out onto the lake or not. In the end, they get in the boat. In the last scene, the sheriff and his men try to coax the two back to the shore. Finally, thinking they are murderers, the sheriff shoots and kills Lloyd, and Betty drowns. The play ends with Elly saying:

It's always the way. People *will* go on the lake. Young people. Cain't keep 'em off. 'N' they's always accidents. Sometimes it's the lake, sometimes it's

the woods- boats leak, guns go off, people air keerless, they's wild
 animals- sump'n happens, sump'n always happens. It cain't be helped.³⁷⁰

Due to Riggs's language and poetic double meanings, the play has an undertone about the passions of youth and the dangers of human emotion in a complex world. Elly's last line symbolically ties her own experience of fleeing from acceptable society to a life in the woods, to the virginal worries of Lloyd and Betty in trying to find a moment alone, away from the watchful eye of the chaperones of the school picnic. This connection is further poeticized by allusions to the supernatural powers of the woods and the lake. About Riggs's work in this play Clark wrote:

There is a winged lightness in the words Mr. Riggs puts into the mouths of his young people, a sort of lyricism that is lacking in most of the so-called poetic plays I know. (...) our American theatre has found a poet who can bring to it an authentic note of ecstasy and passion, expressed in terms of drama. He is one of the few native dramatists (the others being O'Neill and Green) who can take the material of everyday life and mould it into forms of stirring beauty.³⁷¹

As did Green and later E.P. Conkle, Riggs constructed his plays around character, and more particularly on people he knew personally. This coincided with Clark's notion that plays should ideally be examinations of humanity. Riggs bounced ideas off Clark, starting with the earliest inclinations of character, but talking about the characters as if they already existed. This is similar to the way that Green worked and communicated with Clark. The difference is found in the way that Riggs used characters from legend,

folk narratives and song, which gave his plays a more mystical bent, as he shows in this letter to Clark:

My new play began itself yesterday- much to my surprise. It's Borned in Texas, a romance of the roads.

I'm not in it very deep yet, but the mood grows. It's rough and comic, and of the folk who travel the roads in ramshackle wagons through Oklahoma, stopping at night by a stream, stealing roasting ears and young chickens. What a racy, good-for-nothing lot! There is Hanny Rader, a juicy gay one, Pap Rader, a cheerful sly devil. Red Ike and Black Ike, cousins, and that roaring scalawag, Reckless, who got drunk one day and yelled publicly:

"I'm wild and reckless,

Borned in Texas,

Suckled by a bear.

Steel backbone,

Tail screwed on,

Twelve feet lon.

Dare any sonofa bitch to step on it!" [italics in Braunlich]

The native cops suppressed him; and a jovial judge threw him in the hoosegow for twelve days- "one day for ever foot of tail you got."

There are tall tales of "William Penn from acrost the verdigree," and one about buffaloes. There are songs, "Way Out in Idyho" and a scandalous

one about- "They chew tobaccer thin in Kansas." And I mustn't forget

"the banana that weighed 150 pounds."³⁷² *

The play that Riggs mentions started as a one-act play, and he got it to Clark in time for its publication as Reckless in One-Act Plays for Stage and Study, Fourth Series (1928). The One Act Plays for Stage and Study ran for ten volumes from 1925-1943. Although Clark's name is not directly attached to this series, it is the place where dozens of the plays and playwrights that he supported were published by Samuel French. These anthologies are most likely the project upon which Clark focused after the World's Best Plays series faded in the mid-1920s, and he was probably the main force behind them until he left Samuel French in 1936. The series served as a set of textbooks for study in schools and as a means to advertise the these short plays for performance.

In the summer of 1927, Riggs began a stay at Yaddo, an artist's colony established by Spencer Trask and his wife. In order to be admitted, an artist had to be "recommended by established critics and art patrons."³⁷³ Clark likely had a hand in his recommendation, although I have been unable to prove it. Clark and Riggs continued to correspond while Riggs was at Yaddo, mostly concerning the performance of his plays, but also about what he was writing. Riggs told Clark of his local successes. The director of Yaddo had asked him to read Big Lake to the other guests: "Last night I did, and if they didn't fall out of their seats at least they strengthened me in the knowledge that I can present a play so that it lives. And that may be, if worst come to worst, something to be grateful for."³⁷⁴

* A lot of the quotations of letters between Riggs and Clark that follow come from Phyllis Cole Braunlich's biography of Riggs, called Haunted by Home: the Life and Letters of Lynn Riggs. Unfortunately, I don't think that Braunlich was intent on writing a scholarly book, because she hardly ever cites fully the letters she includes in her narrative. Furthermore, she does not always date the letters or mention when she has cut them from their full length.

While Riggs was at Yaddo, he reported to Clark on his progress with The Lonesome West. On July 21, 1927, Riggs told Clark that he was composing "an epic of frustration" about pioneers in Oklahoma territory.³⁷⁵ In August, Riggs reported that he had finished the first act and was going to complete the whole piece before his summer at Yaddo was over.³⁷⁶ On September 26, 1927, he sent it to Clark:

Here it is at last. No murders, no deaths (well, hardly any), nothing but transmitted fevers- in some abundance. If the set looks vaguely like The Field God, I can't help it. It's actual- almost as it stands, and was planned last summer before I knew anything about Paul [Green]'s play. I've thought it best not to point out the "levels of action." This, as you will see, is the set that is to "out-construct constructivism." I'm tired, tired as hell. I'll be here, I believe, until the 10th. But I'd like a word on The Lonesome West. Please!³⁷⁷

The subsequent letters between the two, discussed changes that could or should be made to the script including a possible title change.³⁷⁸ Riggs was very invested in the play. He referred to it as "symphonic music" in a manner similar to the way Paul Green talked of his later plays. As such, the play worked like an accretion of moments, images and words so that it was "completely visible and meaningful only at last."³⁷⁹ Clark and Riggs discussed the play after the playwright had completed a draft.³⁸⁰ Lonesome West, finished in 1927 but never published, was produced for the first time almost ten years later. Nonetheless, Clark mentioned it in several review articles as one of the still-unsold plays that Broadway directors should be snapping up.

During this same time, Riggs asked Clark for advances from Samuel French. Each time, Clark would in turn ask Sheil for installments of \$50. Sometimes the money went the other way as well. In January 1928 Riggs sent Clark the repayment of a loan of \$25, perhaps personally given by Clark.³⁸¹ Loans from Samuel French were not enough for Riggs. In a parallel to Paul Green, Riggs mailed his application for a John Simon Guggenheim Foundation fellowship for "creative writing in drama and study of European theatre"³⁸² on October 13, 1927. Clark acted as a reference for this, along with "Hal" Witter Bynner, Paul Green, Thomas H. Dickinson and others. He supplemented this application with reviews and copies of articles about his plays, including Clark's article about Riggs in English Journal.^{*} The request was successful, and the fellowship of \$2,500 began May 1, 1928. Even after receiving this honorarium, Riggs continued to have trouble and on July 2, 1928 asked Clark to get another advance of \$1,000 from Samuel French.³⁸³

Riggs' time in Europe gave him the perspective he needed to write one of his most publicly important works, Green Grow the Lilacs, and also one of his most personally important works, The Cherokee Night. Throughout the year in Europe, he maintained a continuous editorial discussion with Clark. Starting to write was hard for Riggs, and he thanked Clark for his support: "Many thanks for the kind words in The Drama. Some nice word from you is always arriving just when I've decided I'm no good, and that I might as well jump in the river."³⁸⁴ Clark was regularly putting these "nice words" about all of his playwright friends in his monthly Drama reviews.

^{*} I have been unable to find this article, to which Braunlich refers several times but does not cite, in her Haunted by Home.

The theatre Riggs saw in Paris did not intrigue him, but he told Clark that "the more I see of Europe, the more clearly I see certain things about America."³⁸⁵ Riggs's reaction to Europe, at least initially, was just the opposite of what the Guggenheim Foundation must have intended. His presence in Europe had worn down his need to write, rather than stimulating it. It is possible that Riggs's response is what later caused Clark to suggest that E. P. Conkle *not* apply for the Guggenheim fellowship.

Riggs overcame his initial lack of focus in Paris when he started to describe to himself, and to Clark, what his greater purpose was in writing plays about his home territory and its people. Riggs received a review of One-Act Plays, edited by Clark, which contained some of Riggs' short work, and he responded to Clark about what the reviewer was missing:

No, the truth about those plays is that here is a germ of *light*, a germ of *poetry* about a dark and sometimes fierce, and nearly always ignorant people. (...)

Some day, perhaps, all the plays I will have written, taken together, may constitute a *study* from which certain things may emerge and be formulated into a *kind of truth* about people who happen to be living in Oklahoma instead of South Dakota. But not now. The secret is scattered too widely- and, what is worse, hid away- in the breasts of too many people. Farm people, ranchers, lawyers, bankers, doctors, waitresses, bakers, tool dressers, school teachers- there, as everywhere, unite in a desperate concealment; the beats of their hearts are mysterious and faint;

no pressure of hand or even opened vein may teach much about that guarded flow.

But I have felt a great deal about them. And I know that what makes them a little special, a little distinct in the Middle West is the quality of their taciturnity. They are voiceless, tongueless; they answer the challenging "Who goes there?" only by a flash of a lantern so quick, so momentary, that none but the acute guard sees more than a shadowy figure retreating into the darkness. There are two reasons for this: one- faulty education (or none at all); the other, the people who settled Oklahoma were a suspect fraternity, as fearful of being recognized by others as they were by themselves. Gamblers, traders, vagabonds, adventurers, daredevils, fools. Men with a sickness, men with a distemper. Men disdainful of the settled, the admired, the regular ways of life. Men on the move. Men fleeing from a critical world and their own eyes. Pioneers, eaten people. And their descendants have the same things in them, changed a little, grown out a bit, but there, just the same. And so they don't speak. Speech reveals one. It is better to say nothing. And so these people, who had been much admired and much maligned, have been *not quite known*- a shifting fringe of dark around the camp-fire, where wolves, perhaps, and unnamable things lurked.

I happened to be born myself just outside the rush of light. And I know how it feels, and, I think, how those others felt. And it seems to me that if there was much ignorance in these people, there was also a minor

wisdom; if there was much cruelty and darkness, there was also gentleness, and the singing of old songs. These people, human, were victims of a special and touching disinclination, and even inability, to publish their humanity. That's what I'm trying to do for them, and for their descendants, falteringly, imperfectly, incompletely, in the plays.³⁸⁶

Clark was a willing repository and disseminator of these theories of a developing American drama. What Riggs was describing was more than the simple realistic representation on stage of American locations or American dialects.

Creation of folk memories was one way for Riggs to deal with some of the difficult memories of his own youth, but it was also connected to similar folk dramatic works of Green, Virgil Geddes, E. P. Conkle and Lula Volmer. Riggs confided in Clark while he was in Europe, especially as memories of his Oklahoma youth caused him difficulty and built-up tense emotions.³⁸⁷ Clark was the recipient of long letters of anguish and memories that he was struggling to put into plays like Green Grow the Lilacs and Cherokee Night. After working through his memories, he would occasionally write Clark about moments of success. Venting to Clark allowed Riggs to be more positive when he had to write to the Guggenheim foundation for a six-month extension of funding, which he did not receive.³⁸⁸ When Riggs had finished the first three acts of Green Grow the Lilacs, he sent them off to Clark on January 18, 1929.³⁸⁹

Riggs asked Clark for news of any "way for a bright young man to make money."³⁹⁰ After the Guggenheim fellowship was not renewed, Riggs sent a letter to Clark on April 7, 1929, assessing his time in Europe. He had a "good year" between completion of a play and a chance to take a motor-trip through Southern France. He was

worried that though he was relaxed and tanned he would be unable to stand New York, and probably should find a farm to live on.³⁹¹ Clark had definitely chosen to support playwrights who avoided the cosmopolitan slickness of New York. They could not live there for more than a brief stay, even though, in many ways, their monetary success was tied to the city.

New York did not necessarily knock him down and trample him, but Riggs returned to find himself still in debt, and he had to ask Clark for help:

... if Samuel French's patience with me about money [isn't] exhausted. I know I haven't broken them up; but I am sensible that they've given me money, and the returns are slow in coming. Their generosity about giving me Schubert and Laboratory advances has been one reason, the other being the incalculable bad luck of having three contracts for productions come to naught... the fact remains that I'm broke, as usual, again, and want to write my new play, and don't want to get a job (provided I could get one). Oh, I shan't starve for a week, perhaps two; but please tell me what you think about the matter.³⁹²

Clark did get Riggs another advance, and Riggs went in June down to Provincetown to help Ida Rauh reorganize a theater group.³⁹³

Just as Riggs was again running out of money, he was contacted by Pathé Studios. This was likely facilitated by Sidney Howard, as mentioned in Clark's 1930 bio-critical article on Howard in Theatre Guild Magazine.³⁹⁴ They offered Riggs a six-week contract to work on the film Beyond Victory. On January 18, 1930, he wrote to Clark:

I've got a beastly cold; I hate the climate; the studio people are grand to me; give me a couch and stenographer- (to be used apart from each other, you understand); a noble office; my office hours are whenever I like. Sometimes I come in at ten, and leave at 2- or anytime for that matter. If I wanted to, I could work at home. They don't care. I'm told Pathé is unusual in that regard. The others seem to be factories.³⁹⁵

When Riggs's movie contract was over, he returned to Provincetown and worked on Cherokee Night, reporting his successes to Clark.³⁹⁶

Reckless, the play that Riggs had sent to Clark as a one-act in 1928, became Roadside as a full-length play. Clark helped shop this play around and kept it in the attention of the public and New York critics. Roadside finally got a New York opening in 1930, produced by Arthur Hopkins and opening September 26 at the Longacre Theatre. With the exception of John Anderson and Burns Mantle, the critics were not impressed. They were split between thinking it was not a representation of reality, which it was not intended to be, and that it was not a play at all. Clark quoted Laurence Stallings talking to Gilbert Gabriel, critic for the American. Stallings met Gabriel outside of the theatre and told him that he "was going to see a fine play indoors there- a play with poetry in it, a beautiful play. 'And the sort of play you boys will burn up', he added grimly. We boys are the critics."³⁹⁷

Clark took a stance defending Riggs and the play against the majority of New York critics. He reserved a full page of his monthly review in The Drama to reply to the critics. He commended only John Anderson for "[taking] the trouble to do what is every critic's business, look beyond the acting and production at the play itself."³⁹⁸ Clark felt

that the drama was the most important part of a production, and therefore the playwright was the most important voice in theatre. At the core of the critical response to Roadside was the New York audience's tendency to support plays with a slick, metropolitan style, rather than the slower, rural roughness of Riggs's style. Clark was right in thinking that Riggs could not get a fair critique from New York, but Riggs also could not rely on a livelihood that did not include New York success. Without a significant resident theatre system in the United States, and because of the fading strength of the "little theatres," American playwrights were struggling to sell work to directors. Clark may have helped drum up popular support for Riggs' play by sending out complimentary copies to the important critics in the area. He sent a copy to George Abbot, who thanked Clark by letter for it, and one to John Anderson after the play had opened. In a letter to Clark dated December 9, 1930, Anderson thanked him for the copy of Roadside, and said that he was "more than ever convinced that it got a raw deal. Some day, I feel sure, it will emerge just as "Lucky Sam" will, to make people wonder at the critics it had."³⁹⁹

Clark did not praise Roadside completely. He conceded that the script had unfinished scenes and sketched-out situations, and that it was a little rambling, even after Arthur Hopkins cleaned it up a bit. He also was unhappy with the poor production qualities and the amateur acting. Nonetheless, Clark felt that the critics should have seen Riggs's "honest attempt to write a poetic and fantastic play made up of elements both strange and familiar. Even the timidest [sic] reviewer might have praised the poetry of the lines if he had ears to hear it."⁴⁰⁰ Clark blamed the critics for looking at the production of the play rather than the text inside the production. Clark was willing to let

the audiences like or dislike the performance if they wished, but he expected the critics to judge the script. He explained that critics did this because they were not brave enough to have an opinion that differed from that of the audiences. They praised plays that were popular, and could not understand what was really good in a play.⁴⁰¹ In a review in the same magazine two months later, Clark clarified his opinion about the critical response to Roadside. He defined what he enjoyed about the play and what he respected in Riggs: "What I look for, what I prize (what I may possibly over-prize and over-praise) is the play that is not completely successful, the playwright who bites off more than he can chew, who is not content with limiting himself to what he knows he can do."⁴⁰² Clark ends by saying that "what we need is more life and freedom, and less technical proficiency."⁴⁰³

Roadside was not as personal of a play as Green Grow the Lilacs, which was an adaptation of the playwright's own memories of growing up in Oklahoma. Riggs was hesitant to allow anyone to produce Green Grow the Lilacs. He wanted a director who would understand the poetic side of the play and be able to avoid a ham-handed mockery of his characters' dialects. On Green Grows the Lilacs, Riggs worked in an innovative fashion. The play was written while he was in Europe, and he built it from moods he wished to evoke on stage. The moods were not from realistic memories but rather from the old songs of his childhood. Out of the moods he shaped characters who spoke in remembered dialects, in remembered settings. Plot was almost an afterthought.

It seemed wise to throw away the conventions of ordinary theatricality- a complex plot, swift action, etc.- and try to exhibit luminously, in the

simplest of stories, a wide area of mood and feeling. This could only be done, it seemed to me, by exploring the characters as deeply as possible, simple though they appeared to be, hoping to stumble on, if lucky, the always subtle, always strange compulsions under which they labor and relate themselves to the earth and to other people.⁴⁰⁴

He thought of the first three scenes simply as introduction of characters and the last three scenes as "The Play."⁴⁰⁵ The first three introduced Curley, Aunt Eller, Laurey, the Syrian peddler, Ado Annie and Jeeter. Both Curley and Jeeter want to take Laurey to Old Man Peck's party. Laurey wants to go with Curley, but out of fear, she agrees to go with Jeeter instead. Curley tries to convince Jeeter not to go with Laurey. The part that Riggs felt was "the play" begins at Old Man Peck's party. A playwright thinking in terms of plot could easily have written only the last three scenes, making a reasonable and conventional one-act play. But Riggs preferred using mood to tie the play together rather than plot. For that reason, he used the first half to show the characters as personifications of the subjects of the folksongs.

The personal nature of the script made Riggs sensitive even to Clark. Clark proposed that the play could be given an out-of-town tryout in Rochester for no pay, which caused Riggs to strike out:

Surely we ought to know by now that no hurried production of any play of mine is going to show anything except a disgusting mess. We have only to remember The Domino Parlor, which of all my plays might have yielded to cavalier treatment. And so unshowy and poetic a piece as Green Grow will yield nothing but pain for me, a baffled audience, and the

general air of lack of skill- if it gets a casual and hurried presentation.

This I'm sure of.⁴⁰⁶

The problem was not just fear of a bad production, it was also the worry of his own financial strength. If he was actually a good playwright, then why could he not expect payment even for a tryout performance? So Riggs laid out in the same letter the terms that would be reasonable for such a tryout:

We ought to get 5% at least, or certainly \$25 a performance... I insist on nothing being changed, not even a phrase, without my written consent... I see no reason why Brian [?] shouldn't take up the New York option one week after the last performance in Rochester. I see no point in being suicidally grateful to anyone for doing a play which many people would be glad to do, and pay for doing...⁴⁰⁷

In the end, Riggs allowed Green Grow the Lilacs to have an opening outside of New York.

It was first produced in Boston by the Theatre Guild on January 26, 1931 while Clark was still working as a play-reader for the organization. The play was a great success, but still had a seven-week-long tryout tour of Boston, Philadelphia and Baltimore before an eight-week run in New York City.⁴⁰⁸ Limiting the play to an eight week run in New York was not due to lack of success, but to the fact that the Guild had already set up a tour of member theatres which had to be honored. The critical consensus was that the play was a success, but Brooks Atkinson spoke slightly of it, saying that Riggs's use of the folk-play style was an excuse to throw scenes of hearty country folk on the stage singing and dancing. Clark responded with a letter to Atkinson asking why the

folk-play style had been good enough for Porgy and Desire Under the Elms, but it was not in this case.⁴⁰⁹

Green Grow the Lilacs was quickly released to amateur producers, and in the first fifty years it was given about 600 amateur productions and earned gross royalties of almost \$40,000.⁴¹⁰ The play also enjoyed Clark's profound respect. The critic used the Guild production as a way of saying 'I told you so' about his support of Riggs.

The name of Lynn Riggs is familiar to anyone who has taken the trouble to read these articles of mine during the past three or four years. On occasion I have gone out of my way to drag in on the flimsiest pretext some reference to him. He has been writing for more than five years, but until a few weeks ago he was a relatively obscure figure in the American theatre.⁴¹¹

Clark said that he had been similarly ridiculed for speaking highly of Paul Green and Eugene O'Neill before this. Green Grow the Lilacs proved not just Riggs' skill, but that there was a wide audience for this sort of a play. Clark called the play a

high-spirited, winged, joyous dramatic song. Its poetry is part and parcel of the whole- never an ornament, never an addition. You could no more take from it its lyric beauty than you could separate the style of Shakespeare from his ideas: the one cannot be conceived without the other. Nor is it a deep and subtle document. Subtleties there are, of course, but they are present because the playwright gave his people dimensions, not because he wrote the subtlety in.⁴¹²

Clark supported Riggs against the critics who said that the playwright still did not know

how to write a play. The problem was that Green Grow the Lilacs did not have much of a plot to start with – no more than a folk song would need. It was, after all, a ballad of visual elements and inserted dialogue rather than a realistic plot intended to draw the audience in. Riggs wanted to provoke audience emotion through song, melodic images, and the extreme characters of folk stories.

Near the end of 1939, Riggs found himself in financial difficulty and moved to California to look for offers from movie studios. Riggs's plays were still handled for the amateur theatre by Samuel French, but Clark no longer worked there and was unable to advocate for him. On February 7, 1940, he wrote to Clark:

Do you know I've had nothing but rotten luck since you left French- and thus me?... The simple truth is that since last May, when I stated my willingness to go to work [for the studios], there has been no job for me in Hollywood. I don't understand it at all. I know Rosalie* is on the job, but it's simply that I've had no play on Broadway since 1936, and no hit picture since The Plainsman.

(...)

I've got a lot of new and to me pretty exciting ideas about what the theatre should be- and surely my record ought to be good enough over the country to get small audiences. Sidney [Howard] used to say I was ten times more well known all over America than he was... I've got to do something, and I've got to do it soon. I'm tired of the wolf baying.⁴¹³

* This is Rosalie Stewart of Edington, Vincent & Stewart, Riggs's Hollywood agency

This letter supports the argument that Clark worked as an agent for these young playwrights only as part of his job as literary editor at Samuel French. Besides trying to get movies to write, Riggs wanted to raise money by making a lecture tour of the United States. Instead of a tour, Clark suggested that Riggs contact those colleges and universities that had produced his plays in the past to see if he could come in as a guest artist and speaker. Clark mentioned Garrett Leverton at Northwestern as a good contact, because he had done several of Riggs's early works.⁴¹⁴

Well after Riggs achieved some fame and comfort, Clark continued to support him. In the following letter, Clark shows that he retained a consistency of opinion about the plays he had supported years earlier. Clark wrote on April 25, 1949 to the Drama Editor of the New York Herald Tribune, in a response to an article about Oklahoma! that reacted negatively to the play that spawned the musical.

How one can speak of Green Grow the Lilacs as "unsuccessful" or a "dismal failure" is beyond me. That play aroused very considerable enthusiasm among several reviewers. (...) This "failure" ran for eight weeks in New York City. It should also be noted that the Guild sent Green Grow the Lilacs on the road, together with Elizabeth, The Queen, to meet obligations toward their out-of-town subscribers, though both plays were at the time doing "good business" in New York. Green Grow the Lilacs ran up a total of twenty-three weeks in New York and on the road. For several years it has been produced literally hundreds of times in this country and Canada, as well as in England, and it has been seen by innumerable audiences in colleges, universities and community groups. It

has also made an impressive showing in stock and over the radio. It is still alive.

It is not my object to plead for a play which I happen to admire very deeply, but to put in my small word of warning: a good many of us are over-prone to dismiss fine theater works that happen not to have earned large sums of money. Most poor plays fall, but occasionally some fine plays as well.⁴¹⁵

In summary, if all of Clark's protégés had achieved the same amount of public respect and production as Paul Green, Lynn Riggs and Maxwell Anderson, American drama would possibly have turned into a very different creation than it did. Clark supported dramatists experimenting with form, characterization, poetry and source material, in a specific manner. Clark's own lifelong interest in music manifested in his support of folk song in the plays of Green and Riggs. Clark's poetic sensibility was evident in his promotion of the poetic meter and rhythm of Anderson and the choice of dialect or language by Green, Riggs, O'Neill, Conkle and others. Finally, all of the playwrights whom Clark supported most vigorously wrote about the human condition, as universally as possible, while placing the plays in localized settings with local dialects and concerns.

Chapter 6: Clark's Work with Little Theatres

Although Clark focused mostly on drama, he worked occasionally with production through several little theatres. All of his production work had the goal of improving American drama. After he moved to New York in 1916, he saw some small companies staging "experimental" American dramas. When these companies succeeded, or even when they failed gloriously, they gave playwrights a chance to develop and learn. Clark's ideal little theatre was approached by the work of the Provincetown Players and the early Washington Square Players. These two companies staged plays with the intention of trying out new styles and new dramatists. At the same time, they had enough respect from the theatre community that their productions were well attended by directors and producers who would stage the new playwrights later on. These companies thought in terms of the future of theatre in America as well as the entertainment of audiences.

From 1906, the year the New Theater was founded in New York, until Clark's death in 1953, small and experimental theatre companies were labeled with a wide variety of terms.* Clark tried out some of these terms, but eventually settled on "nonprofessional." On October 27, 1935 he published in The New York Times some of his ideas on what the nonprofessional theater could be or already was in the United States. "West of Broadway, Some Reflexions on the Nonprofessional Theater,"† was also printed as a small pamphlet for him to circulate to friends and acquaintances. It was his report on a 10,000-mile trip he had made the previous spring. He stopped at universities

* i.e. "New Theatre", "Art Theatre", "Insurgent Theatre", "Little Theatre", "Tributary Theatre" and Community Theatre"

† Clark's article "West of Broadway" is Appendix E.

and little theatres wherever he could to lecture and meet with the theatre workers, and to help pay for the trip. This was one of many occasions when Clark, emulating his father, earned extra money from speaking engagements. He also traveled to many festivals and conferences as an invited guest.

Clark was most interested in theatre done in "the dramatic departments of colleges and universities and by private or semi-private corporations." What made these groups unique, and what helped Clark separate them from high schools, clubs and the like, was their focus on "the theater as an end in itself and not upon the making of money, enabling each group (no matter what its financial problems, which are many and serious) to persist year after year without having to depend entirely on box office receipts."⁴¹⁶ Out of the 700 or so colleges and universities which offered dramatic coursework, and the 1000 or so little and community Theatres, he focused on about 100 of each group that had gained the sort of solvency that could allow consistent productions of experimental work. The majority of these 200 theatre groups also trained new actors, designers, directors and occasionally playwrights. These groups could be counted on to give at least five or six major productions in a year. Of course some of them far exceeded that number, like the University of Washington, running almost year-round productions during the 1930s, or the Pasadena Playhouse, similarly in almost constant production.

Clark counted 75 different theatres in colleges and universities in which he had seen productions. Overall, in the previous 10-15 years he had seen as many as 300 plays done in the 200 core theatres "West of Broadway." In his recent 24-state trip he saw productions "as competently executed as all but the very best in the professional world" at the Cleveland Playhouse, the Pasadena Playhouse, Northwestern University, the

University of Iowa, the University of Washington and Jasper Deeter's Hedgerow Theater near Philadelphia.⁴¹⁷ The only element that he found lacking was the quality of acting, largely due to reliance on very young and inexperienced actors. Despite shortcomings, these groups, especially the colleges and universities, were doing something of monumental importance that set them above the common "amateur" theatre and drama: "turning out fairly large numbers of young people with better background, more taste and knowledge of what it's all about than we have ever before had in this country."⁴¹⁸ As proof of the respect these groups engendered, Clark pointed out how the Federal Theatre Project, just instituted, was formed on the foundations of the colleges and universities around the country, using their faculty as administrators in many cases.

Rather than tie the usefulness of non-professional theatre groups to their role as tributaries to professional theatre, Clark again turned to his recent trip around the country.

At least 95% of the young people have no intention of going into the "profession"; they are working for the joy of it: in order to become teachers in high schools and colleges; and to work in Little Theaters. The remaining 5% are headed or think they are headed for New York. This makes it clear to me that the Nonprofessional theater is hardly a tributary to Broadway, a trying out ground for stage-struck youngsters; it is almost entirely an end in itself; neither the actor nor the scene designer nor the director has one eye on Broadway and the other on his immediate job; knowing the haphazard existence that seems a necessary condition of professional theater life.⁴¹⁹

Since these theatre workers were able to enjoy their experiences and pursue them in a venue that directly affected their local community, it made sense that they should also be the best candidates for defining a "national theatre," if that should ever be formed.⁴²⁰

Clark admitted that nonprofessional theatre was bound to be more of a reflection of the needs of the people, and not necessarily *avant garde*. This was because "wherever it originates, ... an institution so democratic as this must usually follow rather than lead."⁴²¹ But Clark also thought that these groups should create an adequate flow of plays into American dramatic literature. For this reason, he was adamant that nonprofessional theatre groups support anything or anyone that developed or stretched the medium in new directions, especially since professional theatres could not always do this and survive. He insisted that "our decentralized theater must, if it would fulfill its function, open up new fields as well, give its audiences occasionally a little more than they expect or what they are supposed to want or enjoy; it must experiment by allowing the playwright to experiment."⁴²² This attitude of experimentation is built on the centrality of the dramatist in the practice of theatre.

He gave a couple of examples of how such experimentation could help the playwrights and theatre as a whole. He mentioned how Elmer Rice had been unable to get a feasible Broadway production of his play Not for Children and withdrew from the production just before rehearsals began, turning instead to nonprofessional production. It was quickly scheduled for production in Ohio, Louisiana, Iowa, New York, California, Oregon and New Mexico. Similarly, Maxwell Anderson's early play Seawife debuted at the University of Minnesota thanks to Clark's persistence with the playwright. After the opening production, the play was quickly snapped up by other nonprofessional

companies. Clark points out that neither of these plays represented a huge profit for the author. These venues did provide the playwrights an audience that was "different, perhaps simpler, certainly less jaded and less conventional minded, less used to slickness and smartness, a public that will occasionally be willing to hear new themes, eloquence, even the delicate and splendid lines of dramatic poetry- in a word be moved by the sort of beauty that is hard to sell or keep going in our centralized market place."⁴²³

In the last ten or twelve years of his life, Clark called the nonprofessional theatre in America a success. When giving speeches or writing certain articles, he would open with a radical statement like: "The theatre is dead"⁴²⁴ as a way of getting attention, but he would follow this up with proof that the national theatre was vibrantly alive in amateur companies and colleges, even if it was weak on Broadway. According to Clark the nonprofessional movement started in about 1910 when university theatre programs began to be formed and "Mrs. Dowager, who wanted to act, would invite the socially elect to her Show Shoppe where the good ladies (with occasionally a few timid males) pretended to enjoy Maeterlinck and Dunsany, Mrs. D. paying the deficit which was one of the conspicuous products of the Little Theatre of her day."⁴²⁵ This was based on Clark's own experience in the Drama League of America and in his university Drama Club.

By 1941, there were 25,000 high schools doing at least two plays a year, more than 700 universities and colleges staging three to thirty plays a year, 44,000 Protestant churches with at least one production a year, 1000 little theatres, and another 500,000 productions done by various clubs and social groups.⁴²⁶ In spite of the number of venues, and in spite of the successful work of "such men as O'Neill, Howard, Kelly, Barry, Rice and a few others," the American drama was not based on the heads of a few playwrights

but on the heads of a few producing organizations.⁴²⁷ Because of this, Clark tried repeatedly to create spaces for staging experimental plays.

After college, Clark's first attempt at creating a little theatre was with the Morningside Players early in 1917. The Players was started at Columbia University by Clark and Hatcher Hughes, both of whom were teaching there at the time, with the assistance of Elmer Rice and actress Edith Randolph. The theatre expanded to open shows at the Comedy Theater in New York City and was seen, briefly, as more than *just* a student group. Clark helped find plays to perform and eventually edited the published collection of plays in their repertory. Their prospectus said they had "no intention or desire to uplift anybody or reform anything, but they believe there is an audience for a type of play which is not ordinarily seen on Broadway."⁴²⁸ In fact, the group's goal was similar to that of the Provincetown Players. In his introduction to Morningside Plays, Clark wrote:

These people, amateurs for the most part, had been writing plays for some years, and while they were fully aware that the mere writing of plays might in itself be of value and interest, their work would probably be rendered fruitless unless it was produced. The sporadic amateur production, under auspices which would be none too favorable, was not sufficient incentive to urge them further, and they decided to organize an association whose business it should be to produce the best of their plays with the collaboration of such professionals as would lend their services, at some down-town theater, looking forward meanwhile to a playhouse of their own.⁴²⁹

At this time Elmer Rice was still Reizenstein, and had not had any important productions since his vibrant entrance to American theatre with On Trial, which opened August 19, 1914. For nine years afterwards, he wrote smaller works, mostly done by amateur groups, but the eventual goal was still Broadway.⁴³⁰ The Morningside Players opened their first production, Reizenstein's The Iron Cross, February 11, 1917. The play was repeated two days later, ending the run. This play opened at the Comedy Theater the day after the Washington Square Players did a bill of one-acts in the same space. The fact that the two groups shared the theatre is not surprising, since many of the founders of the Washington Square Players had been students at Columbia, and the two troupes even shared one cast member between them, Frank Longacre. The Iron Cross is a play about war, set in Austria, meant to show that all of the nations involved in World War I were at fault, and that their actions adversely affected the individuals fighting the war. Arthur Hornblow, reviewing the play for The Theatre was impressed with neither the acting nor the writing: "I cannot help feeling that the supreme need of the modern martial drama is birth control."⁴³¹

In their second bill, The Players performed Reizenstein's The Home of the Free, which ran with some one-acts (Hattie by Elva De Pue, One a Day by Caroline Briggs and Markheim by Zella MacDonald), opening on April 24, 1917 and closing the following day, again borrowing the Comedy Theater from the Washington Square Players. Arthur Hornblow was even more unimpressed with the second bill: "The Morningside Players no doubt will do better with their next bill and all future bills; they could not well do worse."⁴³² The Players did not last on the larger New York stage after this first season. Nonetheless, the group survived as a university theatre club and regularly sent shows to

little theatre tournaments and to a small theatre near the Columbia University campus.

Clark was not involved with it after this first season. He helped arrange the publication of the second bill of plays, late in 1917, which was listed as "uniform with" the Provincetown Plays publications.⁴³³ His introduction to the book is written in the third person, as if he was not one of the members. As with many of his later ventures into little theatre production, he resisted association with a failed organization, especially when it was so close to his dream of an experimental theatre group that would make the commercial manager "realize that with intelligence and a little faith he can experiment with his playwrights and his public."⁴³⁴

At the same time that Clark was helping the Morningside Players, he also wrote book reviews for the New York Sun, and one of the topics that he covered repeatedly was the growth of the little theatre movement and the recent dramas they were performing. In a 1917 review of three new books (The Insurgent Theatre by Thomas H. Dickinson, The Art Theatre by Sheldon Cheney, and The Community Theatre by Louise Burleigh) he pointed out how young the movement really was in the United States, and warned against preaching victory so early:

The question of insurgent theatres has received a good deal more space in the newspapers and magazines of late than its importance would seem to warrant. Perhaps this is but another instance of our national failing: our desire to pursue the new for the sake of the new. Certain it is that the little theatres are doing worth while work, but their directors and adherents must realize that promiscuous publicity does not mean true success, and that three or four years existence is no pledge of perpetuity.⁴³⁵

He was not yet willing to buy into the little theatre for the sake of the little theatre, and he had already been stung once by the little theatre for the sake of the playwright.

Lacking in most of the little theatre groups, as Clark saw it, was support of new American drama:

[U]nless we would be the people of yesterday we must keep our theatre alive by means of plays of to-day. For better, for worse we are wedded to progress, or at least to continuous action. Our plays must reflect, if not ourselves and our life at least our aspirations, no matter how petty or circumscribed they may be. (...) Our drama must be American or perish.⁴³⁶

This was said particularly in response to an anthology of adaptations of classic plays into modern idiom by Samuel A. Eliot. Eliot said that plays like Euripides' Hecuba, Sheridan's St. Patrick's Day, and Beaumont and Fletcher's Coxcomb, could combat the "saucy" dramas being presented by groups like the Washington Square Players. Clark responded that "to attempt to write about New York or even a narrow segment of New York, to add to our drama a single original play like Plots and Playwrights or In the Zone (...) is of vastly more importance than to fall back to the third line trenches of Euripides and Terence."⁴³⁷

By 1926, Clark was firmly behind the little theatre idea. In the New York Times, just before the start of "Little Theatre Week" in New York City, he wrote an article about what the little theatre was, and what it could do. He estimated that there were several thousand companies in existence that he considered little theaters, including community, church, club and school theater groups. He drew on his own experiences by mentioning

the local Beechwood Players of Scarborough-on-Hudson. At the time, Clark was on the Beechwood board and had convinced his friend Knowles Entrikin to institute a plan to develop American drama. The idea was that little theatres could try out new plays and then invite New York producers and directors to see the productions. This would allow the producers to predict how the plays would fare in a first-class production, take some of the guess work out of opening a show in New York, and possibly forego an out-of-town opening tour.⁴³⁸ The plan did not work out in 1926, but Clark kept repeating it for at least a decade to whomever would listen.

Late in 1928, Clark suggested another way for the New York theatre to benefit from little theatres. Since Broadway production was prohibitive for nonprofessional groups due to the cost of real estate in Midtown Manhattan, Clark suggested using some smaller theatres outside of the center of the city. Some shows would not draw audiences of any more than 3000 per week and therefore could not survive in theatres that needed audiences of 7000 per week. So, why not open up smaller theatres in cheaper parts of town to take over quality shows that were "failing" on Broadway and continue them with lower expenses in smaller venues?

I should like to build two or three theatres with small seating capacity and a minimum of gilt ornament, way over on the East Side or the West Side, away from the expensive theatre district. The rent would be probably half what it now is on Broadway. Then I would take over from the speculator-producers those of their "flops" that I thought were worth saving. The scheme would, I think, prevent some of the waste of good material I have

been writing about. Then, if I were successful, the big business men of Broadway would follow suit. So much the better.⁴³⁹

This is actually a somewhat prophetic description of the niche that Off-Broadway and Off-Off-Broadway would fill later on.

In 1929, Clark suggested opening up the rights of production for new plays to little theatre at the same time the plays opened in New York. The idea started with George Kelly, who wanted to release Reflected Glory* to a large number of little theatres at the same time, rather than start it on Broadway and move outwards from there. Kelly contacted Clark at Samuel French and proposed the idea. Kelly was willing to allow first production rights to amateur theatres, which would open the play at the same time as the New York production. But Kelly stipulated that twenty-five amateur companies had to agree to stage it. Clark and Kelly ultimately decided that they would not be able to succeed with the project because they could not find enough theatres that could afford the royalties, even at the amateur rates.⁴⁴⁰

In 1931, Elmer Rice made a similar proposal to Clark about his play The Left Bank. Rice had a controlling interest in the New York production of his play, which allowed him to experiment with the subsidiary rights, specifically leasing to amateur producers. If Clark could interest enough amateur theatres in the play, according to Rice's stipulations, then he would release the rights. Rice wanted to protect the stock rights to his play, so he said he would only let amateur companies that were not in "stock towns" or in major touring stops to open the show simultaneously with the New York production. Clark offered the play to 50 different amateur theatres, with royalties of \$50

* Later known as Philip Goes Forth.

for the first performance and \$25 for each subsequent performance in the initial run of the show. Of all theatres offered this chance, only one accepted. Many of the companies had already chosen their seasons, and could not alter them on such short notice.⁴⁴¹

There were plenty of amateur and little theatre leaders who wanted plays by people like Rice as soon as possible after the initial production, but this involved breaking down the long established hierarchy of rights to production of plays.* Although producers were in favor, some playwrights were worried because they relied on the gradual release of rights to give them a steady income over a long period of time. Clark and Paul Green discussed the repercussions of Rice's idea when Clark visited the Carolina Playmakers in March 1931. Green was not impressed with the idea, especially since it was hard to understand Rice's motives. Green wrote to Clark:

I've been thinking over the plan Elmer Rice has for allowing the amateur theatres to do his Left Bank before it has had a New York run, that is, contemporaneous with the N.Y. production if so wished. So far as advance toward the freedom of the theatre goes, I don't see anything in the idea and I'm writing you because I strongly feel that if definite progress is to be made in the true way, nothing should be done to blur the issues. As I understand it, the facts are these: Rice is to produce, direct and manage his play in N.Y. next season. He will make this play available to amateurs the night it opens. It can be played in C.H.† the same night if we wish. He requests some sort of guarantee. Frankly I see nothing in this except that

* Over the course of one to five years, rights of production passed from first-class producers to stock companies to little theaters and then to amateurs.

† Chapel Hill

Rice has all to gain and the little theatres have the privilege of making up their own mind and choosing something before New York has said this or that. Suppose Rice's play is a flop; then the amateurs are perhaps already committed to do it here and there. Suppose it is a great success, they will do it more anyway. Rice wins both heads and tails, and wherein does he yield so much in his plan?⁴⁴²

In Green's eyes, the purpose was to assure a profit to the playwright from an inherently risky commodity. It would benefit the author whether or not it was a success, but a single expensive play flopping at a small theatre could bankrupt a minor producer.

Besides trying to get "good" plays into little theatres, Clark defended productions of these plays once they were produced. In March 1929, Clark responded to St. John Ervine's critique of Virgil Geddes' The Earth Between, done at the Provincetown Playhouse. Ervine was the drama critic at the New York World and had not only panned Geddes' play, but spent thirty-four lines of print on the rain and the uncomfortable seats. Clark wrote "An Open Letter to Mr. St. John Ervine" and sent a copy to Ervine, the New York World and several other New York newspapers. None of the papers printed the article, so he had it published as a pamphlet, 1600 copies of which were made for his own circulation.^{443*} It is not surprising that newspapers shied away from it, since it has a much more vitriolic tone than most things Clark wrote. He said that "A few days ago, in reviewing the opening performance of Virgil Geddes' play, The Earth Between, at the Provincetown Playhouse, you revealed yourself as a perfect intellectual snob, a traitor to your ideals as I conceive them, and an exceedingly cruel, unfair and unsportsmanlike

* Clark's "Open Letter to Mr. St. John Ervine" is Appendix B.

critic."⁴⁴⁴ Ervine had received his start in experimental ventures when the newly formed Theatre Guild gave him his first American success with John Ferguson. Clark claimed that Ervine was too used to comfort and fame, and had forgotten the situation of the experimenters. Because he had forgotten, Ervine failed critically "in bringing to bear all the power of [his] position and influence to flout, ridicule and insult an author of unquestioned sincerity and no mean talent, and a group of players whose efforts entitle them to greater respect than can be properly accorded to any other company of its kind in this country."⁴⁴⁵ Ervine did not respond directly to Clark's critique, and even claimed he had not received a copy of the letter until too late, as he was on his boat back to England. In return for the 1,600 copies that Clark had printed, he got 225 letters, and telegrams from writers, editors, managers, and others about the issue.⁴⁴⁶

In the April 1929 issue of The Drama, Clark reviewed The Earth Between himself. He called Virgil Geddes "a man of promise" and his play "a play that was worth trying out."⁴⁴⁷ Clark had likely known of Geddes and his plays for at least a year or two. Geddes spent his first 21 years in Dixon County Nebraska, after which he worked as a newspaper proofreader in Chicago, before moving to Paris for four years. While in Paris, during the early 1920s, he wrote poetry and turned to drama in about 1926. Between 1926 and 1929 Geddes wrote eight plays, including The Earth Between. Clark had read most of Geddes' poetry and three of his plays, and it is likely that it was Clark who had passed Geddes' work on to the Provincetown.⁴⁴⁸ This was Geddes' first major production.

Clark encouraged critics of plays like The Earth Between to be more open-minded about new playwrights. Geddes' play was not extremely strange, but it was written in eight scenes of inconsistent patterns and lengths: "[H]e saw his story as he gives it to us.

Can't we take it on his own terms?"⁴⁴⁹ Clark admitted that Geddes had room for improvement in plot construction and in the incisiveness of his dialogue, but he balanced that against his brevity, simplicity and honesty. Clark saw these qualities as core skills of folk drama. The experimentation in American drama at the time was paying off in veracity and simplicity, as long as the playwrights were allowed a chance. Any theatre group that encouraged experimentation was worth supporting. Clark felt that Provincetown was the only experimental theatre in the United States that had survived for any extended time period. Young playwrights like Geddes needed "a theatre and intelligent production and encouragement. The Provincetowners have just given him all these. But he has written seven or eight more plays. In case The Earth Between fails to make money, where will he turn?"⁴⁵⁰

Just before the start of the 1929-30 season in New York, Clark was involved in one of the last iterations of the theatre company that had launched O'Neill to fame. The "Provincetown Playhouse in the Garrick Theater" began to advertise for subscription to raise the \$75,000 they would need to open a season of new American playwrights. Their advertisement in Theatre Arts Monthly states their intent to produce Green's Tread the Green Grass, Geddes' plays Native Ground and Mud on the Hoofs, Michael Gold's Fiesta, and new plays by e.e. cummings, Lynn Riggs and E.P. Conkle.⁴⁵¹ The Board of Directors for this venture included Clark, Arthur L. Carns, M. Eleanor Fitzgerald, James Light, Harold McGee, Eugene O'Neill, Oliver M. Sayler, Cleon Throckmorton and Harry Weinberger. With this Board of Directors and the name they had chosen, they were bound to uphold the goals of the previous fourteen years of the Provincetown name. They had an:

impelling desire (...) to establish a stage where playwrights of sincere, poetic, literary and dramatic purpose can see their plays in action and superintend their production without submitting to the commercial manager's interpretation of public taste. Equally, it is to afford an opportunity for actors, producers, scenic and costume designers to experiment with a stage of extremely simple resources- it being the idea of the Players that elaborate settings are unnecessary to bring out the essential qualities of a good play.⁴⁵²

This quote from the prospectus of the new theatre was taken from an earlier manifestation of the Provincetown group, and represented their intention to continue the goal of experimental growth in American drama. In letters between Clark and his playwright friends, the name of "MacDougal Street," the location of the old Provincetown company was a byword for a playwright-focused theatre unencumbered by the needs of commercialism. There was no doubt in people's minds that even though the Provincetown Players of the past had some occasionally poor quality shows, it was all for the good of the dramatist and American theatre as a whole.

To help the Provincetown survive, the managers were trying to gather 5,000 subscribers at \$10 each for initial capital. The \$10 would gain the subscriber a seat at five shows in the season; \$15 would garner a seat at each opening night. Much of the capital they raised was needed to move from MacDougal Street to the new, larger theater space. The subscription was started at the beginning of the summer, not knowing that the end of the summer would bring one of the largest stock market crashes in American history. They did manage to open Michael Gold's Fiesta at the Garrick on September 17,

1929. By February 1930, the Provincetown Playhouse in the Garrick Theater called it quits.⁴⁵³

Clark had already left the group and moved on to work with the Theatre Guild as the head of their Play Reading department in early November 1929. The change of name and plea for subscriptions for the Provincetown was a last-ditch effort, and once again Clark did not wish to be part of a failure. To see it in a more positive light, Clark was also starting a position of great possibility. The Theatre Guild was in financial difficulties at the time Clark started there, but it was one of the great survivors of modern American theatre. If Clark could get his protégés staged at the Guild, they would definitely be noticed. The Guild hiring Clark to head their Reading Committee was one of the high points of Clark's acceptance by the New York theatre community. In order to do this he was obliged to cut any remaining connections with the Provincetown Playhouse. Theresa Helburn, his main contact at the Guild, seems to be the one who was pushing for this. Clark's resignation from the Board of Directors of Provincetown was accepted in the first week of November 1929.⁴⁵⁴ Later in November, Helburn noticed that Clark was still listed on Provincetown letterhead.⁴⁵⁵ After getting approval from Helburn, Clark was put on the Honorary Board of the Provincetown Playhouse along with Eugene O'Neill and Maurice Browne, in order to maintain a connection.⁴⁵⁶

Helburn and Clark were to meet in a weekly conference to discuss plays that he was reading for them.⁴⁵⁷ Because of the large number of letters that passed between them at this time, he appears to have done much of his work away from the Guild offices, with the exception of the weekly conference. Besides reading plays and bringing good ones to the attention of the directors, Clark served as a contact person for key playwrights of his

acquaintance. For instance, Helburn asked him about Green's opinion in an ongoing negotiation about The House of Connelly, a play the Guild held in a perpetual state of advances.⁴⁵⁸ Similarly, Clark acted as representative to O'Neill when the Guild was interested in his Lazarus Laughed.

While Clark was working for the Guild, another of his tasks was to identify young playwrights who were "worth watching." On April 20, 1930 he sent Helburn a memo listing these playwrights, their ages, a brief description of their greatest skills, and his forecast of their future. His "watch list" included: Frederick Schlick, Leo B. Pride, E. P. Conkle, Virgil Geddes, Frank B. Elsler, Knowles Entrikin, Samson Raphaelson, Lynn Riggs, Paul Green, Michael Gold, Em Jo Basshe, John Dos Passos, Marie Baumer, Daniel Rubin, William Powell, Keith MacKaye and Dan Totheroh. The oldest of these was in his late forties and the youngest was twenty-two, and they were mostly folk dramatists. The three most promising were those with whom he was already corresponding voluminously: E. P. Conkle ("Possibilities here are unlimited"), Lynn Riggs ("Will be recognized as one of our 5 or 6 best. Romance, subtle characterization, satire and tragedy. One of our three or four poets in the theatre. A Pulitzer winner") and Paul Green ("if he is able to continue work, I'll bet he will win the Nobel Prize by the time he's 50").⁴⁵⁹ These three may not have lived up to Clark's hyperbolic predictions, but they did have the *potential*. In this same "Memo" Clark included a list of "authors of single plays I have hopes for, but not enough data to predict on": Burdette J. Kinne, Annie Frierson, Leonard Ide, Olivia Hobgood, Thomas Craven, Kate Clugston, Kate Parsons, H.S. Stange, Josephine Francke and E.H. Culbertson. Finally, Clark identified Susan Glaspell, Kenyon Nicholson, Vincent Lawrence and Warren Lawrence as

established playwrights that may yet surprise.⁴⁶⁰ The Guild had repeatedly demonstrated its intention to maintain the practice of staging only polished plays likely to succeed, but Clark wanted them to encourage budding talent now in order to reap more polished works later on.

At this same time, Clark crafted a proposal for an experimental workshop under the auspices of the Guild to allow these young playwrights a chance to develop new plays. He continued to work on this idea for the rest of the year. There is a dated draft of his proposal as it was shown to members of the Board of the Guild on April 23, 1930 in the Beinecke Library,⁴⁶¹ and in the same location there is what appears to be an earlier draft, but it is not dated. The following is based on a copy of his plan from November 1930.* As early as March or April 1930, Clark gave his "Plan for an Experimental Workshop" to the Board of the Guild. It was in a draft format but still went to all the Board members (Philip Moeller, Lawrence Langner, Helen Westley, Lee Simonson, Maurice Wertheim and Theresa Helburn).⁴⁶² Clark's idea was to create a branch within the Guild or its Studios that would allow playwrights with little experience to get try-out stagings of their plays. This would help train the playwrights to have the sort of internal "eye" needed to translate dramatic literature into stageable theatre. After the dissolution of the Provincetown, there remained only two viable companies in the United States that provided an experimental venue: Jasper Deeter's Hedgerow Theatre and Knowles Entrikin's Beechwood Theatre.

Clark expressed the need for a call to action:

* His Proposal for an Experimental Workshop is Appendix C.

[D]uring the last six months the need for new actors, new directors, new plays, and new ideas has become more persistent, and nothing much has been done about it.... [E]ven playwrights of standing, with really good mss. (like Elmer Rice), and reputable managers (like Arthur Hopkins) are up against it. Phillip Barry, at the present writing, can't find the right actors for his new play; and Kenyon Nicholson left for Hollywood in disgust over the way his Stepdaughters of War was put on.⁴⁶³

This was not just a matter of unstaged plays; it was an issue underlying the whole culture of production of new plays. Producing groups like the Guild focused on finished and polished plays under tightly controlled conditions, so that they might be somewhat in control of the success of the show. At the same time, playwrights like Philip Barry and Elmer Rice wanted more control over the shape of initial production of their plays. The playwrights did not always think of a production in terms of its eventual success, but more often in terms of its veracity to their intentions. Clark wanted to ensure that playwrights could learn how to write plays that groups like the Guild would buy. He also wanted the Guild to learn how to honor playwrights' intentions while improving the pool of scripts for their future use.

The Guild's critics saw them as unwilling to experiment with American drama, unwilling to consider the opinions of playwrights, and uninterested in plays with any need for improvement. These criticisms were addressed by Clark's proposal, and he tried to explain these issues to the Guild's Board in a way that would reach them. In Clark's opinion the "ultimate purpose [was] to encourage the younger writers to look upon the

Guild- or its Studios, if further Studios should be formed- as the proper place to bring their more mature products."⁴⁶⁴ At the same time, Clark wanted plays done at his Workshop unobstructed by the Guild's tendency to keep plays in perpetual advances. Plays done at the Workshop would be considered for full production by the Guild or released for production elsewhere.

Clark made a good case for the need of his project and wanted the Guild to take it up before someone else did. In essence, he was merely passing on what he heard from his many playwright friends. He mentioned Green and Riggs, who had written several deserving experiments in the previous four years, but they had only one play each produced in that time. Similarly, Virgil Geddes had four productions of his new works, all done by amateurs. Leo Pride, E. P. Conkle, Don Totheroh, B. J. Kinne and Frank Elser had all been waiting three or four years for production of any one of their plays. Clark listed twenty-six more playwrights willing to write for such a Workshop, including Em Jo Basshe, Mike Gold, John Dos Passos, John Howard Lawson, e.e. cummings, Susan Glaspell, Eulalie Spence, Georgia Douglas Johnson and Thornton Wilder.⁴⁶⁵

The audiences, like the dramatists, needed to be encouraged so they would not become bored with what they were offered:

Unless the public is given a certain amount of new and experimental stuff, even if it is not liked or appreciated at first, there is always the danger of apathy. The public, at least an important part of it, is interested in everything new, no matter what, and this curiosity ought, indeed must, be stimulated and satisfied.⁴⁶⁶

Only through twenty years of expanding experimentation had American theatre developed the audience that was keeping the Guild afloat. Clark knew that one of the best ways to get the Guild back on steady ground was to continue developing their audience.

The Guild had a huge subscription audience base in several different towns, and often chose plays to interest the whole group. Clark felt that if they advertised the project inside the subscription audience, they could easily draw audiences and give more breadth to their repertory. The Guild would also benefit from training new actors, directors and designers. Finally, Clark suggested that his proposal would appeal to popular writers like Theodore Dreiser, Sherwood Anderson, Ernest Hemingway and Thomas Wolfe, who would not otherwise get produced as dramatists.⁴⁶⁷

The need for dramatists and good plays was *pressing* for the Guild, even though they had thousands of submissions yearly to their playreaders. Instead of waiting for the best playwrights to miraculously develop skills, why not encourage them along the way? After all, "wherever a tryout theater exists, new dramatists will spring up to use it. (Théâtre Libre, Freie Bühne, Moscow Art Theatre, Abbey Theater, Independent Theater, Stage Society, Theater Guild, Provincetown Players, etc.)."⁴⁶⁸

How Clark's Experimental Workshop Would Work

Clark wanted his project to be presented openly with the solid backing of the Guild. For this reason, he suggested an initial season of no less than ten manuscripts for the start of the project. All ten would be "accepted and announced" at the outset and given at least four times at matinees or on Sunday nights in one of the Guild theatres.

Clark was so adamant about this because he had seen Green dangled for two years by the Guild. They had announced but not produced his House of Connelly on more than one occasion, stringing him along six months at a time on advances. The shows were to be publicized as "experimental" so that the audience would come with a full realization of the goal. Besides the four shows, there would be a press review to benefit publicity.⁴⁶⁹

Clark wanted the project to be open to new talent. He recommended that the lists of actors interested in working for the Guild could supply actors who could be developed. The same thing went for directors, but here Clark threw in a reference to one of his long-standing ideas: he wanted to use the Experimental Workshop to display important guest directors from little theatres. He suggested "almost at random such men as Oliver Hinsdell of Dallas, Gilmor Brown of Pasadena and Frederic McConnell of Cleveland, Thomas Wood Stevens and James Light."⁴⁷⁰ He saw them as capable of teaching through example the lessons of non-professional production.

He realized the monetary difficulty of starting such a project and suggested hiring casts for the whole season "just as one hires a stock company." They could offer a salary that was lower in terms of weekly pay, but make up for it with the stability of being guaranteed for the whole season: "it is possible to secure all but well-known or very successful actors, on a season contract basis, at salaries 25% to 60% lower than are demanded under the ordinary routine. I know many a \$150 [per] week actor who would be glad to take \$60 to \$85 a week, for a 30 weeks' season contract."⁴⁷¹ Also, since these actors were performing on matinees and Sundays, they could bend Equity rules and work on more than one show at once. Clark mentioned scenic elements almost in passing, saying that much of what was needed could be adapted from Guild stock. Even if it was

not in stock, the style of scenery could be simplified or "purely conventionalized scenery [like] that Thomas Wood Stevens worked out so cleverly for his production of the Tour du Monde in Chicago."⁴⁷²

It is in the selection of manuscripts that Clark showed how much he had developed in the past 10 to 15 years. "I am convinced that the basis of selection must be upon such things as sincerity, novelty of theme or writing, artistic intention and potential power- not upon the degree in which the dramatist approaches our preconceptions of what a technically good and "effective" play ought to be."⁴⁷³ He had learned that if a play was sincere and powerful, but not technically strong, it was closer to being ready for the stage than if it was technically strong but insincere and tepid.

For the benefit of the playwrights, Clark also wished his Workshop to have some freedom from the Guild Directors. He wanted a separate Workshop Board that would choose the plays on its own, perhaps with the Guild Board able to stop a Workshop production with a unanimous agreement among the Guild Directors. Once a play was accepted by the Workshop, the Guild would have the option to sign a regular contract "otherwise, the author is at liberty, within a reasonable time, to dispose of his play as he sees fit" with the possibility that the Guild might have right of refusal on the following play or two by the author. Clark concluded his proposal with a list of new plays and young playwrights which could provide the first season. He mentioned twenty-nine male and female playwrights, and fifty-four of their plays, as ideal experiments. Since this was Clark's project, he included a very strong sampling of folk dramas and dramatists, largely a repetition of his memo on playwrights to be watched.⁴⁷⁴

The Guild Directors' opinion about such an experimental workshop was not positive. An example was Lawrence Langner's rather circular thinking about the nature of using the "provinces" as a basis for trying out new plays.⁴⁷⁵ He compared try-outs in the province to test-marketing a new food product. If someone passes around a bad product and everyone gets a stomach ache after eating it, then of course they are going to have their opinions shaped against future trials. They will be more wary, and unwilling to try something else new. Langner felt that producers would nonetheless continue to test market plays outside of New York because the provincial towns enjoy the plays or at least enjoy speculating on their success. Langner suggested that in order to have successful try-outs, the managers should only try out plays that the out-of-town audiences are going to like,⁴⁷⁶ even though the whole purpose of the try-out is to find out whether or not the play is going to be liked. The best that can be drawn from this is that Langer, as one of the directors of the Theatre Guild, had little tolerance for staging anything that was not assured of the greatest possible appreciation by the audience.

In 1931, Clark was still the head of the Guild's Play-Reading Committee and sent Helburn a memo reviewing the current circulating manuscripts along with the problematic relationships between the Guild and authors.* According to Clark, there was a shortage of good material, even though there were no fewer submissions than normal.⁴⁷⁷ The Guild was considering changing their submission policy to get a better group of plays for the amount of effort they put into reading, but Clark suggested keeping the policy as it was. He felt that an "open door" approach to accepting plays was the best

* This memo is Appendix D.

way to keep anything from slipping past the readers. The other option would have been taking play submissions only through agents.⁴⁷⁸

Clark then told the Guild the whereabouts of the established dramatists. Several had gone to Hollywood for the income: S. N. Behrman, John Howard Lawson, Eddie Mayer, George Abbott, Samson Raphaelson, Vincent Lawrence, Sidney Howard and Martin Flavin. Howard and Flavin were writing films and plays at the same time. Clark mentioned a few playwrights who were much less likely to send their plays to the Guild, because of how that organization had treated them in the past. "I imagine that after [Marc] Connelly's experience with Green Pastures he won't be ready to turn to the Guild soon again."⁴⁷⁹ Of particular concern to Clark were the reactions of Elmer Rice, Philip Barry and Paul Green. Rice at the time was trying to get The Left Bank produced. Clark outlined not just the play, but also his understanding of Rice's relations with the Guild.⁴⁸⁰ Apparently, the Guild delayed the decision on The Left Bank. They did not tell Rice in a timely or friendly manner when they decided not to do it, and this was the final straw in Rice's relationship with the Guild. Rice had summed up his Guild experience in a letter to Clark a year earlier:

Yes, I am planning to do some rewriting on Helen and John and on Baa,Baa Black Sheep (...) Both these plays were read and rejected by the Guild, and since my proposed changes will not particularly alter the general tone of the plays, there seems to be no good reason for submitting them again. In fact, there seems to be no good reason why I or any American playwright should ever submit a play to the Guild. The Guild in its entire career has done nothing whatever to encourage the American

playwright nor to help foster a native drama. It has drawn its support from the American public and has consistently refused a hearing to practically every American author of promise. My own case is typical. After the production of The Adding Machine, the Guild refused production to The Subway, Baa, Baa Black Sheep, Life Is Real, Helen And John, Street Scene and See Naples And Die. Admitting the imperfections of all of these plays, they certainly represent as high a level of achievement as do the dull and piffling European farces and costume plays which for years have represented the Guild's stock-in-trade.

Furthermore, the Guild in my opinion no longer has any claim to be called an art theatre. It has become a large scale commercial producing organization, dominated by box-office policies and using all the familiar devices of ballyhoo and high-pressure salesmanship. It has become timid, respectable and conservative.

Considering the Guild therefore, as a purely commercial producing organization, I find that I can sell my wares to better advantage elsewhere. I receive from the so-called Broadway managers, not only more courteous treatment and more prompt action, but much more favorable terms. Consequently, I cannot as I said, see what I have to gain by submitting my plays to the Guild.

You understand, of course, that these strictures upon the Guild reflect in no way upon you. I have great respect for your integrity as an individual and for your critical judgement and I shall always be interested

in what you have to say about my plays, either before or after production.⁴⁸¹

This letter reflects how much respect Clark had earned from his persistent support of American dramatists. Even as he was working for the sullied Theatre Guild, he was seen as personally respectable. I have been unable to find stated reasons for Clark's eventual departure from the Guild, but this dichotomy between his intentions and the Guild's actions seems a likely candidate.

Philip Barry, trying to sell Tomorrow and Tomorrow (which was called Hail and Farewell! at the time), had also been coldly rejected and ignored by the Guild. Clark covered Barry's situation in his reading report for the Directors.⁴⁸² In reference to Barry, Rice and Martin Flavin (also snubbed), Clark tried to suggest greater courtesy towards playwrights who were likely to contribute strong plays in the future.

Paul Green, as Clark saw it, had received the worst treatment. Green's House of Connelly by early 1931 had been announced but not produced by the Guild for two years running. Trying to raise a family, Green filled his coffers by teaching while he continued to write plays. By not jumping on this play, the Guild had forced Green to shop other plays around to other producers while Connelly was the best play he had. While waiting for Connelly to be staged, Green had finished The Honeycomb, sold Potter's Field for production by Harry Moses, and accepted from Moses an option on his next two plays. Connelly was not his only unlucky play. At the same time, he had sold Tread the Green Grass "three or four times" without production.

In sum, Clark felt that successful production groups like the Guild had a duty to support and encourage playwrights, rather than treat them as cogs in the machine of

production. He skirted around saying what Rice had said about the insidious reputation the Guild was developing. About the Guild's treatment of playwrights, Clark told Helburn:

I could give you other examples of this sort of thing, but I think you have enough. I am not laying the blame on any one person or theater. I do not much care how it is done, but something should be done in order to keep the talented people we have. I know there are good reasons why plays of Green, Tothoroh and others are not produced, but these reasons are in the final analysis not enough. To talk about encouraging these young people by telling them how good they are or even on occasion to pay them \$500.00 advance for a play doesn't really get anyone anywhere.

(...)

What these playwrights need and desire is production. If the Guild cannot produce their plays then the Guild should at least make it possible for someone else to produce them. If the Studio cannot take care of them all, then why not some try-out experimental theatre such as I suggested last year? Here again there are reasons against the adoption of such a scheme, but the history of the Guild, as I see it, is a history of insuperable obstacles that were somehow surmounted.⁴⁸³

After reintroducing his Experimental Workshop, he mentioned to Helburn the same playwrights who were still holding manuscripts suitable for workshop production. This time he proposed the twist that even if the Guild would not open their own Workshop, they could pay groups like the Hedgerow Theatre, the Beechwood Theatre or the Detroit

Playhouse to run a Workshop for them. He shortened the suggested season to six or eight plays and recommended budgets of \$200- \$500 for these shows.⁴⁸⁴

Clark received a reply, almost certainly from Helburn, about his survey of the manuscript field. Helburn was not moved to change the Guild's treatment of playwrights. She said "I think that the Guild is more entitled to apologies from Barry and Rice than the other way around."⁴⁸⁵ Her response to the idea of try-out productions was similarly unfeeling:

As to try-outs, while for many reasons I am anxious to get some kind of Studio under-way, its value as a try-out field, is, to my mind, negligible unless its acting and producing force are of really excellent calibre. I do not feel that a serious ensemble of [a] partly amateur group trying out half baked plays, is of much more than sentimental value. The less finished the play, the more it needs in the way of acting and production to help project it. Moreover, I am not sure that an author deserves a production for an unachieved play. What he really needs is an experienced theatrical person, either a director or manager, who can see the theatrical shortcomings of a play in which he, however, fundamentally believes, and help him get it into produceable form. This depends on a personal response between the individual of the theatre and the author and the management cannot undertake the task unless someone or other persons are keenly interested in the play and have a clear vision as to what it needs in the matter of rewriting. But to waste the time and effort of production on a play which no one considers ready for production and no one feels

able to prepare satisfactorily for production, seems to me rather an empty gesture. The Guild can only tackle such plays as it feels competent to cope with. The only kind of Studio production which would be of any value to my mind is, if and when we can achieve a Studio of fine talent.⁴⁸⁶

Helburn, in her rebuke of Clark's idea outlines some of the key components of a dramaturg as literary manager for a company. It is ironic that Clark was already providing these same things for his protégé playwrights.

Clark left the Play Reading Committee of the Guild in mid-June 1931. He sent Helburn a cordial but formal note saying: "at the close of our official relationship ... I appreciate having worked with you and I want to tell you particularly that my work here has been not only interesting but pleasant."⁴⁸⁷ Helburn replied with a similar cordiality saying: "I am not going to say 'Farewell' or anything of the sort because I feel your relation to the Guild still too close to admit a real severance and I do want you to know that we have enjoyed but appreciated your association with us and your very generous cooperation in our times of stress."⁴⁸⁸

I have a strong suspicion that Clark's Workshop proposal acted as a precursor for the Group Theatre, which began to spin off of the Theatre Guild about the same time. However, I doubt that he wrote it on behalf of the working group that would later become the Group Theatre. At the time that Clark sent his first proposal for an Experimental Workshop to the Guild Board in November 1930, Harold Clurman, a member of Clark's Play Reading Committee, was giving weekly talks to young actors about a theatre he wished to found.⁴⁸⁹ Once established, some of the playwrights listed in Clark's Workshop proposal were given productions through the Group, which helped develop

new theatre artists and performers and used new techniques that were a less conservative than those of the Guild. The Group also encouraged playwrights to share in a communal expression of all the theatre artists. A playwright was to participate in rehearsals, and have an equal voice in the production of the plays.

Clark mentioned the death of the Provincetown Playhouse and the effective start of the Theatre Guild Studio (to become the Group Theatre) in the same article. He was impressed with the way the Studio's opening play, Red Rust, represented the new ideas in drama from the Soviet Union and acknowledged that the acting made a propaganda piece genuinely entertaining.⁴⁹⁰ Clark also made a point of quoting from the Guild Studio's self-description:

... professional casts will appear in all their plays; their need for plays of an experimental nature, interesting in theme but not necessarily finished in technique; The Board of Managers of the Theatre Guild will supervise all their productions, and it seeks to offer an opportunity to the younger element of the theatre, both in and out of The Guild.⁴⁹¹

Compared to Clark's Experimental Workshop, the Studio was working entirely with professional actors, and was also under the thumb of the Theatre Guild Board, something Clark tried to avoid. Red Rust, the Guild Studio's only production, lost about \$13,000 and the Guild Board closed the branch down.⁴⁹² After the Studio was closed, the "Group" of theatre workers continued to plan, and started serious steps in November 1930 to recruit members through Clurman's talks. Between then and June 1931, they put together a company based more on moral and political beliefs than on artistic goals. They managed to get the support of the Guild Board, which contributed \$1,000 and gave

Guild actors leave for the summer to do "Group" work. The Guild also released its option on Green's House of Connelly,⁴⁹³ so that the Group would have a play to produce.

As the Group Theatre separated from the Guild, Clark helped them to shape their theories through discussions with Cheryl Crawford and Harold Clurman. He was not entirely in agreement with the way they did theatre, however:

... in becoming one of its first official sponsors I believed in what it wanted to accomplish, even though I thought that many connected with it *talked a great deal of nonsense*. The shadow of Stanislavsky loomed large over these young people, and I thought that more work and less philosophy would have enabled them to start more quickly than they did, and without the loss of anything that could not be spared. But the directors apparently had to hypnotize themselves into an almost religious mood before they actually set to work in their theater.⁴⁹⁴

Clark left the Guild at the same time that the Group departed and was briefly a member of the "Group Associates," an advisory board.⁴⁹⁵

The last theatre group with which Clark was directly involved was the Theatre Alliance. Early in February 1935 about 40 men and women with various connections to professional theatre met at the Belasco Theatre to form a cooperative repertory theatre. This project was named in reference to the Group Theatre and started in mid-April 1935 while they tried to find the funding to continue. Theatre Alliance wanted to use the repertory approach to help establish the relationship among plays and to develop a continuity over time, with plays given a chance to find their audience.⁴⁹⁶

Elmer Rice was part of this project, as he had been with Clark's first little theatre group. Rice pointed out four objectives for the project. First, they wanted to produce quality plays of past and present, mostly American drama. In each season, they would attempt to revive two American plays, produce two new American plays, and stage one new or revived European play. Second, the theatre was a tributary organization, meant to train and develop talent for the good of the trade. The best way to do this was as a permanent theatre with a permanent acting company of 15 to 20 players and an apprentice group to augment it. Third, the Alliance contained a studio/workshop that would admit 30-50 potential theatre workers. The curriculum would be practical, and based on the fact that many of the members had just come from college or university training. The fourth part of the program was the cooperative arrangement of the theatre. A socially educated group working as a unit towards the good of the art was the overall goal. Rice saw socially motivated artists as more valuable than those who worked from the viewpoint of the ego.⁴⁹⁷ The audience for this venture was just as important as the artists. For this reason, the audience was to have representation on the executive board of the theatre and "the best seats will be \$1.50; the cheapest, as cheap as it is possible to make them without throwing away the budget."⁴⁹⁸

The theatre did manage to interest many important artists and theatre workers. Artists like James Light from the Provincetown Players, Sidney Howard and Elmer Rice would be hired to direct. Barrett Clark would be the chairman of the studio to train young talent. This studio was probably going to be designed after the try-out theatre that Clark had suggested to the Guild. The actors who participated included Rachel Hartzell,

Sam Jaffe, Philip Loeb and Lester Vail.⁴⁹⁹ Even though the Alliance had talent, they could not find enough money, and they dissolved before offering a single show.

Not long after the Theatre Alliance project failed, Clark focused all of his attention on founding the Dramatists' Play Service. For almost twenty years, he had tried to translate the idealism of the little theatre movement into real benefits for American drama and dramatists. His projects never made a profit, but that was not the goal. Rather, it was to continue the spirit of the Provincetown and Washington Square Players and connect that spirit to what he saw as a singularly unspirited commercial theatre. Because he saw the dramatist as the central figure in the theatre, his tactic was to provide him with the proper support and sufficient productions to experiment, and thereby to develop. For Clark, professional theatre would not change until it staged fresh modern American dramas. The fresh dramas would only get written if the dramatists had a way to see experiments on stage. And the best place to experiment before an audience was in a little theatre specifically designed for experimentation.

Chapter 7: Founding of the Dramatists' Play Service

Between the World Wars American theatre became less driven by producers and more by dramatists. Clark contributed to this change by supporting specific writers and by changing the culture of play publication to give more of the profits to the dramatists. Clark helped construct the Dramatists' Play Service in 1936, when he was already a respected critic and theatre worker. He had eighteen years of experience in the largest English-language play publisher, Samuel French. French had a veritable monopoly on amateur rights to the best playwrights and works, and whether or not that was their intention, they controlled the finances of many American dramatists. To understand the position of a company like Samuel French, it is important to understand the general economics of American play publication.

The history of play publication for amateurs in the first third of the 20th century is barely mentioned in periodicals, letters or books. Publication of plays in hardbound, attractive editions meant for private reading was more common in this period than ever before in American publishing. Even so, no play ever became a best-seller, and the majority of plays were never printed in any way other than in cheap acting editions.* Publishers of acting editions did not spend nearly as much effort or expense on printing as publishers of hardbound plays and attempted to earn a profit from production royalties rather than bookstore sales. In the middle of an eight-month exchange of letters with the

* Acting editions are pamphlet bound editions designed for use in performing a script. They usually have detailed stage directions and may include costume notes, a sample scenic design or property plots. They are printed on cheap paper with narrow margins and small fonts. The wrapper (cover) is used to advertise other plays or products of the publisher. The wrapper is usually set up separately from the text block.

editor of The Drama in 1923 about amateurs paying royalties, Walter H. Baker

Company described the economics of an acting edition:

A manuscript is offered to us by an author of some importance. If it is of such a character that we can use it, we contract with the writer to give him a book royalty of ten percent of the retail price of every copy sold. Then follows a simple case of mathematics. We foresee a maximum sale of two thousand copies at a price, say twenty-five cents for each book. It is a proved fact that twenty-five percent of an edition of the size as mentioned are sold to our wholesale competitors at a discount of fifty percent. Our gross at its maximum is \$325. Take from this these expenses, author's book royalty, \$50; cost of plates (average), \$60; paper, printing and binding, with cover blocks, \$75; advertising space in catalogue (average per year), \$18; overhead each play, \$9. These to a total of \$212. It may take ten years to dispose of an edition of two thousand copies so that our net profit per play is about \$11 each year.⁵⁰⁰

This accounting assumes an average play, and not a play by a famous Broadway playwright. Most of the plays that Baker handled were written for amateurs rather than Broadway. They published plays like The New Co-Ed (Marie Doran) or A School Boy's Dream (A.E. Harris) that were performed as high-school class plays or as skits. Many of them were offered without royalties for performance by amateurs, or at least with inexpensive royalties. If the play was sold without royalty for performance, and if an edition sold out in less than ten years, the profit to Baker increased significantly in later printings. This is because the stereotype plates from the first printing were kept for reuse,

saving enough money that the second and any subsequent printings would earn the publisher \$17 a year, over ten years. This is likely what happened with plays like It Pays to Advertise (by Roi Cooper Megrue and Walter Hackett) or The Torch-Bearers (George Kelly). Some companies like Samuel French were using stereotype plates that were up to 80 years old.* None of the above accounting deals were with the authors and plays of Broadway quality, which would also draw significant profit from performance royalties. A well known author or play could have royalties of \$50 per performance from amateurs, from which the publisher would earn 25% or more. The plays that carried the company from year to year were these same Broadway plays and dramatists, but they often could not be sold to amateurs until all of the other sources of performance royalties were exhausted.

Until about 1930, scripts from Broadway would spend a few years trickling down through a hierarchy of rights, each type of rights designed for a specific type of theater or production unit. After writing the play, the dramatist would attempt to sell the manuscript for first-class production, usually in New York City, through an agent. A producer might pay an advance on the script, which would hold the production for a few months, while the producer waited for the right conditions. With repeat advances, a play could be kept out of production for years. Once a play made it into production at a first-class level, that producer would have some contractual right to profits from subsequent lesser rights. The theory behind the first-class producer earning so much from subsidiary rights is that the producer was the "author" of the production and that the producer's work

* This fact comes from examining multiple copies of the same play. The copies were dated by the advertising material on the covers. The fact that they were the same plates was determined by the presence of the same cracks and breaks in the type over many years.

was present in the stage directions of the publication. The first-class producer would retain control of a play until the contract or producer allowed it to be sold for stock rights. It would only reach the stock level after the subsidiary rights, touring and movie rights being the most important, were exploited.

Some agents dealt almost entirely in stock rights, and as late as 1927 there were still about 200 stock companies active at some level. The field was vigorous enough that playwrights would sell their stock rights outright* to stock agents. Once a stock agent owned the rights, he or she had to work in an atmosphere of competition with other agents for the limited number of producers. Stock agencies could earn \$500-\$700 a week in rights for a single play. A play generally was not leased to stock companies until it was in decline in New York City, and once it was released for stock it would be reserved for use only in "stock towns" for the next one or two years. Only after the stock rights were exhausted would the play be released to amateur companies. For amateurs the rights were handled by the play publishing and leasing agencies, some of whom could afford to buy outright the rights to amateur production. The journey from first class production to release of amateur rights, depending on the play's viability, could last one to five years. Not every play went through this whole process, and there were plenty of plays written only for amateurs, and never shown to stock or first-class producers.⁵⁰¹

This whole approach had changed by 1935. The number of stock agencies had declined drastically because there were only a couple dozen professional companies in "stock towns." The definition of what gave a town "stock" status was also becoming

* I am using the term "outright" to refer to a complete sale of all of the rights in perpetuity, as opposed to leasing someone the ability to sell a certain set of rights (i.e. stock, amateur, movie, first-class) for a certain period of time, after which the rights would revert to the author. "Outright" is also the term used in articles and discussion of the time.

more contested. It was easy enough to define a "professional" theatre company as one that paid the majority of its actors and production staff in the course of rehearsing and running a show, but it still had to be in a "stock" town to have access to the stock rights of the play. "Little theatre" companies that were almost professional in size still had to wait years for release of important plays to amateur rights if they were not in a "stock" town. Many people wanted to dismantle the whole system, so that amateur theatres could more easily fill in the gaps left by disappearing stock companies and the decline of "the Road." Edith Isaacs, in an open letter to the Dramatists' Guild, suggested the abolition of "stock rights" altogether and asked for agents to deal both with the amateur and the professional rights that remain, with no arbitrary rules for release of the rights in a certain order. She was not against releasing a play to different groups at different times, but said that it should be decided separately for each play.⁵⁰² It is at this time, in the late 1920s and early 1930s, that stock agencies stopped buying stock rights outright and Samuel French, Inc. started to buy more of the amateur rights outright.⁵⁰³

In reply to Isaacs' claim that stock rights limited the growth of the amateur field, Frank Shiel, Executive Director of Samuel French, asserted that there was no evidence to support the claim. He tried to prove in a letter to Theatre Arts Magazine that the continuation of stock rights did not adversely affect the amateur theatre. He pointed out that not all plays went through this whole cycle step by step; some of them went directly from professional production to the release of amateur rights, sometimes even before the show closed in New York. Furthermore, Shiel stated that an amateur director who inquired about the rights to a certain play was not basing his or her entire season on the accessibility of that specific play, and would therefore not be enormously slowed down if

he or she could not get the rights to it. Finally, Shiel pointed out that the clause that reserved stock rights for about a year or so in stock towns was very broadly and openly interpreted, so that it was rarely a limiting factor.⁵⁰⁴ It is important to remember that Shiel, as the head of a firm that dealt in both stock and amateur rights, was interested in retaining "stock" status. Stock rights at \$200- \$500 a week/per play were a lot more lucrative than \$11 a year/per play for amateur sales. By January 1937 the author of the "World and the Theatre" column of Theatre Arts Monthly* said that there was not a single professional stock company functioning regularly in the United States. There were of course summer stock theatres, and some little theatres that negotiated for "stock" rights, but there were no longer the traditional stock companies as they had been defined in the 19th century. As a result, the author of the note suggested that the Dramatists' Play Service should spearhead the movement to rewrite the clause on stock rights in every playwright contract. Clark was named specifically as worthy of this challenge.⁵⁰⁵

The Dramatists' Guild Minimum Standard Contract

The decline of stock companies was not the only major change during the first three decades of the 20th century. Theatre workers and dramatists were concerned with the growing power of movie studios as producing units for first-class shows. Movie studios backed first-class productions in New York in order to get control of subsidiary rights, particularly those of talking motion pictures. The ability of movie studios to get control of subsidiary rights to a play with relative ease was due to the structure of the Dramatists' Guild Minimum Standard Contract as negotiated in 1926. In this year, talkies

* Likely Edith Isaacs, but not indicated.

were not yet in existence, but soon movie studios realized that the best source for scripts for talking motion pictures was Broadway. In order to give playwrights improved contractual rights, the Dramatists' Guild used the expiration of the Minimum Standard Contract in 1935 (between the Guild and the League of New York Theaters) to negotiate a stronger position for playwrights. The Minimum Standard Contract outlined how all of a play's rights would be dispersed at the point the play was sold for first-class production.

The Contract was negotiated by the Dramatists' Guild, an organization under the umbrella of the Authors' League of America. They had formed as a committee of the Authors' League in 1919. Following the success of the Actor's Equity strike, they decided to form their own trade union, operating as an open shop. A dramatist did not have to join the Guild, but all Guild members assisted each other as a unit once they had joined. They did not follow the pattern of many of the on-stage and backstage labor unions, because they did not affiliate with the American Federation of Labor.^{*506} The most important product of their unionizing was creation of a contracted arrangement to support the dramatists in agreements with producing units.

The Minimum Standard Contract of 1926 gave a huge amount of profit to the manager after the initial first-class run of the show.⁵⁰⁷ Even though the contract was shaped at the instigation of the authors, the manager who signed such a contract stood to gain about 50% of all profits from most forms of royalties, with the notable exclusion of the printing and publishing royalties, which were vested solely in the hands of the author.⁵⁰⁸ These profits would continue as long as the script remained commercially viable and under contract. The manager was bound only to stage the play in question in a

* As did the scenic artists, the musicians, carpenters, property hands, teamsters, electricians, wardrobe attendants, bill posters, theatrical agents and managers.

first-class production (including first-class actors, scenic designers, etc.) in a major metropolitan city, usually New York, for three consecutive weeks. If it would not hold the boards in New York, this clause could be fulfilled by staging 75 performances by the same company while touring or by 24 performances in a repertory company in New York City.⁵⁰⁹ If the above was accomplished within six months of the contract date and all royalties were paid to the satisfaction of the author, the manager had right to up to 50% of the royalties earned by that play for years to come.

This contract showed the power relations between the author and the play-producing management in 1926, one of the best years for opening new plays on the New York stage in the history of American theatre. The contract suggested the importance of even a short New York production to the later livelihood of that play in the market. New York City was one of the few areas that could ensure the nationwide attention of other producers as well as the general public. Plays were also published using stage directions and notes from New York productions. Reviews from New York showed up in nationally syndicated newspaper columns, national magazines, and serial book form (Burns Mantle's Best Plays series is the best example of the latter). New York was the starting point for national or international tours and it defined what was American in American theatre. Three weeks on Broadway, properly discussed through national media, seemed a good trade-off for 50% of the author's profits on sale of: stock, touring, amateur, motion picture, radio, repertory and British touring rights. After all, the play probably would not be noticed by any of the latter producers without a New York production. The manager could even take a reasonable loss on Broadway if a play appeared to be profitable for any of the subsidiary rights.

The 1926 Contract was adjusted in 1931 with a Minimum Basic Agreement, and then renegotiated in 1935-6. The changes from the original contract were significant.⁵¹⁰ Rights of the managers in the new contract were still based around a three-week run on Broadway or a 75-show tour of a first-class production within six months of the contract date,* but the value of the later rights for the manager were significantly curtailed. Article VIII, section 1, "Subsidiary Rights," of the 1936 contract stated:

The Author shall retain, for his sole benefit, complete title, both legal and equitable, in and to all rights whatsoever (including, but not by way of limitation, motion picture rights, stock rights, amateur and semi-professional performing rights, radio and television rights, foreign language performing rights in condensed and tabloid versions, publication rights of music and mechanical reproduction rights of music) other than the rights specifically leased to the Manager under Articles IV and V.⁵¹¹

The rights given specifically in articles IV and V were those of production on the speaking stage in Great Britain and presentation in foreign countries other than Great Britain. Besides no longer having half rights to the stock, touring, amateur, motion picture, radio and repertory rights, the manager got 10% less of the profits in what rights remained in his or her possession, and these only lasted for four years after the first-class production. All other royalty-based profit from production of the play was in possession of the author, unless agreed otherwise. This new Contract was finally signed by both the

* This is not as easy as it sounds. *Theatre Arts Magazine* kept note of the failure rate of plays in the introductory notes of each issue. By the end of the season of 1934-5, the percentage of failures among all Broadway attractions was 81.3% (n.a. "The World and the Theatre" *Theatre Arts Magazine*, July, 1935, vol. xix, no. 7, p. 479), based on a run of twelve weeks or more being the measure of success. This was up from the previous year, which had a failure rate of 77.2% (same source).

Dramatists' Guild and the managers of the League of New York Theatres in July 1936, even as the Dramatists' Play Service was being formed. The group least happy about the new agreement were "the motion picture companies [who] are bewailing the fate of younger dramatists who are not, in the new deal, placed quite so liberally at their tender mercies."⁵¹²

The motion picture companies had been pumping huge amounts of money into the drama market. At the end of the 1933-34 New York season, the amount spent by motion picture producers for rights to plays was tabulated: Warner Brothers had spent about \$100,000 for rights to four plays; RKO had spent about \$129,000 for four plays; Paramount had spent about \$336,000 for seven plays; and MGM had spent about \$253,000 for six plays.⁵¹³ The plays that received the most money for movie rights were Sailor, Beware! (\$76,000) and Ah, Wilderness (\$75,000). Even though the Broadway failure rate was often between 60% and 80%, movie companies were still running shows for at least three weeks to gain movie rights.⁵¹⁴ Negotiation of the 1936 contract was heated. That the dramatists could negotiate such a strong contract, especially in the face of movie producers, is a testament to the strength of the Guild. Hot on the success of the re-negotiation, it also made sense to work for more control of dramatists' rights with amateur play publishing and leasing agencies.

Dramatists' Play Service was formed by the same people who had just re-negotiated the Contract, and it became the standard contract for the Service. Clark, who eventually became the Executive Director of the Service, helped Sidney Howard and Luise Sillcox with the project almost from the outset. The notion of the Service came from Howard during his brief but influential presidency of the Dramatists' Guild of the

Authors' League of America.⁵¹⁵ Howard felt that a single company, Samuel French, had largely monopolized the sale of amateur rights to English language plays in America, and that a competing agency should be formed.

Samuel French, one of the longest-lasting play agencies in the world, was founded in 1846. Since that year, it had bought or run out of business dozens of competitors, and was seen as the most viable market for plays in America and England. After Samuel French, the next largest companies were Sergel's (Chicago) and Baker's Plays (Boston). The competition was most fierce between these agencies at the end of each New York season. French continued the practice of outright purchase of plays. If they could get the authors of the best New York shows to give them exclusive rights to amateur business once the play died down in New York, then they could beat their competition. A company like French would offer the playwright the very tempting amount of \$1,000-\$5,000 for outright purchase of a single property.⁵¹⁶ At these prices, if French charged \$25 royalties a show they could make a profit after 40-200 amateur performances, not counting profit from script sales. French did manage to buy outright some scripts that became huge profit-makers. A good example is It Pays to Advertise, for which Roi Cooper Megrue and Walter Hackett (the authors) earned a lump sum that was much lower than what they would have earned from royalties.⁵¹⁷

Even when French did not buy a play outright, they were accused of stinginess on advances against future royalties. George Middleton mentions advances that seldom exceeded \$2,500. Clark's correspondence with Paul Green and Lynn Riggs on behalf of French reflects that the publisher was also willing to trade advances for the ownership of larger percentages of the royalties. As early as 1929, Green had a line of credit with

French that allowed him to get loans of \$50 to \$250 at a time against future royalties.

Green struggled this way for a while, but eventually had to come up with new ways to get money from French. He wrote to Clark:

In view of the fact that production seems still in the future I sent Mr. Sheil a letter offering to sell French's a still further slice of two plays. I have no idea as to what is a good gamble, but it seemed to me fairly one. I hope to hear from him soon.⁵¹⁸

Green then mentioned the manuscripts which arrived every day or so from other writers, asking his advice about whether to keep writing or stick to their day jobs. Green recommended working slowly and seeing what happens.⁵¹⁹ Two years later, in 1931, Green had to make further sales to French:

Now for something of business which I wish you would pass to Mr. Sheil. French owns 25 percent of Connelly. On Dec. 13- unlucky day- I have to meet my last big payment on my belongings [his home]. My account is rather overdrawn with you and since Connelly has a chance to go on the road and will no doubt as time goes on do business with little theatre groups, I'd rather sell another part to French than ask them for credit. I've tried to get these notes renewed further, but nothing doing here. I need \$1,200 on the 13th of December and will sell French an additional 15 percent of the play for that amount- which will bring their holdings to 40 percent. I don't believe there's any chance of its not paying French for the investment and as for me- it'll pay me to get this load off so I can go ahead

with my work. If it's satisfactory have a bill of sale made out and I will sign it at once.⁵²⁰

Sheil wrote to Green on December 12, 1931 to accept this offer and included a check for the amount.⁵²¹ Green was selling off further shares of House of Connelly even as it was running successfully at the Group Theatre. So, even if they could not buy the rights to plays initially, sometimes French gained control over time. French was run as a property management firm, similar to real estate, and Howard wanted an agency that would focus instead on the needs of the dramatists themselves, which is why Clark was the ideal candidate to lead the organization.

Howard wanted to create an agency incorporated under the Dramatists' Guild that focused solely on selling amateur rights to members' plays. Membership in the Guild was made up partly of Active Members who had written at least one play that was given a first-class production in the United States or Canada. It also had Associate Memberships for anyone that had written a dramatic work or was in the midst of writing such a work. This meant that almost any dramatist who paid dues could be a member of the organization, and therefore could have access to the Play Service, once organized.

The Service had to be kept secret while in planning stages, especially from the other large play agencies that would be competitors. Clark was in a difficult position because of his job at Samuel French. He was not happy there, but he was ethically bound to work on their behalf as long as they employed him. Even before Clark knew about the Service, he expressed to Green the need for a job change and asked for his help. Green replied on April 16, 1936:

I have your letter of the 14th and I agree with everything you say. Be sure that I will keep on the lookout* and it might be that the very thing most satisfactory to all concerned-- except F.†-- will show up. By the inserted phrase I mean the company would be fools and vastly poorer if you were let go. But that's the way it is. I've long ago learned that the least business-like people in the world over any considerable stretch of time are the so-called business men. They are so busy diving for mortgages, dollars and bonds that they never realize the power and direction of the stream's current until it's too late and they are swept over Niagara or some such disaster. That is, the nature of their intent is necessarily shortsighted. The studios also are money-making organizations as they are now run. But with one hand saluting art and the other rifling the pockets of the public, they offer a posture at least of friendliness to people like you and me, which can't be said of all industrialists through the fair land.⁵²²

The idea of working for the movies was considered only briefly though, because Howard and Clark were soon discussing DPS and how to make it work.

Clark also had to be careful around his friends before the DPS became public knowledge. For instance, Ernst Toller contacted Clark to ask him to be the American agent for his plays. He was having financial difficulties, living in England, without access to profits from German-language productions. His friendship with Clark began in 1922 and 1923 when Clark was living in Berlin. Toller had been arrested as the leader of

* Green was heading out to Hollywood for a short period of writing movies.

† Samuel French, Inc.

the Bavarian Soviet, which was declared soon after the end of the first World War.

Clark corresponded with the political prisoner about his plays, and may have visited him in prison, or at least sent him books there.⁵²³ Clark was in the midst of organizing DPS before they went public and before he left Samuel French. Toller's plays would be good for the new Service if he could keep them from French's attention. As soon as he could tell his friend about it, Clark wrote to Toller to clarify the situation. This is also a good summary of the situation, so I include most of the letter:

During the past few weeks our Dramatists' Guild has been planning to form a Cooperative Service Bureau to handle the amateur acting rights on the produced (not yet the unproduced) plays of its members. While most of our members will use the service, they will not be required to do so. Already most of our best-known dramatists have pledged all their new plays for the next five years: men like Sidney Howard, George Abbott, Phil Dunning, George Middleton, George Kaufman, etc., and most of the young Leftists: Maltz, Peters, etc. The Service will pay no advances nor buy plays (or even shares) outright, and commissions will be limited to 20%. Experience shows that playwrights have been paying far too high for the service they are getting from the private agents, and many abuses are apparent.

I have been asked to head this bureau, and the people I shall take with me are familiar with every detail of the business. The Guild will share in the profits, so that the whole enterprise will be only incidentally a profit-making enterprise. It is estimated that after the Service is well

under way, and has a fair number of new properties the playwrights will receive in the aggregate \$100,000 a year more than they are now getting.

The directors of the Guild are unanimously in favor of the new project, which may be announced publicly within the next few days. However, at present the whole thing is to be kept strictly private: the amateur publishers must know nothing until the announcement is made.

I take it that when you first wrote me your intention was to allow me to handle your plays in this country. However, since I was, and still am, connected with an agency it was my duty to turn the matter over to that agency. I did so, but was told that no action could be taken now, since the affair was complicated. I therefore take it for granted that you are now at liberty to dispose of your work elsewhere, though you are perfectly free to take the matter up again with French should the new Guild project fail to materialize. My suggestion now is that you write a letter to Sidney Howard, President of the Dramatists' Guild (9 East 38 St., New York), somewhat as follows:

"I have been told, confidentially, of the Guild's project for the establishment of a Service for the handling of the nonprofessional rights of plays of its members, and I understand that Mr. Clark is to be in charge. Should this scheme be worked out satisfactorily to you I should like to have all my plays handled by the Service on the terms specified by the Guild. Should the Service not handle the professional rights I should be

happy to have your advice on where to apply for a good agent." (...) I presume you know about the Guild? It is a powerful organization, a closed shop, to which every American playwright (who has ever had a play professionally produced) belongs. There are also a great many foreign playwrights who are members. I am asking the Guild to send you various leaflets, a copy of our new Minimum Basic Contract, etc. I take it that you are already a member, but if you are not I believe you may become (until your next play is professionally produced here) an Associate Member, at \$8.00 a year.

Since I am on the subject, and provided always that you are interested, I should appreciate your taking up this matter, personally, with certain foreign playwrights, including the English, though the Guild will have communicate with many of these on a personal basis. I may say that from the viewpoint of mere demand (among the better type of non-professionals here) such men as Lenarmand, Bernard, Vildrac, Kaiser, Pirandello, Coward, Drinkwater, O'Casey, Novello, are the most important. However, we want all good authors.⁵²⁴

In corresponding with his radical acquaintance, Clark could more openly describe it as a unionizing tactic, appealing to socialist thinking. He writes of the Guild as a "closed shop" and he specifically mentions the young Marxist playwrights who are members of the Guild and have passed on their produced plays to the new Service. This is the same

work that got Clark noticed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.* Toller was pleased with the prospect of DPS and in a letter to Clark dated August 10, 1936, he gave the Service exclusive amateur rights to his plays.⁵²⁵

This gets a little ahead of my narrative, as it was actually in about the middle of May 1936 that Howard told Clark for the first time about his idea for a new way of representing plays for Guild members. Clark replied to Howard, in a "Confidential" letter, dated May 25, 1936:

I've considered the tentative proposal you made me last week; in fact, I have had such a thing in mind for some years. I've discussed it confidentially with a friend and present associate of mine, who is the one logical man who ought to go into the thing with me, and both of us are pretty sure that the idea is sound, and can be made decently profitable.

There are, of course, details to be discussed, questions to be asked, assurances to be made, on both sides.

This is the right time to strike.

Give me a ring, and we'll talk things over.

(...)

This associate, with one of the younger me- plus me- will be enough. Among the 3 of us, we'll know all that's necessary about the whole damn business!⁵²⁶

* He is mentioned in Herbert Mitgang's Dangerous Dossiers: Exposing the Secret War Against America's Greatest Authors (p. 179, New York: Ballantine Books, 1989). I do not know any more than this single reference, tantalizing though it is.

Soon after this, in an undated letter circa June 20, 1936, Clark renewed his and his "associates'" excitement. He wrote: "About the Big Plan, we're full of Agenda and ready to start at the fall of the handkerchief. Rarin', I believe, is the proper word."⁵²⁷

Howard had his own agenda and wanted to make sure that Clark could make the case to the Guild Council about how DPS differed from Samuel French. In the week before the Guild voted on creation of the Service, Howard wrote to Clark.

Thinking over our pet scheme on which, unless things change and no quorum is obtainable, we all get together on Thursday, one worry haunts me. French has made its money on bargain outright purchases such as It Pays to Advertise with all the returns coming in. With our policy of turning those big profits over to our authors, will we be able to break even on commissions (20%) alone? Ask your friend Duffy (?) to think this over and, if possible, get up some figures. I'll call you hoping that we may lunch on Thursday.⁵²⁸

Clark responded to Howard's worries in an undated letter, saying: "If we get the plays, and are not held back too long for stock or Road rights, it can be done on a 20% basis. It will mean close figuring and no profits to speak of for a time, but as the list grows we can look for a surplus and get it."⁵²⁹ In spite of these jitters about their chances, the meeting of the Guild Council on June 25 was successful. The Council voted to support the project and a "Confidential" memo was passed to the Council-members not present.

The memo was sent to the Council by Luise Sillcox,* Executive Secretary of the Guild, on June 30, 1936. It stated that the 6 members of the Council who could get to the meeting (Sidney Howard, Elizabeth McFadden, George Middleton, Rita Weiman, Kenyon Nicholson and Howard Lindsay) had agreed to form the DPS. They did not have a quorum, but were backed by nine other Council members who wrote in their support (George Kaufman, Philip Dunning, Edward Childs Carpenter, Jules Eckert Goodman, Morrie Ryskind, Moss Hart, Austin Strong, Arthur Richman and George Abbott). Clark was not on the Council, but was also present.⁵³⁰ The Memo continues:

The Council felt that the establishment of this service corporation to handle amateur rights was practicable and that we should go ahead with the plan, provided we were assured of getting for a period of five years new plays of the majority of authors most in demand in the amateur field, and provided, in addition, that we could be sure of obtaining the rights to nearly all the important plays produced during the past season, the amateur rights of which have not yet been contracted for. If we are able to obtain this assurance, the Council then decided that the general membership should be informed of the proposal together with the names of the authors agreeing to give us their plays and the membership should decide whether dramatists desire the establishment of such a service.⁵³¹

Soon after the June 25 meeting, Sillcox organized the Council membership into four categories: 1) members who had no access to the amateur rights in any of their plays (mostly writers of musicals); 2) members who did not have plays in the previous season

* Though she is listed as a secretary, Luise Sillcox had just as much say in the shape of the DPS as Clark or Howard; though she barely exists in published theatre history, she was integral behind the scenes in organizations like this.

of interest to DPS, but who had promised (in writing) their future plays; 3) members who had no plays of the previous season of interest to DPS, but who had not yet promised future plays to them; 4) members with plays in the past season on which DPS wanted a 2-months' option and from whom they wanted a promise for the upcoming 5 years.⁵³²

Luise sent letters adapted to the needs of each situation, so that all of the members of the Council would hold back for two months (until Sept. 15, 1936) from leasing amateur rights on plays of the recent season that would be useful to the DPS. Her letters also made sure that Council members had all sent a written agreement to give the amateur rights of new plays to DPS for the next five years without commission, in a contract based on the Minimum Standard Contract just negotiated. Besides members of the Council, Sillcox sent these same requests to a important playwrights in the general membership, even though they had not yet been officially told of the proposed Service.

There were two important dramatists who created special problems, Eugene O'Neill and Phillip Barry. Sillcox wrote to Howard about them on July 3, 1936. O'Neill was one of the most respected playwrights in America, but he had not allowed any agency to have exclusive use of his rights. He was a member of the Guild Council and supported the idea of the Service, but because of his past actions Sillcox worried about asking for a five year contract.⁵³³ In the end, she wrote a letter to O'Neill asking for him to contract with DPS for amateur rights, but not insisting on the five year exclusivity that other Council members were agreeing to. She sent this letter to Howard, so he could decide whether to mail it, and also suggested having Clark talk directly with O'Neill.⁵³⁴ Philip Barry was opposite of O'Neill, since he was not on the Council and he had "never been cooperative."⁵³⁵ Nonetheless, Barry and Sam Behrman were two playwrights not on

the Council who should have been asked to contract with DPS before the Service was announced to the public. Sillcox held off contacting Barry until she heard back from the rest of the Council and until Clark was able to talk to him personally.⁵³⁶

After requesting a five-year exclusivity and two month's hold on sale of the season's plays, the next step was incorporation. At this point, the only people who knew about the DPS besides Clark, Howard, Sillcox and the lawyers were the members of the Council, a select group of agents and an even more select group of important dramatists. Some of the solo agents were in on the project and agreed with the need for greater competition in amateur rights, but these "Participating Agents" worried that DPS would hurt their profits. Initially, the agents were willing to allow amateur rights to be handled by the Service, but they wanted to maintain control of road, stock, radio and movie rights. Clark and Howard agreed to not deal in stock or road rights (at first) to help appease the agents. They were also enticed by being offered a share of the Service's future profits.

As Clark, Sillcox and the Guild's lawyers discussed incorporation papers early in July 1936, they made the choice to incorporate as a business rather than a cooperative. They also decided to incorporate in New York, rather than the lower-tax states of New Jersey or Connecticut, and ask for a tax exemption as a non-profit making company.⁵³⁷ At about this time Clark, Howard and Sillcox wrote a Preliminary Plan which outlined the shape of the Board of Directors and the purpose of the Service⁵³⁸. The directorate would have 6-10 members, including Clark as the Executive of the corporation and one theatre manager. The remaining members would be chosen half by "Participating Agents" and half from the Dramatists' Guild.⁵³⁹ The plan stated that:

... the purpose of the corporation would be to handle the amateur performing rights of dramatist members of the Authors' League of America on a commission basis. The underlying philosophy of the plan is that amateur rights are small rights similar to the musical performing rights held by the Composers' society and can be handled cooperatively more satisfactorily than by individual competition. Such handling would, we believe, assure the widest distribution and the best service to playwrights and to amateur groups. It is proposed to specialize at first in the handling of these rights in professionally produced plays and to charge a commission on such plays of 20%. Other plays of members, one act or three act, suitable for amateur production, may be handled by the organization for a higher commission. For the present no plays will be bought outright. No advances will be paid. It is proposed to use a standard contract approved by the Dramatists' Guild. It is contemplated that immediately upon receipt monies will be segregated and 80% deposited in a separate account for distribution to the authors of the plays quarterly, or upon request at any time after it has accrued. It is planned to use a name which shows the connection with the Dramatists' Guild and to include in the name the word "service" to indicate the cooperative character of the service. It is not contemplated that all members must handle their work through this service. It is however, contemplated that the corporation will handle the rights in any produced play of a member of the Guild provided it has been produced and has run for a given number of

weeks. It is contemplated, however, that before undertaking any great expense, the corporation will secure the options upon the plays of a number of dramatists for a period of five years, and will secure the promise of complete cooperation from some of the leading agents.

The corporation will set aside not less than 25% of the net profits of the organization (after paying all expenses and dividends on Preferred Stock, to be divided among the agents whose clients' plays are handled by the corporation. The amount to be distributed to each agent would be proportionate to the amount of business brought to the corporation by his client. This would be in exchange for agents waiving their 10% commission on monies accruing to their clients from the corporation.

Since the expenses in the first few years will be very heavy, the first five years should be reckoned as a single period rather than as a year.⁵⁴⁰

The Service was trying to expand gradually. First, they would represent plays by members of the Guild that already had a first-class production in a major city. Such plays would already have the publicity connected with a large production. They were likely to have been reviewed in national magazines catering to the needs of the amateur and little theatre market or at least in a major newspaper with national circulation. In order for DPS to survive past its first year, it was vital to gain control of the most important plays and the help of the best playwrights. This made Clark an ideal candidate for the Executive Directorship. He already knew the most important playwrights and had a strong idea of the up-and-comers.

In a summary of the "Estimated Expenses, First Year"* the un-named author, most likely Sillcox and Clark working together, wrote that it was:

... essential that the majority of the outstanding successes of the past season be secured. Unless Boy Meets Girl, First Lady, Ethan Frome, Idiot's Delight, End of Summer are secured and offered at once (i.e. in the fall) for production, it will hardly be possible to get even a foothold. To these should be added a few other titles: Bury the Dead, Moon Over Mulberry Street, Murder in the Cathedral and perhaps a few more.⁵⁴¹

The Dramatists' Guild hoped to use connections among playwrights and agents to stop the dispersal of the amateur or stock rights for the last season's plays. Besides these recent plays, the Service wanted to gain control of plays without huge commercial pull, but important for release in "lesser" rights including: Green Pastures, The Yellow Jacket, 3 Men on a Horse ("unless it's too late"), Yellow Jack, and Spring Song.⁵⁴²

In this early phase of organizing, the most important American dramatists had already been identified, and many were recruited for an Advisory Board. At the same time, a separate list of dramatists was created that were "among members of the Dramatists' Guild known to me and believed to be particularly anxious for the new setup."⁵⁴³ This list included:

Siftons, Nicholson, Flavin, Kelly, Spewacks, P. Osborn, Entrikin, Wexley, Bein, Blankfort, Maltz, Rice, D. Powell, R.J. Powell, Raphaelson, Atlas, Basshe, Cushing, J. H. Lawson, Clugston, Kreymborg, G. O'Neil, Hatcher Hughes, Baumer, Ide, Jennings, Totheroh, Eustace, Lavery (Regarding

* "Estimated Expenses, First Year" is Appendix F.

Green and Riggs, they are favorable but for a short period will probably be tied up by prior engagements.)⁵⁴⁴

Also groomed for inclusion in DPS were foreign authors, especially those that were seen as poorly exploited in America. For example, both Shaw and Barrie had their plays managed by several different agents and "consequently no one pushes them."⁵⁴⁵ The foreign authors seen as worth cultivating included Coward, Maugham, O'Casey, Priestley, Van Druten, Drinkwater, Molnar, Toller, Obey and Werfel.⁵⁴⁶ The skill and vigor with which Clark pursued these authors is shown by the early catalogs of the company. By 1938, they were advertising a 72-page catalog.

The Dramatists' Guild was attempting something fairly audacious. The estimated minimum expenses for the first year were \$20,000 to \$25,000,⁵⁴⁷ and this was to be reimbursed with profits from commissions that were purposely set very low. Assuming amateur royalties of \$25 to \$50 per show, the Service earned 20% per show, or \$5-\$10 per performance. That means that it would take 2500 to 5000 performances of shows controlled by DPS in order to cover a year's expenses. This does not even take into account the 25% of DPS profits which was to go to "Participating Agents."

The promise of 25% of profits per year is how the agents were attracted into co-operation. Normally, an agent would receive a 10% commission on the dramatists' share of royalties. The "Participating Agents" were asked to waive their commission in return for access to preferred stocks, half the initial common stock, some control of the makeup of the Board of Directors, and, as soon as it turned a profit, their share of one quarter of DPS profits, depending on the business the agent's clients brought to DPS.⁵⁴⁸

To raise operating funds, the Service issued 6 per cent cumulative preferred stock to those sanguine enough to invest in the enterprise. Most investors were Dramatists. Common stock, which was to receive the profits after preferred dividends had been paid, was issued in equal amounts to the Guild and the Trustees for the "Participating Agents." The share flowing to the latter was to be in lieu of commissions they were giving up.⁵⁴⁹

Of the expenses predicted for the first year of DPS, the greatest expense was for salaries. The estimate was made for three salaried positions: "A@ 125. per week, B@ 100. per week, C@ 35. per week."⁵⁵⁰ "A" was almost certainly Clark. "B" was likely one of the people Clark said he was bringing with him from French, possibly "Duffy," who helped Clark estimate the financial stability for the new corporation. "C" was likely a permanent secretary, since they had been borrowing the Dramatists' Guild secretary ("Miss Rennie"). Besides these three, an estimate of \$500 was made for "temporary extra help."⁵⁵¹ The second largest expense, \$1500, was under the heading of "Manuscripts," a reference to the process of acquiring copies of plays not yet printed that were of interest to the corporation. This amount was based on a cost of \$15 to \$50 a set for copies of manuscripts. Only enough money for 30-100 scripts was set aside, because "such expenses are self-liquidating, since these are charged to account of each play."⁵⁵²

The estimated \$20,000 to \$25,000 needed for the initial year was to be raised by sale of stock. To ensure a large enough capitalization, they issued 1000 shares of preferred stock at a par value of \$100 per share and another 10 shares of common stock at no par value.⁵⁵³ They did not think they would raise all \$100,000 immediately, but even

before their incorporation they asked for pledges. Their "Preliminary Plans" stated that "subscription [is] to be taken immediately for \$25,000 and additional \$25,000 in pledges to be taken to be paid within nine months or a year. The probability is that the additional \$25,000 will never be needed and possibly, if the department is very successful, the whole \$50,000 will not be needed."⁵⁵⁴ The preferred stock would accumulate \$6 "per share per annum payable out of the net profits of surplus of the corporation at such time or times each year as the Board of Directors shall determine, before any dividend shall be declared, set apart for, or paid upon the common shares of the corporation."⁵⁵⁵ The ten common shares stood less chance of an immediate profit. They had no par value upon issue and would not earn any dividends until all present or accumulated dividends on preferred stock were paid.

Preferred stock was to be sold in a pre-defined ratio to the "Participating Agents," who would get 25% to 30% of the stock, and the "Authors League Members," who would get 70% to 75% of the stock. The ratio of control of the corporation between these two bodies was one of the most disputed parts of the organization, with the agents trying to get 50% of the preferred stock. If I understand correctly, it is through preferred stock dividends that the agents would earn the 25% of the profits of the company that they were promised in return for giving up the usual 10% commission they would earn from the playwrights' amateur and stock royalties. This means that of the \$6,000 to be paid out yearly in dividends on preferred stock, agents would earn \$1500 to \$1800.

In the second week of July 1936, Clark resigned from Samuel French. It was a risky move, with his three children to support, but he had looked at enough other positions if this did not work out that he felt safe. The Council members also would try

to find something for him through their connections, if DPS failed. Sillcox wrote to Howard about this on July 10, 1936. I include most of the letter to show the amount of care and respect Howard and Sillcox felt for Clark.

Further in regard to my wire about Barrett's resignation, I wanted him to resign and I knew you wanted him to because if he said he would stay he would, in my opinion, in all honor have had to stay one or two years, not just a few months. On the other hand, since he has children to support, I wanted to be overly careful.⁵⁵⁶

He could not be hired until DPS was incorporated, so there was some time.⁵⁵⁷ Sillcox had:

... an increasing feeling that things had to be hurried or Samuel French would acquire more plays of last season. Also, there is a time to do everything, as you and I decided last week. The time for this is definitely here. I felt, however, in honor bound to point out to Barrett that although all of us had every intention of shoving this through to completion and although I knew that the Authors' League and the Dramatists' Guild and individual members would see him through a few months if anything went wrong, still he was giving up a permanent position. Barrett's answer was that he knew all the risks, he knew the decision was entirely his own because under the circumstances we could not guarantee, but that he was going to resign for the following reasons, in addition to his thrill and interest in what we are doing:

- (1) Some day he was going to leave French anyway.

(2) There was a chance that with his experience and good will and interest of all the agents and authors, some of us could find something for him to do if this fell through (this was Dick Madden's idea yesterday morning).

(3) That his position at Samuel French if he stayed after this would be more unhappy than in the past.

(4) That he was sure the Rockefeller group would give him a job at \$50 for a very small amount of time, or \$100 a week if he could give them half time, and possibly more, if the thing fell through and he could spend his whole time there; that that job would be good for two years anyway (...)

I always feel that I can decide whether what someone else is doing is reasonable only if I would do the same thing in the same position. After talking to Barrett I decided that if I were in the same spot I would take the same chance. He will, therefore, resign from Samuel French today. He will ask to be relieved at once and to waive his right to one week's vacation which is due him. If they hold him to two weeks' notice he will ask that one of them be the vacation week that is coming to him and that he only be obliged to work one week, so that he will be in our office next Monday or a week from then. This will help me a lot because it is hard to catch up the general work that has to be done in the Dramatists and Authors' departments and shove this ahead at the same time. He will naturally make the offer to French that if leaving on such a short notice

puts them in any kind of a jam on which they want his advice, or they find anything he has not cleaned up, he will come back at any time to help them straighten it out.⁵⁵⁸

While Clark, Sillcox and Howard discussed the terms for Clark's inclusion in the project, they also prepared a leaflet which would go to the general membership of the Guild to petition their support. The leaflet was effectively a press release. As the first announcement of the DPS, this leaflet was constructed along with the incorporation papers. They had to be able to back up in the latter any promises made in the former. William Hamilton Osborne, lawyer for American Dramatists and therefore DPS, and Alec Lindey were working on the legal problems of incorporation, and they were asked to examine the leaflet before it was printed.⁵⁵⁹

The point is that this leaflet could be considered as laying the groundwork for sale of stock and therefore we have to be overly conservative in our claim of what will result.

I am trying to clean up the way to approach point after point with the lawyers today and work with Barrett and Miss Rennie tonight. The printer will set proof Saturday morning so it will be ready for all of us to look at Monday morning.

(...) I showed the memorandum for the members to Mr. Osborne and then went over it with Barrett tonight to meet Mr. Osborne's objections.

I'm sending copy as re-written to the printer tonight. He's going to set it tomorrow without letting me see proofs and mail a galley to you at Tyringham at noon tomorrow. I'll have proof Monday. The plan is for me

to show it to Alec Lindey and Mr. Osborne on Monday and get their final approval. (...) In general, Mr. Osborne's criticisms were:

(1) to get away from the direct, traceable references to Samuel French in order to avoid libel or insinuation of unfairness;

(2) that since we might be considered legally in this document to be laying a foundation for the selling of stock to our members, I have to underestimate the possibilities instead of being enthusiastic -- this is in order to avoid a charge of fraudulently selling stock (...)

(3) the suggestion which was business, not legal, advice, that we cut out all details such as uniform advertising, names of the board of directors, etc., etc., since it would delay the issuance of the pamphlet to check every item and might seriously tie our hands if the board of directors of the corporation later decided to steer away from any single item. These details can just as well be included in follow-up letters which will have to go out once we have the corporation running. In rephrasing, Barrett and I thought it best to state our specific examples in more general terms rather than in actual figures in order that we could be sure that if we were challenged in court we could prove our statements. The difficulties with the figures you mentioned were that Barrett hasn't ever seen Samuel French's books and has the detailed information from another person who would not testify.

(...) Barrett and I are dictating this more or less together, but Miss Rennie is signing it because it's late tonight and horribly hot and we don't want to stop to write it up tonight.⁵⁶⁰

In the third week of July 1936 the leaflet making the DPS public news was sent out by Howard, Clark and Sillcox. I have a feeling that the leaflet went to all the members of the Dramatists' Guild of the Authors League of America. I have not yet been able to examine a copy. Clark was congratulated on his new position by many of his friends, but it also created problems. Clark was caught in the newly competitive atmosphere. Young playwrights like Michael Blankfort became hot properties in the new competition for amateur rights between French and DPS. In a letter to Clark dated July 21, 1936, Blankfort congratulated Clark but peppered him with questions:

Does this mean that you are no longer agenting for playwrights - and that having just started I shall have to seek elsewhere? Does it mean that royalties will come through French (which they haven't as yet)? I am not particularly anxious to have Shiel handle the matter of Choose a Bright Morning for me. I can't conceive of French without you.

Am I right in understanding that you are only going to handle the amateur rights of Guild authors? and that other rights, production, et al, will be handled by other agents?

This and other questions (to paraphrase Time) are in the back of my mind.

Take your time answering. You must be busy. I will write to Sheil about the Battle Hymn royalties which haven't come yet, unless you have other ideas. I'll wait a few days before I write.⁵⁶¹

During the next month, French offered publication of Blankfort's play, probably to get the dramatist before DPS had time to organize.⁵⁶² Blankfort wrote DPS two weeks later that French had contracted for rights to his play, and refusal rights on the next three.

Paul Green wrote on July 30, 1936 to congratulate Clark and thank him for the work he had done.

I've just got your letter and also the news from Sidney Howard's leaflet that you are now launched on the new business. Elizabeth sends her love and her wishes for the venture and I add mine and the belief that you will do a great thing for all of us playwrights. Naturally there will be problems to solve, but I'm sure you'll do that. So, Barrett, we are all behind you. So you know I am still hooked up with Mr. Sheil, but whatever poor help I can offer apart from the business of writing plays please call on me for it. You know my feeling for you and my appreciation for what you have done for me, but I want to tell you-- something you already know, no doubt-- that every American playwright I've ever met up with seems in some curious way to be indebted to you. So from our point of view and our camp you will have nothing but helpfulness, I'm sure.⁵⁶³

After DPS became public, they were still faced with satisfying the Participating Agents so that they could actually incorporate. These agents were concerned with what rights DPS was going to be able to negotiate. To make this even more difficult, Clark's

former boss, Frank Shiel, tried to turn the agents away from DPS before they could incorporate. For the agents to join they had to be certain that they would be able to profit, because they would be waiving the 10% commission they normally earned from amateur royalties. In return, the Service would negotiate with amateur production units for them, and they would receive 25% to 30% of the preferred stock and half of the common stock. The agents would have to buy the preferred stock on their own, but five of the 10 shares of common stock would be given to a trusteeship working for the agents. Only after the 6% dividend (including any accumulated dividend due from previous years) was paid on preferred stock would any dividend be declared on the common stock. As a result, the agents were very interested in negotiating for half of all the preferred shares, since the dividends on those shares was guaranteed.

Early in August 1936 some of the agents tried to hash out their differences with Clark, Howard and Sillcox. After talking with the Guild representatives, the agents met separately and invited Shiel to join them. Sillcox, Howard and Clark were not pleased that he had the ear of the agents, but Shiel was also a member of the agents' association, and therefore had the right to meet with them.⁵⁶⁴ In order to influence the agents against the Service, Shiel brought a long list of plays that he had bought outright from these particular agents, and then explained how terribly unprofitable the plays had been. Shiel attempted to prove that the business of selling amateur rights to Broadway plays was profitable in very few cases and then only when the agency owned the play outright. Shiel claimed to have lost \$3000 the previous year on plays sold only on commission.⁵⁶⁵ He succeeded in scaring them enough that Mr. Rumsey (one of the agents) was not initially willing to work with the DPS Board of Directors.⁵⁶⁶

Shiel's figures were grim. Of the Broadway plays that he bought outright, more than half of them did not earn back the cost of their purchase, between 40% and 45% broke even or made a slim profit, and the remaining 5% to 10% carried the whole list.⁵⁶⁷ Playwrights in the Guild sometimes questioned whether the agencies pushed certain plays to the detriment of others, or to the detriment of the whole field of theatre in America,⁵⁶⁸ which was why so few plays carried the list. Shiel maintained a pessimistic outlook on the profit possibilities of Broadway plays, and claimed he was obliged to buy up the rights to them in order to forestall the beginning of any competing agency.⁵⁶⁹ The overall picture given of the business was that the plays on commission were a loss, and no more than a tenth of the plays bought outright carried the other properties. This ignored another portion of Samuel French's business, which consisted of plays that had been written specifically for amateur or little theatre production, and never even opened on Broadway. This latter part of the field was actually where French had a large amount of competition. There were good sized agencies like Denison, Walter Baker and Dramatic Publishing Company that dealt mostly in amateur and little theatre plays. The threat that DPS presented was not in this area, but rather to take control of the most successful Broadway playwrights and to offer them the chance at a larger amount of profits than they were given at French's.

Harold Freedman kept in close touch with Sillcox and Clark during these discussions and was behind the new Service, but was worried about the figures nonetheless. The Service had already told the agents that it would only deal in amateur rights and not sell stock or radio rights for any of the plays, but Freedman was concerned that they would not be able to survive on only amateur rights. If the Service sold stock

and radio rights, they would be in direct competition with the agents who relied on such rights themselves. Based on this worry, Freedman wanted the agents to be given a 50% interest in the new corporation.⁵⁷⁰

Sillcox and Clark both were interested in the Service for more than economic reasons, so profit concerns were secondary to development of American drama. Sillcox wrote to Howard that outside of profit the Service would serve three other goals:

- (1) To have a service available for those authors who wanted to sell on commission which would not own plays so that they would not feel that the plays that were owned were pushed to the disadvantage of plays on commission.
- (2) To cut down for the little theatres, amateurs and colleges as much as possible the conflict between stock brokers and amateur brokers. If the amateur agency is close to the author, who also is the principal person interested in stock sales, this friction should be cut to a minimum and the play given to amateurs as soon as possible at the close of the professional run.
- (3) To establish another service in the business of handling the amateur rights in Broadway produced plays so that we would not be in a position of being at the mercy of a monopoly.⁵⁷¹

Sillcox suggested incorporating right away with a Board of Directors representing the authors only, turning over no more than 70% of the stock to the Authors' League and retaining the remainder in case the agents decided to join, and also to keep the initial Board of Directors until the meeting of the stock holders near the end of the year 1936.⁵⁷²

Even though Clark had worked with Samuel French for the previous 18 years, he had never been privy to the account books, so it was only by his discussion with the

playwrights and agents that he could verify or deny any of the claims Shiel was making. Harold Freedman, one of the agents most agreeable to the new Service asked Shiel to show him the specific figures for the plays Freedman's agency (Brandt & Brandt) had sold to Samuel French in the previous ten years. Shiel was slow about allowing this, but eventually he arranged a meeting at his offices. The Bancroft Library at Berkeley contains a second-hand summary of this discussion. It is undated but labeled "Notes for Sidney Howard from Barrett Clark and L.M.S. [Luise Sillcox]."

Shiel showed Freedman the financial records for 27 of the 28 plays that Brandt & Brandt had sold outright to French. Freedman felt that there was no need to ask to see the plays sold on a commission basis, since Brandt & Brandt would have their own copy of those records. The one play for which Shiel did not show records was Sidney Howard's The Late Christopher Bean, which is important, because it was a huge profit-maker. Overall, Shiel's figures showed less profit than the total sum that had been paid for the 27 plays. After subtracting the 20% that was the cost of the business of selling the plays:

Mr. Shiel counts that he is out on his purchases from Harold \$10,000 to \$15,000. The amounts paid were \$500 and up, though there were a couple under \$500. The losses were a surprise to Harold in some instances, the gains a surprise to him in others. Noah (I believe Harold said this was not his play), for instance, shows a heavy loss. Flamingo was the most successful. Shiel made 400% on that. Among the list were the advances of \$250 with grosses of \$41; advances of \$6,000 with earnings of \$3,000. Ned McCobb's Daughter showed a loss. The Silver Cord, on the other hand, made a reasonable amount of money, but was not a great seller.

None of Max Anderson's plays have made up their advances.

As regards Chris Bean, the questions Harold asked him were: "Has this made you \$50,000?" Shiel's answer was: "Nothing like it." Harold asked "Will it make you \$250,000 ultimately?" Shiel said that this was a crazy dream of ours. Harold asked if it would ultimately gross \$100,000. Shiel's statement was that they would be exceedingly lucky if it ever brought them in \$60,000. They listed it as having cost them \$17,500. We had thought they paid \$12,500, but Harold tells me they bought a half interest for \$5,000 and later bought another half interest for \$12,500. Harold asked them what they thought it had brought them and they stated that for the United States and Canada they thought it had brought in about \$20,000. They stated that they knew something about figures, but that they could not give them, since they did not know that the manager of the London office would want them to discuss his business. Harold got the impression that it was just catching on in London, was likely to do well there and that they knew it.⁵⁷³

These numbers are only from the plays through Brandt & Brandt in the past ten years and Shiel had left out the profit from the London branch of Samuel French. The Late Christopher Bean alone was likely to make the whole group of plays profitable. Clark and Sillcox also pointed out that the playwrights that Brandt & Brandt managed wrote "very sophisticated plays" and usually got more for the plays bought outright than other agents did.

Late in August 1936, DPS finally was incorporated,* after the Participating Agents had been satisfied. When the Dramatists' Guild Council actually voted to form the company and created the Board of Directors, it consisted of nine members, four chosen by the "Participating Agents," four more chosen by the Guild, and then the final member agreed on by both Agents and Guild. The leading individuals of the Guild responsible for the founding of the Service were Sidney Howard, Howard Lindsay, Kenyon Nicholson and George Abbott, and they may have also been the founding officers of the Board of Directors. Two years later, in July 1938, the officers of the Dramatists' Play Service were: Howard Lindsay, President; Sidney Howard, Vice President; Barrett H. Clark, Secretary; and Luise M. Sillcox, Treasurer. The Board of Directors did the hiring for the Service, and acted independently of the Dramatists' Guild and the Participating Agents, once it had been voted into shape. It had already set up an office of sorts, inside the offices of "The American Dramatists"† (9 East 38th St., New York, NY). Clark wrote to Paul Green on January 2, 1937 to update him on DPS:

After several bits of tactical and strategic obstruction on the part of the professional agents, aided and abetted by our 45th Street friends,‡ the D.P.S. is about to step forth. The professional agents are coming in to cooperate which will give us a good many titles to carry us over to the time when the plays of our 200 pledged authors materialize. It is consoling to know that we are going to handle exclusively the professionally produced plays of so large a number of good writers. Right

* A draft of their Incorporation Papers is Appendix G.

† This is another name for the Dramatists' Guild.

‡ Samuel French, Inc.

now we have the three latest Kaufman plays which will be enough probably to pay a good part of our running expenses. Then the three Max Andersons, not to mention Brother Rat, Daughters of Atreus, Yellow Jack, 3 Men on a Horse, Boy Meets Girl, Winterset, Idiots Delight, Ethan Frome, and The Petrified Forest, etc.

Nevertheless it has been hard for me to wait so long before getting started on our national publicity campaign.⁵⁷⁴

Soon after its founding, Clark had the nearly impossible task of rapidly acquiring enough plays to allow the company to survive the competition it had just created. He sent personal entreaties to every person he could think of to request scripts. The support of Guild members was obvious from the start. Not only did they buy stock in the Service, but about 200 playwrights gave permission to Clark to be represented in part or in whole in the amateur field. These 200 agreed to give up advances on their new, and some old, plays for the first five years of the Service. Clark had already acquired the right to sell some of the most popular plays of Maxwell Anderson, Sidney Howard, George S. Kaufman and Owen Davis. Among these playwrights, the plays of Kaufman and Moss Hart more than anything else ensured the company's success. By 1965, their plays represented one fifth of the plays that had grossed more than \$100,000.⁵⁷⁵

The important but commercially neglected older plays were an important part of Clark's plan. One of the plays that Clark thought could be more successfully sold to amateurs was Yellow Jacket by George Hazelton and J.H. Benrimo. To talk the owners of the rights into letting DPS use the play was not simple, which is probably why it was commercially neglected in the first place. In response to Clark's request, Benrimo wrote

him a very proper and highly mannered letter, going into great detail.⁵⁷⁶ As a result, his letter was a little confusing and caused more difficulty than it cleared up about rights to the play. Benrimo tried to explain exactly why it would be difficult to issue an amateur version of Yellow Jacket. He felt that it would put two different versions of the play on the market at the same time: a quality re-publication of the original version, and a version that would have to be written especially for the amateur's use. Benrimo had little conception of the simplistic needs of an acting edition, and suggested that DPS offer it on a subscription basis in order to see if there was enough interest in the play to warrant publishing it in a version cut and adjusted for production. Benrimo also explained the relationship between all of the various owners of rights in the play, and how that put barriers up against publication.⁵⁷⁷

Clark's three-page draft reply to Benrimo was penciled onto the back of the same letter. He offered to have DPS cover the cost of the reprint edition as part of the cost of "business done with the acting edition."⁵⁷⁸ This would allow reciprocal ads to be placed in both the reprint and acting editions, which would solve Benrimo's worry that two editions would cause confusion.⁵⁷⁹ Clark then outlined the positions of the owners of the script as he understood them:

Now, for the sake of all of us who are concerned in this matter, let me again try to present briefly the issues at stake, & the terms of the compromise I am striving to convince all of you to accept:

- A. Mrs. Hazelton wants the original edition reprinted.
- B. Messrs Coburn & Benrimo want the acting version published.

C. Will Mrs. Hazelton agree to the publication of the acting version in case Messrs Coburn & Benrimo agree to the re-printing of the original edition? From your letter & from what Mr. Coburn tells me, I assume that this is so. But I am not yet quite sure whether Mrs. Hazelton will, under these conditions, consent to the publication of the acting script? This I shall ask of her at once.

Once this point is decided on, I feel sure we can work out the details.⁵⁸⁰

Although Clark tried to work out the details, it was not successful. The various owners of the script did get interested in having it published as an acting edition, and three years later it was published by Samuel French.

In order to try and drive the newcomers out of business, Samuel French and other rival agencies started to attack the Service in one of their weak spots, the lack of capital. They began to offer comparatively large advances on royalties in order to secure new scripts. In some cases, they offered as much as \$20,000, four times as much as their previous highest advances. Of course in the middle of a Depression, this was an enormous enticement, and DPS had to change their intentions and offer advances in return. The first of these advances came directly from the bank accounts of members of the Board of Directors, and could only be given to the most desirable properties.⁵⁸¹ Another system the young company utilized was to offer a guarantee of future royalties, in lieu of an actual cash advance⁵⁸² (sort of a promise of advances in the future). The members of the DPS Board did have to take out some loans early on to make payrolls and

overhead.⁵⁸³ In a sense, DPS was almost driven out of business by the very competition they sought to create.

One way the Service kept growing, even without the capital to give out advances, was through cultivating support from America's prominent dramatists. This was done within the first months of their existence when Clark and Sillcox proposed the formation of an Advisory Board. Their proposal was sent to the officers (Sidney Howard, Howard Lindsay, Kenyon Nicholson and George Abbott) on September 18, 1936. The proposed Advisory Board was to include: Sidney Howard, Walter Eaton, George Kaufman, Albert Maltz, George Kelly, Howard Lindsay, Kenyon Nicholson, John Wexley, Paul Green, Max Anderson, Marc Connelly, Robert Sherwood, Clifford Odets, Philip Barry, Elmer Rice, Jack Lawson, John Golden, George Abbott, Martin Flavin, Austin Strong, Arthur Hopkins, Susan Glaspell and Rachel Crothers.⁵⁸⁴ The board was almost completely honorary, and the list was to be "on the letterhead and for prestige."⁵⁸⁵ They tried to find not just playwrights, but representatives of the academic world (Walter Prichard Eaton), theatrical managers (John Golden, Arthur Hopkins and George Abbott), and maybe even an actor.⁵⁸⁶ The biggest problem was wanting to put Eugene O'Neill on the Advisory Board, even though none of his plays were to be handled by DPS.⁵⁸⁷ After consulting with George Abbott, Clark sent an invitation to O'Neill as well as to George M. Cohan and Sam Behrman.⁵⁸⁸ Ultimately, the Advisory Board included most of the people suggested. As of July 1938, George Abbott, Maxwell Anderson, Philip Barry, Edward Childs Carpenter, Marc Connelly, Rachel Crothers, Walter Prichard Eaton, Martin Flavin, Susan Glaspell, John Golden, Arthur Hopkins, Sidney Howard, George S.

* "O'Neill" is written in at the end of the list, and then crossed off.

Kaufman, John Howard Lawson, Howard Lindsay, Albert Maltz, Kenyon Nicholson, Clifford Odets, Eugene O'Neill, Elmer Rice, Robert E. Sherwood, Austin Strong and John Wexley were members.

Although created mostly for image, the Advisory Board did lead to a very important early client for DPS, the Federal Theatre Project. Late in 1936, Clark sent a telegram inviting Susan Glaspell to join the Advisory Board. At the time, she was in Chicago working for the Works Progress Administration and replied that she was:

... very glad to be a member of this Board, for I think the idea an excellent one. I am writing you now about what I am doing here and I think you may be able to help me. I am with the Federal Theatre as Director of a Play Bureau for the middle west.

My headquarters will be Chicago, but the idea is to try and find plays suitable for production in Chicago and in the other middle western cities that have Federal theatres. I am much interested in this, not only because of my interest in the Federal Theatre, but because my feeling about the middle west. What I hope to find is plays indigenous to this region, though that need not be exclusively true. If I can find some good plays from the soil or from the experiences of recent years, I will feel that we are doing something for the theatre in helping build it up through this part of the country.

Because of your long experience with plays and playwrights I wondered if you might not have something in mind. We have been receiving plays from French's, so possibly have seen some of the plays

you might think of. Perhaps you would let me know if anything does come to mind, and let me know too of any playwrights you know out here who might be interested in this. I am just beginning to work and will appreciate so much any suggestions you may be able to give me.⁵⁸⁹

Having Glaspell on the Advisory Board probably helped when the Dramatists' Guild negotiated with the Federal Theatre Project for special deals on the rights to plays.

The WPA and its specific projects represent one of the strongest periods of nationwide artistic examination and development. WPA projects helped define what America is by examining local pasts, improving national monuments and sites, and creating not just work but projects that discussed America's self-image (e.g., theatre projects, guides to the states and the rivers, etc.). Hallie Flanagan described the Federal Theatre Project of the WPA in terms similar to those Clark used to talk about folk drama. Besides the surface need to employ the American population, the FTP set up regional theaters performing local dramatists for audiences that would understand them best. The core idea was to fulfill the:

... need throughout America [for] a number of theatres, experimental in nature, specializing in new plays of unknown dramatists, with an emphasis on regional and local material. (...) We need a theatre adapted to new times and new conditions; a theatre which recognizes the presence of its sister arts, and of the movies and the radio, its neighbors and competitors, a theatre vividly conscious of the rich heritage of its past but which builds towards the future with new faith and imagination.⁵⁹⁰

The FTP meshed nicely with many of Clark's ideas of American drama. For that reason, it is a suitable site from which to conclude this study. It created an environment for experimentation in staging and writing, derived its workers and writers from the folk of America, and assumed the folk as a primary audience. Most importantly, it was not something that occurred only in New York; it was a national experiment.

Late in 1936, Hallie Flanagan wrote to DPS concerning the best way to arrange royalty payments for the use of plays by such a large national organization. Because it was not clear whether the FTP would count as a "professional" group or as a "stock" group, they negotiated through the Dramatists' Guild for plays that would ultimately come from the DPS. Since DPS had agreed not to sell stock rights, and because they wanted to protect amateur rights as much as possible, the Guild and the FTP needed to create a middle ground. The two organizations had a conference on December 11, 1936 to discuss the FTP's use of plays. Flanagan then discussed the results of the meeting with some of the directors of the national regions of the FTP (William Stahl, John McGee, J. Howard Miller, George Kondolf, Philip Barber and Hiram Motherwell). The FTP had to work within the guidelines of governmental procedure, so the discussions were tricky, but they still wanted to approximate the "customs of the profession."⁵⁹¹

The FTP outlined some proposals to ease the payment of royalties on plays. They suggested that the FTP paying the same fee for all plays done, rather than negotiating each contract separately. This would cut down significantly on paperwork, but was also meant to fit the complex economies of play production to the needs of governmental accounting practice. The FTP would centralize play rentals out of New York City's "Central Contracts Department," which worked directly under the Washington, D.C.

headquarters of the FTP. This office would create a mimeographed bulletin every two weeks outlining all pertinent information about the plays produced in the previous two weeks. Payments would then be made once a month for the preceding month's performances. The Guild suggested that payments represent a straight percentage of the gross box office receipts of all the hundred or more producing units in the Project. Needless to say, the Central Contracts Department did not want to have to deal with such computing, and they suggested a slightly different method of calculation. They would pay a rental of \$50 a night for a production by a Federal Theatre unit in a single city. After three weeks' continuous run, this would increase automatically to \$75 a night. After a six weeks' run, it would increase to \$100 for the remainder of the run.⁵⁹² This only covered the possibilities for a continuous run show. For repertory performances, the FTP suggested a proportional rental fee, based on the number of performances given in a week, which would increase when the equivalent of a three week and a six week run was reached, as discussed with the continuous run shows. For touring shows, the FTP suggested a flat rental fee of \$10 per performance.⁵⁹³ Finally, Flanagan pointed out the possibility of hiring authors to assist productions of their plays that were being professionally produced for the first time by the FTP. She pointed out that the Project created a market for their work at a national level, without any intention of impinging on the subsidiary rights of the plays (movies, radio, etc.).⁵⁹⁴

The Guild took about a month to discuss the proposal, after which Sillcox responded to Flanagan on February 1, 1937. The Guild felt that paying a standard per-night rate no matter which town or theater the play was done did not take into account the size of some theaters and the popularity of theatre in some towns and cities. Although

they favored the payment of a percentage of the gross box office receipts of each theatre, they proposed a compromise with a plan built on the old stock system of royalties. According to this plan, the various stock centers in the United States would be designated either "A", "B" or "C". The "A" would have the highest per week rental rates, the "B" would be the medium rates and the "C" would be the lowest rates. Instead of using the actual rates that the old stock companies used to pay (as high as \$500 a week for a single show in a single theater), the Guild suggested basing the rates on a level closer to that of the college theaters and larger amateur theaters; especially since these were the groups with whom the FTP would be competing:⁵⁹⁵

In this amateur-college field, it has been the general usage of the amateur agencies to charge a fee of \$50 per performance for new and successful plays and of \$25 per performance for all others not of extreme maturity. With these figures in mind and with every desire both to simplify your problems of administration and to protect the Guild's interest in the amateur field, the Council suggests:

1. That the Guild and the Federal Theatre units in revising the old stock lists so that the classifications "A," "B" and "C" be brought up to date.
2. That the rentals for Class "A" cities (i.e., Boston, Cleveland, Chicago, San Francisco, etc.) be \$150 minimum per week; that the rental for Class "B" cities (i.e., Atlanta, New Orleans, Denver, etc.) be \$100 minimum per week; and that the rental for Class "C" cities (i.e., all cities and towns not included in either "A" or "B" classifications) be \$50 minimum per week.

3. That a reduction of 25% be made in both "A" and "B" classifications on Federal performances for which no admission is charged.
4. That a reduction of all rentals above \$50 minimum be made on any play leased by the Federal Theatre five years after the termination of its first class run.

You will understand that the Guild's interest in protecting the amateur field is a double one. In addition to the fact that Guild members derive a considerable income from the amateur productions of their plays, the Guild has itself lately established an amateur play rental service, the object of which is to encourage the amateur-college theatrical field by the closest possible cooperation between the Guild and the producers in that field. The Guild is therefore committed, in spite of its sincere eagerness to cooperate with the Federal Theatre, against any arrangement which places the amateur theatre at too great a disadvantage. The facts of the competition between the Federal Theatre and the amateur theatre have already been submitted to you and are causing the Guild a continued and increasing anxiety.

On the other hand and in the interests of the Federal Theatre, the Council submits that the Federal Theatre will be able to secure the plays it desires only by paying the author approximately the income which he can expect from the amateur field. You are of course well aware of the number of new plays which are produced annually in the college and

amateur field. It is our understanding that these are the plays in which you are most interested.⁵⁹⁶

Outside of these few suggestions, the Guild agreed with basing the repertory and touring rates on the continuous performance rates. They also insisted that hiring of authors as technical assistants on first performances of shows would be mandatory.⁵⁹⁷

The negotiation between the Guild and FTP shows how close American theatre had come to Clark's ideal. The Federal Theatre Project wanted to stage experimental plays by folk dramatists for the common people. They wanted (and the Guild insisted on) the input of the dramatist in production, making the playwright more central to theatre. The lines between stock production and production in large amateur groups (like colleges) was blurring in such a way that the amateur theatre was becoming the standard and professional theatre was following it. Finally, the whole discussion was carried on by theatre people talking to theatre people rather than business people.

What had started as a Service for selling only amateur rights to first-class plays, grew within a year into one that provided some of the plays in a pseudo-stock fashion to the Federal Theatre Project. About a year and a half later, the DPS had also expanded to selling plays written specifically for release to amateurs. This type of play was as old as the notion of amateur play-leasing agencies, and was in fact the mainstay of almost all of the play agencies in the United States in the 1930s. Before Dramatists' Play Service, only Samuel French had the size and strength to deal not just in the lesser amateur-only plays, but also in the amateur rights of the hottest properties. After DPS proved that it could also deal in the latter, Clark advanced the sale of the former.

Clark had long been a proponent of a vigorous non-professional theatre in America, but he had to convince some playwrights that their plays would never be performed outside of the non-professional stage. Many playwrights focused only on literate plays, but Clark along with his editorial staff put together a guide for "Writers of Plays for the Amateur Market." This was a form letter outlining the "rules" of what was needed by the Service to help it survive in the amateur market. Clark understood that the amateur market was likely to be more lucrative than the professional market, as long as he could find plays to suit it. Shiel had made the same claim two years earlier when he was trying to convince the agents not to join up with the Service. The recipients of the letter were encouraged to remember that "the subject of this letter is business, not art."⁵⁹⁸ Art plays were the ones sold to the colleges and universities, but there was a great need for high school plays that fit certain criteria. First, the plays had to be simple in theme, with short speeches and simplest of scenic elements.⁵⁹⁹ Furthermore:

There should be at least as many female characters as male, and preferably two or three more. There should be no plot involvement or even reference to "sex", aside from its purely romantic and superficial aspects. There must be no profanity, blasphemy, or any adverse reference to or reflection upon the better known varieties of organized religion or the clergy. There should be no drinking on stage of an alcoholic beverage, and preferably no reference to it except to point a moral. There should be no discussion of politics, except in its non-controversial aspects. There should be no questioning of the status quo in moral, economic, political or religious matters. No character should smoke on the stage.⁶⁰⁰

Of course, the best genre of play to write for this audience was light comedy, with an occasional fantasy, mystery or melodrama being useful. Whatever the genre, the cast had to be large "seven women and five men are best."⁶⁰¹ These twelve characters should all be young, to suit the acting pool of sixteen to twenty year olds. Any character sufficiently older would best be a "character" role.

It is hard to describe the ideal amateur play. It must, however, be amusing; have an easily understood and quickly moving story; it should have plenty of laughs throughout; and explain or suggest some idea or viewpoint that is optimistic, "worth-while" and wholly acceptable to present-day Americans who are neither intellectuals nor morons.⁶⁰²

The sorts of plays that Clark and his other editors were looking for was a reversion to exactly the sort of play that he had made fun of when it was done by the women's study groups and student groups when he was starting in theatre.

Between these glorified skits and the selling of amateur rights to the highest quality Broadway dramas, Clark did manage to turn the Dramatists' Play Service into a success. After five years, DPS had a catalog of plays that rivaled all the other publishers.⁶⁰³ Even though they were in debt for the first ten years of their existence they did finally start making a profit. The Dramatists' Play Service took a few years before it regularly operated in the black, but in the meantime, it had grown at an enormous rate. On November 3, 1938, Barrett Clark and Luise Sillcox wrote to Sidney Howard about the results of a Board of Director's meeting of the DPS. A space had opened for lease in the same building and the Board wanted to raise immediate funds to secure it. They predicted the need to raise \$5,000 that month and then another \$5,000 by December 15th,

even though they had 90% to 100% better sales figures compared to the previous year. The estimates for sales of that year had only predicted a 50% increase, so they were growing phenomenally, but this was off-set by the fact that the sales of preferred stock were not growing fast enough to keep up with the expenses created by such a growth.⁶⁰⁴ Before Clark's death in 1953, DPS had paid off almost all of the accumulated dividends of the preferred stock. Because of Clark's hard work building up DPS for the seventeen years that he ran it, at his death it was making profits for the playwrights as well as for the Dramatists' Guild. By 1964, DPS was paying out \$573,000 a year in play leasing royalties and more than \$28,000 a year in book royalties, and kept a staff of 16 people busy full time.⁶⁰⁵

Conclusion

Barrett Clark's career as a dramaturg influenced the shape of modern American dramatic literature through his friendships, publication, criticism and editorship. His activities linked together the influences of the little theatre movement, folk drama, worker's theatre, changes in play publication, and the Drama League of America. Because of his friendship with almost all of the important American dramatists and producers of the Inter-War period, Clark was a one-person web of information and support. Before Clark, there were theatre workers who acted similarly, as gatherers and disseminators of knowledge to the American theatre community, but Clark had a unique approach. He was more concerned with the creation of dramatic literature than with the performance of that drama, which made his work as a critic, editor and scholar the work of a dramaturg. Due to relationships with Eugene O'Neill and Sidney Howard, and because of the work of experimental theatre groups just after World War I, Clark discovered that America had the possibility of producing its own modern literary tradition with his help.

Most of his publication before 1920 relied on works by Aristotle and his Renaissance interpreters to explain the correct form and function of plays. This approach worked well while he was teaching 19th-century European theatre to the members of the Drama League of America, but he had to reassess when he started working as a literary manager in 1920. The European playwrights that he taught wrote realistic, well-made scripts that conformed easily to analysis according to rules and unities. The Drama League audiences were used to five-act plays that followed the unities of time, place and

action and contained believable characters and a melodramatic climax followed by a resolution scene. But dramatic literature needed to be not only stageworthy, but also worthy of publication and reading for generations. Therefore, when Clark shifted his focus from European theatre to American drama, he needed to devise new ways to approach the texts he was reading. Clark adapted the practice of dramaturgy in America to serve the needs of the young dramatists working between the World Wars.

Just after World War I, Clark's relationships with Eugene O'Neill and Sidney Howard fueled his interest in being an *American* dramaturg. These two playwrights portrayed social and philosophical ideas using whatever experimental style that served the needs of the subject. O'Neill was especially opposed to the mechanistic construction of plays, and as he and Clark developed a working relationship, Clark learned how to critique for the benefit of the playwright. For most of his adult life, he read thousands of plays each year, in manuscript, and responded to dramatists about how to improve or sell them. His manner of encouraging works in progress was not the same as other literary editors. He put the needs of the play and playwright ahead of the needs of publisher or producer, often encouraging the latter to use experimental works just to benefit the dramatist.

After he gave up on European theatre, he publicly and privately developed dozens of young American playwrights, mostly folk dramatists. The folk drama movement was Clark's ideal of how modern American drama should be written. Folk dramatists wrote untainted by conventions of popular theatre, used stories of lower-class American struggles, and wrote in poetic languages. They wrote for local audiences rather than for New York, and with Clark's help, were the featured artists at little theatres throughout the

United States. His protégés – Paul Green, Lynn Riggs, E.P. Conkle and Virgil Geddes – were obviously folk dramatists, but Clark also encouraged use of folk components by writers that did not identify themselves as such. He guided playwrights such as O'Neill, Maxwell Anderson and Sidney Howard in the use of poetic language, working class characters, American themes, local dialects, and plots of everyday survival in a grim world – characteristics of American folk drama. Even though he had started as one of the most vociferous supporters of strict formalism to create drama, his discovery of folk drama gave him a much broader, more inclusive theory for his dramaturgy.

Clark tried to start theatre companies that would perform his experimental playwrights. None of the groups he founded lasted very long, but Clark also maintained a strong influence over theatre groups in colleges and universities, and he used his connections with them to challenge young performers and directors. Whether starting or influencing companies, he encouraged them to emulate the Provincetown Players and to stage "experimental" American drama. He even proposed at one point that the Theatre Guild start an Experimental Workshop, which presaged play-development workshops of the 1960s and 1970s. Clark's Workshop gave some form and impetus to the Group Theatre as it split from the Guild at about the same time.

At the same time that he helped dramatists and theatres, Clark kept up a pattern of publishing and speaking to the people who comprised the audiences for his favorite dramas. Clark produced a huge amount of criticism and educational materials. He was a regular critic and book reviewer for the New York Sun, The Drama and Contempo, and also published occasional articles in about 70 other journals and newspapers. He wrote study guides and textbooks, some of which are still in print, on European and American

drama, history and criticism. He compiled anthologies of plays, dramatic theory, short stories, short novels, biographies and translations. He was, like his father, a public speaker in hundreds of cities in the United States and an instructor at a half-dozen different universities and colleges. All of this was done in only forty years, which gives an idea of Clark's manic passion for work.

All of Clark's work as a dramaturg – translation, expansion of repertory, encouragement of writers, production assistance, criticism and publication – came together in 1936 when Clark, Sidney Howard and Luise Sillcox created the Dramatists' Play Service. This play leasing and publishing company was formed to benefit playwrights and create healthy competition in the amateur theatre market. Clark ran DPS first as a service for dramatists and second as a business venture. This meant that it did not make a profit for its first ten years of existence, but it still grew into the second largest English-language play publisher in the United States. After Clark's death in 1953, it was fifteen years more before American theatre defined the work he did as "dramaturgy," but his influence with playwrights was enormous. It was because of his open generosity and vigor that by the time he founded the Dramatists' Play Service, Paul Green could point out to him that "every American playwright I've ever met up with seems in some curious way to be indebted to you."⁶⁰⁶

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Correspondence.

Appendix A: Clark's "Confession of Faith"

This is a copy of the first part of an article called "Broadway Opens Shop Again" which Clark wrote for The Drama.^{*} It is a summary of his notions about his role as a critic, and includes his "confession of faith" about criticism of drama.

Why do I review plays season after season? Why go to the bother of writing down the impressions made upon me by each new theatrical offering I go to see? Does anyone read what I write, and if he does, what is its effect on him? Do I write to prove anything, to convince or persuade anyone? What, in a word, is my ultimate purpose?

Every critic must ask himself such questions, and I have a sneaking suspicion that every critic now and then tells himself that he is an utterly useless cog in a machine. Do we really know a good play when we see one, and if we do can we explain why it is good? And can we hope to convince others that a bad play is bad, and prove our points step by step?

Why dramatic criticism?

I suppose it is in the same category with saxophone playing, writing sonnets, or selling real estate. We practice it either from necessity or inclination. For myself I can say it is from inclination. I am impelled to write my opinion of the new shows because I am sufficiently interested in them to want to tell others what I think. I am especially fortunate in being able to write for The Drama. To begin with, it is not necessary for

^{*} Barrett H. Clark, "Broadway Opens Shop Again," The Drama 19.1 (October 1928): 9-11.

me to appear before my readers every day (as so many reviewers must) and perform clever antics. Next- and this is very important- I enjoy perfect liberty of choice as to what plays I see and what I do not choose to see. It is not my business to write metropolitan news. There is no managing editor to tell me to cover Ethel Barrymore's new show in case I happen to want to attend the opening of some unknown play in a hole-in-the-wall south of the Village. Finally (so far) I am utterly, shamefully unshackled in the matter of freedom of opinion and expression. If I feel so inclined I may shout hosannas in the very temple of Communism, and there is no one who will tell me to vote the Republican ticket or get out.

Now, I don't for an instant believe that the clever reviewers on the New York papers are in any respect the tools of vigilant and jealous capitalist managing editors, but I do know that it is their business first of all to write entertainingly, and to write news, and within certain limitations to give their largely conservative reading public what that public wants. Burns Mantle, an honest and intelligent critic, selects his Ten Best Plays of each season not entirely on the basis of his own opinion: they "request the best judgment of the editor, *variously confirmed by the public's indorsement*".

The phrase I have italicized proclaims the nullification of the critic as critic. Call in the public, to sit in judgment, and you have not criticism at all but democracy. There are, let us say, five hundred dramatic critics or reviewers in our country; if you apply voting methods here, think how

easy it would be to get five hundred citizens- farmers, miners, realtors salesmen- to cancel the votes of the critics.

Of course, Mr. Mantle makes it clear that his selection is not intended to be based on his own predilections, and I am not blaming him: I have used that phrase of his to show you one of the functions of the metropolitan play-reviewer: the dispensing of news to the public.

There are those who maintain that public approval is to a certain extent the criterion of artistic worth. If Abie's Irish Rose can net its author six or seven millions there must be something to it. There is, of course. But chewing gum is much more profitable. The sales of Abie and Spearmint indicate simply that the public likes these manufactured articles, and when a reviewer acknowledges this, he is only stating a fact. But criticism is a different thing.

I wonder that I dare repeat such truisms. They seem so obvious. But every once in a while it must be done, for we Americans- nay, we moderns, for this is universal- are too apt to believe that because a play or a person or an idea doesn't pay, or catch on, or become famous, it must suffer from some inherent defect.

My own aim in writing these periodical reviews is first to tell the truth- my own truth, personal, prejudiced, warped as it may be- about all the plays I see. But the truth, especially when I try to discover it in my own mind, is exceptionally hard to see. And it is perhaps harder to put down in black and white when I do see it, or think I see it. Still, this is my

confession and faith and work, and I might as well put it down and get it out of the way. Here it is:

I dislike plays that set forth to reform, convince, persuade, or improve me or anyone else.

I dislike, in most of its forms, "good theatre." By this I mean plays deliberately written to make an effect. Good plays aren't made that way.

I dislike and do my utmost to combat every effort to curb the dramatist in his choice of subject or treatment. Censorship, in whatever guise, is a stupid and mischievous thing.

On the other hand.

I welcome every new play (no matter how poor it may otherwise be) that treats a "forbidden" or delicate subject or employs words and phrases that have not yet found their way into the theatre.

I am at present more interested in American plays than in the plays of any other country, because (a) there are more of them worth seeing than ever before, and (b) because many of them are not yet given a fair chance of success, and (c) because I am an American, attracted not only by what is familiar to me, but because I confess I see in our country more potential material for drama than is to be found anywhere else.

Hence.

I make it my business to seek out among the new plays of each season every indication of talent, of a desire to discover and interpret any phase of our national existence, in the belief that it is better to encourage a young dramatist with something to say than to patronize the dramatists of the past at the expense of the newcomers.

From this point on, the article deals with the specific plays he was reviewing for this issue.

Appendix B: "An Open Letter to Mr. St. John Ervine"

The following is a response to criticism by St. John Ervine who wrote for the New York World, in 1929. Clark sent this to various New York newspapers, and then had it set up as an off-print. Across the top of the article is a printed note "The following was sent to several newspapers, but after a week's delay, has been neither printed or answered. -B.H.C." The letter is dated March 10, 1929, from Clark's home in Briarcliff Manor, N.Y.

My dear Ervine,

When you came to our shores as a guest critic I believed that you would bring with you a fresh viewpoint and give us the benefit of your keen judgment, your honesty, your hard-hitting and fearless style. I have read your articles in The World with a sense of increasing disappointment, until I am no longer able to sit back and hold my tongue. That you have praised inferior plays and damned good ones, that you have made mistakes of taste and judgment and sometimes distorted facts in order to turn a pretty phrase, would hardly cause me to address you in this fashion. There is something besides.

If you were merely a high-priced personality writer brought here to amuse readers at the breakfast table, I would not bother my head about you; but you are an artist, a writer of plays that command our respect and admiration, and at one time you waged battle on behalf of the best standards that could be raised in the world of the theater. You are yourself

the product of an idealistic venture which first gave you a chance to try your hand at playwriting, and for some years you very ably directed the Abbey Theater in Dublin. Your first success in America was achieved through the efforts of a small and enthusiastic group of penniless producers (who have since become the Theater Guild), who recognized in John Ferguson a play of rare quality.

A few days ago, in reviewing the opening performance of Virgil Geddes' play, The Earth Between, at the Provincetown Playhouse, you revealed yourself as a perfect intellectual snob, a traitor to your ideals as I conceive them, and an exceedingly cruel, unfair and unsportsmanlike critic. I don't object to your seeing little in Mr. Geddes' play; it is your right to knock it to pieces and then advise Mr. Geddes to get a job selling ribbons; though personally I find the play, in spite of its faults, a beautiful if imperfect thing. I charge you with gross unfairness for having permitted your own discomforts to put you into a frame of mind at once bitter and disdainful; with using up thirty-four lines of your review in complaining about the rain and the uncomfortable seats; with making statements about the author that a glance at your program would have instantly belied; above all, with the cantankerous attitude you adopt toward a group of disinterested producers and actors, and toward a new, young and unknown writer, all of whom were evidently in earnest.

Can't you realize, or have you forgotten, that the experimental theaters cannot furnish comfortable seats? Don't you know that they

haven't the money to bring their troupes up-town? I have no doubt that the management of the Provincetown Playhouse made every effort to prevent the rain, and I am credibly informed that on the other occasions of your visits to the Village theaters, the weather men were appealed to in vain.

I am not at all interested, my dear Ervine, in hearing the reiterated litanies of your personal discomforts: your endless chants have convinced me only that you ought never to go to the theater except when your mind is serene. What in the name of heaven has all this to do with dramatic criticism? Because late-comers fell over you in Macdougall Street must you accuse Mr. Geddes, who was born and brought up on a farm, of "reading about agriculturists in Greenwich Village?" Must you call the author "simple-minded," and refer to all his characters as "mentally deficient," "half-wits," and "semi-insane"? If you had taken the trouble to inquire or look at your program you would have seen that Mr. Geddes hasn't had much chance to live in Greenwich Village, and that he has been writing plays for less than three years.

Do not imagine that I would ask you or any critic to be easy on a writer just because he is young: a play is to be judged on its own merits (forgive me for saying this, but I think it well to make the point), and The Earth Between is no better for being the work of a beginner.

Where you have failed, and failed ignominiously, is in bringing to bear all the power of your position and influence to flout, ridicule and

insult an author of unquestioned sincerity and no mean talent, and a group of players whose efforts entitle them to greater respect than can be properly accorded to any other company of its kind in this country.

You conclude your review with a graceful compliment by saying that there were moments when you "devoutly wished" that the theater could be restored to its "original purpose" -as a stable. This may be considered courtesy and fair play by lovers of horses; it is hardly criticism.

I don't know if you remember the time, some years ago, when you were given a chance to see your own plays acted by semi-professionals, and doubtless you have forgotten the two pleasant conferences you and I had when we discussed new writers and new theaters and what might be done to encourage the younger men to write truthfully and passionately about the world they knew? You were poor then (as I still am), but there was a gleam in your eye and a determination to carry on the fight.

This is why I address you thus publicly, with some anger but with more sorrow. Think it over, won't you? Aren't you just a little ashamed?

Barrett H. Clark.*

* This off-print broadside is in the Beinecke Library, Yale, in the Lynn Riggs collection, box 23, folder no. 387. It is dated March 10, 1929, from Briarcliff Manor, NY.

Appendix C: "Plan for an Experimental Workshop"

PLAN FOR AN EXPERIMENTAL WORKSHOP*

-by Barrett H. Clark

November, 1930.

My first "Plan" was outlined in the Spring of 1930, revised in the early summer, and submitted to all members of the Board. Four sections were left blank, because I felt that other persons were better qualified to cover the points listed than I. Meantime, I have made inquiries and while I know I'm not the one to speak with authority on certain technical matters touching on casting, actors' contracts, etc. I have at least indicated enough to enable members of the Board to work these out to their own satisfaction.

The rest of the "Plan" has been somewhat revised, and the list of plays brought up to date. In this connection it is worth noting that some of the plays I suggested have been produced: Frank Elser's Mr. Gilhooly, Geddes' Behind the Night, Riggs' Sump'n Like Wings, Leo Pride's Seven Who Were Chosen and Susan Glaspell's Alison's House. But only two were done professionally.

During the last six months the need for new actors, new directors, new plays and new ideas has become more persistent, and nothing much

* Barrett H. Clark, "Plan for an Experimental Workshop," Beinecke Library, Yale, Theatre Guild Collection, Za Theatre Guild Correspondence, box 32, folder "Clark, Barrett H." There are two earlier versions of this document, one of which was sent around to the members of the Guild Board in April, 1930.

has been done about it. Even playwrights of standing, with really good mss. (like Elmer Rice), and reputable managers (like Arthur Hopkins) are up against it. Philip Barry, at the present writing, can't find the right actors for his new play; and Kenyon Nicholson has left for Hollywood in disgust over the way his Stepdaughters of War was put on.

I really believe that such men, as well as the unknown men, would occasionally write plays for a Guild Experimental Workshop, provided they had the right to dispose of their property elsewhere in case the Guild didn't want to carry on with it after the experimental performances were over.

I am offering this revised Plan again with the hope that the Directors will give it every consideration, and put it into effect before someone else tries to do so.

The Idea

To provide, under Guild auspices, for a series of tryout productions of new plays of a more or less experimental nature by young American writers. The immediate purpose is to give such writers a start as playwrights, enabling them to see a few adequate performances well acted and directed, before audiences sympathetically inclined. The ultimate purpose is to encourage the younger writers to look upon the Guild- or its Studios, if further Studios should be formed- as the proper place to bring their more mature products. The plays are "experimental" in the sense that either because of technique, theme or subject-matter, they are

not such as would attract the ordinary commercial manager at the present time.

The writers whose work is to be produced are mostly young, though there need be no arbitrary age-limit. It just happens that among the younger writers we find a greater eagerness for experiment than among the older, though there is no reason why workshop facilities should not be put at the service of the successful older writers who may want to try out plays of an experimental type, differing from what they have been doing.

The Need is Pressing

Formerly, these new writers could occasionally hope for a hearing thru such groups as the Provincetown Players, the New Playwrights, etc. in New York, and on rare occasions from such Little Theater's as Deeter's Hedgerow and Entrikin's Beechwood, but even when all these were in operation (and only one still exists), many writers with something to say were still unable to secure a tryout. Four years ago Paul Green and Lynn Riggs were writing plays that deserved tryouts, and were able to get them only after long waiting, and then only for one play each. For four years Geddes has been turning out plays; only one has been seen in New York, two in Boston, and one in Detroit, and all done by amateurs. Leo Pride (whose work has been highly praised by O'Neill) has not yet found a tryout producer, tho a new Detroit group has planned to do one mss. E.P. Conkle, with six plays, is in the same situation. Don Totheroh, with four plays, has had nothing done since "Wild Birds" (awarded a prize by

Nathan and O'Neill six years ago). B.J. Kinne, author of three plays, has waited four years; Frank Elser three. These are a few outstanding instances. And so it goes. Awaiting workshop production are plays- imperfect, it is true, but with something worth developing- by such men as Keith MacKaye, Thomas Craven, Frederick Schlick, Em Jo Basshe, Mike Gold. These are other men, who have had some work produced, who would be glad of the chance to write new plays if there were a theatre and cast at their disposal: Leopold Atlas; John Powell (the composer); R.H. Powel; Gilbert Seldes; John Dos Passos; John Howard Lawson; T.H. Dickinson; E.E. Cummings; Marie Baumer; Olivia Hobgood; Thomas Robinson; Daniel Rubin; Roy Chanslor and Edward Painter (authors of "Tabloid"); Susan Glaspell; Percy MacKaye (who was going to do a Kentucky Mountain Ballet for the Provincetowners); the negro writers, Willis Richardson, Eulalie Spence and Georgia Douglas Johnson; Thornton Wilder (whose "Trumpet Shall Sound" had good stuff in it); Paul Green, who is always trying to write beyond the ordinary theater, etc.

Here, then, are some of the writers who need such a theater. It is also practically certain- the history of every such venture proves it- that wherever a tryout theater exists, new dramatists will spring up to use it. (Théâtre Libre, Freie Bühne, Moscow Art Theatre, Abbey Theater, Independent Theater, Stage Society, Theater Guild, Provincetown Players, etc.)

Advantages

1. To the writers- for without such encouragement, we run the risk (a) of losing them as dramatists and (b) of compelling them to write for conventional-minded managers and audiences. Without the infusion of new blood we run the risk of becoming set, of alienating the interests of the new theater-going public. (c) It is becoming clear that Europe is not to be counted upon as it used to be for a supply of new and interesting plays- i.e. new or interesting enough for us- hence we must look, to some extent, to our own country. (d) Finally, the matter of financial help to young authors. While a few tryout performances won't yield anything much to a writer, they will enhance his reputation and show his wares to the managers. These may then be bought either by the Guild or, if the Guild is not interested, by another manager.

(If Paul Green had had enough money to support his family, he would not have had to accept the Guggenheim Fellowship which, so far as writing was concerned, set him back a year. If Lynn Riggs had had the right tryouts two or three years ago he would not have been forced to go to Hollywood. The same thing is also true of Totheroh and Raphaelson).

2. To the public.- Unless the public is given a certain amount of new and experimental stuff, even if it is not liked or appreciated at first, there is always the danger of apathy. The public, at least an important part of it, is interested in everything new, no matter what, and this curiosity ought, indeed must, be stimulated and satisfied.

3. To the Guild.

(a) Publicity. The Guild not only preserves its high standards by regular subscription offerings, it welcomes the newcomers. The Guild is constantly active in its efforts to furnish every kind of play that seems worth producing. Realizing that certain kinds of works are not appropriate as subscription plays, it offers these to a smaller public likely to be interested.

(b) Training for younger actors, directors, designers, etc. This point needs no elaboration.

(c) Means of discovering new writers, encouraging these who have been writing, inducing those who have had some success as playwrights, coaxing into the theater (in case they have anything to say in drama form) men who like Dreiser, Anderson, Hemingway and Wolfe, seem to want to write plays but don't quite like to risk the time and their reputations. Finally, to give a chance to men, like O'Neill, Howard, Green, Riggs, Connelly, etc., to do what they like in going beyond the conventional limits of the theatre as it is. (What about O'Neill's play on the "Book of Revelations"? Green's "Blue Thunder"? Howard's Chinese play? Riggs' plan to do a Cherokee Indian fantasy?)

How it Would Work.

1. It is clear the whole thing must be undertaken on the basis of an entire season, and continued after that if the need persists. To give two or three plays and see how they go, or how the public likes them, is no use at

all. Ten MSS. at least should be accepted and announced. Each play should be given at least four performances, with possibly a special press or preview showing.

Publicity, especially in the program notes, should make clear exactly what is intended, so that there should be no misunderstanding of the experimental character of the undertaking.

These performances to be on matinees (and possibly Sunday nights) in one of the Guild theatres.

2. Casting.- the details here will have to be worked out by Cheryl Crawford or someone else who knows more about the matter than I do. But I see no reason why among the hundreds of applicants now on the Guild's list- and the hundreds of newcomers who would be attracted by the announcement of this play- we should not have all the talent we need. And certainly we have every reason to believe that occasionally new really good actors will be discovered or developed.

3. Directors.- the same principles apply, to a certain extent. The Guild doubtless has certain untried persons in view who could be safely entrusted with certain of these tryout performances. New directors are certainly more in demand than new actors.

It might be a good idea to invite guest directors to New York from among the Little Theater men. I suggest almost at random such men as Oliver Hinsdell of Dallas, Gilmor Brown of Pasadena and Frederic McConnell of Cleveland, Thomas Wood Stevens and James Light. Such a

plan would not only bring in good directors but would be one more link between the Guild and the theatergoing provinces- would, in a word, neatly combine legitimate self-interest with that helping hand policy which has always been at least implicit in the Guild idea. Finally, see what playwrights might be able to direct their own plays.

4. Remuneration for casts and directors.- Here again I don't pretend to know all the details, but in general I think my conclusions are sound.

(a) It is possible to hire the nucleus of a company for all ten plays; in other words, for a season, just as one hires a stock company. There are probably several unknowns that the Guild has had in mind, and perhaps wanted to hold for future productions. This would enable us to do it without paying salary or bonus for actors who are doing nothing. Some of these, not used in one play, might help as stage managers or otherwise, as in the Civic Repertory scheme, and even if they weren't active in every production, the average salary would be much much lower than if we had to hire new actors for each play. It is possible to secure all but well-known or very successful actors, on a season contract basis, at salaries 25% to 60% lower than are demanded under the ordinary routine. I know many a \$150. week actor who would be glad to take \$60. to \$85. a week, for a 30 weeks' season contract.

(b) It would not be advisable, even if possible, to hire all actors by the season; in which case, some could be engaged when they are at liberty.

Since, with only a few performances of any play, no actor could hope to make any money beyond a nominal figure, it would be possible to have performances on non-matinee days, and (since the whole thing would be on a subscription basis) on Sunday afternoons or evenings.

I believe that the Equity regulations provide for contingencies of this kind, and there are very few actors who would not regard a chance to appear under the proper auspices as sufficient reward for time and labor spent in rehearsing.

5. Scenery and other technical requirements.- Not so important, especially since we are evolving the sort of purely conventionalized scenery that Thomas Wood Stevens worked out so cleverly for his production of the Tour du Monde in Chicago. This applies only to mss. that require elaborate settings. Surely the Guild has enough scenery and props to supply what is needed for most plays that would be done. Many old sets, furniture, etc. could be made over at relatively small cost.

6. Relations with authors.- Special arrangements could be made with authors whereby a small nominal fee is paid them as royalty. The Guild has an option on every play produced and may sign a regular contract for it in case it can be used in the regular professional way. Otherwise, the author is at liberty, within a reasonable time, to dispose of his play as he sees fit. The Guild might also insist on having a refusal on the author's next play or two.

If possible, the author could be called in during rehearsals to give and receive advice. This, of course, is most important to him.

7. Selection of MSS. The same spirit that prompts the whole enterprise of experimentation here outlined must determine the choosing of plays. I am convinced that the basis of selection must be upon such things as sincerity, novelty of theme or writing, artistic intention and potential power- not upon the degree in which the dramatists approaches out preconceptions of what a technically good and "effective" play ought to be. I think it imperative that those deciding on mss. should adopt the viewpoint of the tolerant judge who says, like Voltaire, "While disagreeing with what this man says, I would defend with my life his right to say it." For this reason, I recommend that the board or committee having immediate charge of the workshop should be empowered to select its own plays without having to refer such decisions to the entire Board of Guild Directors, tho these should be called in as advisers, an equal number of them serving with the Workshop Board. Possibly the Guild Directors might, by unanimous vote, hold the ultimate veto power over the Workshop. However, I believe that the greater the freedom of choice, the more genuinely representative and experimental the plays will be.

8. Audiences. I have no doubt that at least four season audiences of subscribers could be secured in advance from within the present Guild membership, to pay \$15. each for a season of ten plays. Possibly tickets might be offered to the outside public for one or more

performances, but that is a detail that can be decided on later. The publicity for the entire season could consist of a few advance press stories and a circular stating the idea and giving a list of plays and a few lines about the authors.

Where Does the Present Guild Studio Come In?

No matter what policy may be ultimately adopted, the Workshop idea can be worked out independently of the Studio which, I take it, will go on producing plays by writers of any or all nations, not necessarily experimental except insofar as their effect on the general public is concerned. I see no reason, indeed, why several Playshops or Studios should not ultimately be developed, and I confine myself here to the American aspect because it happens to interest me most.

Concluding Note.

Some sort of really experimental workshop is bound to be started in New York. Plans are being submitted now to one wealthy foundation for an ambitious scheme of this kind, while a new producer has asked his partner to secure data on all available tryout MSS, but I believe that the Guild is ideally fitted both to benefit and be benefited by backing its own workshop.

Though I understand that the Guild is willing to lose a reasonable sum in running something of the kind, I don't see how, in the long run, it could help actually making a profit. The subscriptions ought easily to cover the actors' salaries, and with rent, equipment and overhead

reckoned in, I should say that the ten tryout productions of one season would pay for themselves. The profit would come in the form of nationwide publicity, goodwill and interest awakened among the younger theatergoers; and in the commercial success of at least one play each season, a modest estimate, even if calculated on the basis of MSS. at present available.

List of New Plays from which the First Season's

Offerings could be chosen:

E.P. Conkle

"49 Dogs in the Meathouse"

"Fraulein Klauber"

"In Tamman's Hollow"

"Poor Old Tom"

"Dobey and Sons"

(New play nearly completed)

Virgil Geddes

"Mud on the Hoofs"

"The Plowshare's Glean"

"As the Crow Flies"

"The Stable and the Grove"

"Behind the Night"

"Native Ground"

"Pocahontas"

"So Late Begins"

Lynn Riggs

"The Lonesome West"

"Sump'n Like Wings"

"Rancor"

"The Domino Parlor"

"A Lantern to See by"

(New Indian play not yet finished)

Paul Green

"Blue Thunder" (not yet done)

"John Henry"

"The Honeycomb"

Sidney Howard

Chinese play (adaptation)

Leo B. Pride

"The Seven Who Were Chosen"

"The Barbarians"

"The Underground Savage"

Burdette J. Kinne

"B.A., B.A., Black Sheep"

"The New York Virgin"

Frederick Schlick

New play (nearly ready)

Michael Gold

"John Brown"

Keith MacKaye

"Honey Holler"

Percy MacKaye

"The Gobbler of God" (ballet in preparation)

Leonard Ide

"Gray Magic"

R.H. Powel

"Brief Candle"

Gilbert Seldes (possibly in collaboration with Wm. A. Drake)

"The Orange Comedy"

Susan Glaspell and N. Matson

"The Comic Artist"

Stark Young

"River House"

"The Colonnade"

Pierre Loving

"Black Damp"

W.D. Steele

"When Hell Froze"

Roy Chanslor and Edward Painter

"Tabloid"

Dan Totheroh

"The Princess Salome"

"Distant Drums"

Annie Frierson

"Quagmire"

Ernest H. Culbertson

New play (nearly ready)

Olivia Hobgood

"Wedlock"

Elmer Rice

"Life is Real"

"Sidewalks of New York"

"Helen and John"

Thomas Wood Stevens

"Jeanne D'Arc"

David Boehm

"Ferry Across"

John Howard Lawson

Untitled Play (sent to Guild during spring, 1930)

Em Jo Basshe

New Play (first version).

Appendix D: "Short Survey of New Manuscript Field"

The following memo from Clark, dated March 9, 1931 was sent to Theresa Helburn at the Theatre Guild:

SHORT SURVEY OF NEW MANUSCRIPT FIELD

Just now we seem to be short of good new material. Although the total number of manuscripts submitted to us seems to be somewhat larger than usual, there are exceptionally few plays to argue or fight about. I think it wise to set down, more or less at random, my ideas about the situation and what can be done about it. What good plays have we? What are the successful playwrights doing? What are the youngsters promising?

1. As usual we have a large quantity of junk, but after considering this problem for some years I don' [sic] think there is anything to do about it. If we were to insist that every play must be sent to us through an agent we would be almost as badly off, because we read the unknown stuff in order that nothing of any possible use may escape us, and an agent is just as likely to slip up as anyone else. Also, there are some writers who will not deal with an agent under any circumstances. I am sure the only thing to do is to continue our open door policy.

2. What are the well-known established dramatists doing? Of course we know about O'Neill and doubtless Maxwell Anderson is taken care of. (I'd like to see him do another play of the type of Gypsy).

Hollywood appears to have swallowed up Behrman, Lawson,

Richman[~~crossed out~~], Eddie Mayer, George Abbott, Samson Raphaelson, and a few others whose work interests us. I believe Vincent Lawrence is there too. Sid Howard's case is exceptional, but he now seems to be on his feet again. A letter from him last week tells me that he expects to have Yellow Jack and Alien Corn ready to show me in first drafts very soon.

Flavin is doing some work for the pictures but continues to write straight plays. As for him, Rice and Barry I have something to say below. Susan Glaspell tells me that she will probably do another play before long. Zoe Akins is to be counted on: I liked her "Morning Glory." George Kelly is always telling me he would like to do something for the Guild, but I'm afraid he will insist on directing his own shows. Connelly and Kaufman, I presume, will go ahead on their own, and I imagine that after Connelly's experience with Green Pastures he won't be ready to turn to the Guild soon again. Knowles Entrikin comes to town soon to arrange rehearsals for A Gracefull Generation, which Dwight Wiman is trying out in the spring. He has another play nearly ready. Some day he'll do a Guild play, tho after seeing "Midnight" he said he was pleased that his early mss. were not considered "available". Paul Osborn, I understand, is pretty well tied up with Wiman, but I have told him that I should like to see anything new that he may write.

A word as to Rice and Barry. My reports on The Left Bank and Tomorrow and Tomorrow (then under the title of Hail and Farewell!)

show what our relations have been with these men during the last few months. I am afraid that both are definitely off the Guild. Rice, I am sure, should have had some kind of official note from the Board aside from my own communication, which he naturally regarded as personal. No matter who has been at fault, Rice feels that the Guild should have given him an earlier answer on his play, and at least sent him a line or two after it was turned down. You know about Phil Barry. Flavin, of course, has no legitimate complaint against the Guild but I feel that he too might have received some marked official courtesy. This is a matter of some importance, particularly when we turn down a play by any author from whom we have reason to expect other 'scripts. Men like Flavin, Barry and Rice are sensitive, and whether they have the right or no to feel hurt in their dealings with us, they should be considered the way customers are considered in large department stores. Of course I happen to know most of these people personally and when I take them out to lunch that is not regarded as Guild courtesy, but simply as a friendly act. Is it not possible to go out of our way to smooth the ruffled feathers of these fellows?

3. As for the authors who cannot be considered in the very successful class and also the in-between promising playwrights, there are several that should be encouraged in various ways. Susan Glaspell, for instance, whose Alison's House I thought the Guild should produce.

Though they have both had successes of a kind, Riggs and Green are also in this category. Riggs we know about, but Green's case is

precarious. Among other playwrights in this class are: Samson Raphaelson, Leo B. Pride, John Howard Lawson, E.P. Conkle, B.J. Kinne, Dan Totheroh, Dawn Powell, Mike Gold, Katherine Clugston, Frederick Schlick and Virgil Geddes. Then there is Roy Chanslor, who wrote Tabloid, and who has just given up trying to sell his play and has gone to Hollywood. Dan Totheroh stays in Hollywood until something is done about Distant Drums. Pride also is in Hollywood, and Kinne is looking for a better teaching job. Green cannot afford to give up teaching for even a few months in order to do some of the new plays he has sketched out. Geddes is nearly on the rocks financially, and there is only one experimental theatre in the country that is able or willing to try out his new plays. Conkle is waiting for a chance to talk over Forty-Nine Dogs with Cheryl Crawford and other Guild people when he returns from Europe in the spring. Dawn Powell is waiting to see what happens to The Party before starting on another play. Mike Gold has evidently stopped work on "Jews Without Money," and there are others: Marie Baumer, for instance, who is now working on something that I think will interest us. It will be done in July, unless she is called to Hollywood.

The case of Paul Green is the most aggravated. The House of Connelly has been announced for two years and he has, as yet, received no definite word as to our plans. He has just finished another play, The Honeycomb, but is very much afraid that no producer will be able to do it. Meantime, a newcomer, Harry Moses, co-producer of Grand Hotel, has

given him real encouragement by buying Potter's Field on terms very favorable to Green, by getting Boris Aaronson to do the sets, and by preparing for his production eight months ahead of time. Moses has also secured an option on Green's next two plays. However, Green will have to wait until the fall for production of Potter's Field. Meantime Tread the Green Grass, which has been sold three or four times, is still unproduced. There's a musical score written for this by one of the most talented (and poverty-stricken) composers I know. If ever there was a poetic and imaginative drama that demanded a try-out, it is this. Green has spent some years talking it over with enthusiastic directors and managers, who do everything but put it on the stage. Green has ideas for other plays and is eager to get to work on them. One of them, Jed Harris is anxious to have and Green anxious to write. But with three unproduced plays on his hands and a living to make, what can he do? I don't know whose fault it is, but certainly something or someone has got to do something about this man.

Dan Totheroh's case is not so serious, but here's another talented young man doing hack work for the movies. How about Distant Drums? Totheroh has other plays in him, some of which may be on paper for all I know. But certainly he is not going to give up Hollywood in order to go on writing plays that will not be produced.

The same is true of Dawn Powell, who can doubtless make a living by her miscellaneous writings.

I could give you other examples of this sort of thing, but I think you have enough. I am not laying the blame on any one person or theater. I do not much care how it is done, but something should be done in order to keep the talented people we have. I know there are good reasons why plays of Green, Totheroh and others are not produced, but these reasons are in the final analysis not enough. To talk about encouraging these young people by telling them how good they are or even on occasion to pay them \$500.00 advance for a play doesn't really get anyone anywhere.

This sort of thing reminds me of a little play I read recently called Wistful Waiting. A young man has been seriously injured in an automobile accident and lies covered up on a hospital cot while seven women, all of whom know him, discuss what should be done with him. They can reach no conclusion, so one of them suggests that the man himself be consulted. The nurse stoops over the cot, throws back the blanket and finds that the patient has died.

What these playwrights need and desire is production. If the Guild cannot produce their plays then the Guild should at least make it possible for someone else to produce them. If the Studio cannot take care of them all, then why not some try-out experimental theatre such as I suggested last year? Here again there are reasons against the adoption of such a scheme, but the history of the Guild, as I see it, is a history of insuperable obstacles that were somehow surmounted.

4. The real beginners, the playwrights who have talent but whose plays are not in shape for regular production, are numerous. I have already mentioned several of these. Men like Geddes, Atlas, Annie Frierson, Olivia Hobgood, Schlick, Conkle, Pride and Keith MacKaye. These people should have some place like the old Provincetown Playhouse or the New Playwrights Theatre. But there is no such theatre and there seems little use in encouraging these playwrights to go ahead. Why, unless the Guild intends to do experimental work, should not the Guild select three or four out-of-town non-professional groups, like Deeter's in Philadelphia, Beechwood Theatre in Scarborough, Detroit Playhouse, etc. and subsidize them for the purpose of trying out such plays as I have referred to? For a very small sum of money plays could be tried out at the right time and at the rate of perhaps six or eight a year at each playhouse. I should think that sums of from two to five hundred dollars for each production would be quite sufficient. This would not only enable the Guild to encourage new writers but would give everyone a chance to see plays in production and also a chance to try out new actors and, more important, new directors. I do not pretend to have worked out all the details of such a scheme and I do not know that I am the person to do it.

You may say, and be perfectly right, that there are grave difficulties in the way of such a scheme. But if other people do not do this experimenting and the Guild cannot or will not do it, I don't for the life of me see how we are going to continue. Certainly Europe hasn't as much to

offer as it did ten years ago. We can go on improving theatrical conditions, and for a time have a theatre that looks alive, but if we don't do something for the playwrights, what will be the use of a theatre?

In conclusion, we must not only treat all playwrights with courtesy and consideration (that should be taken for granted) but make every effort to have all possible plays tried out. Whatever the reason, most writers do not feel friendly toward us, and say what we will, a friendly relationship between author and manager counts for just as much as a good contract or a brilliant production.

Can't we do something about this?

- Barrett H. Clark *

* Barrett H. Clark, letter to Theatre Guild Board of Directors, March 9, 1931, Beinecke Library, Yale, Theatre Guild Papers, Za Theatre Guild Correspondence, box 32, folder "Clark, Barrett H."

**Appendix E: "West of Broadway, Some Reflexions on the
Nonprofessional Theater"**

On October 27, 1935, Clark published in The New York Times some of his ideas on what the nonprofessional theater could be or already was in the United States. This article was called "West of Broadway, Some Reflexions on the Nonprofessional Theater" and Clark had copies of it printed up in a small pamphlet to be passed around to friends and business acquaintances. In a way, this was a reporting back on a trip he had made the previous spring of 10,000 miles. I do not know if he is referring to the Spring of 1934 or 1935, but if I remember correctly, Clark traveled out to Seattle in 1935(?) for a Theatre Conference there, and he stopped at a few spots (at least) along the way to help pay for the trip with lecturing. About 10 or 11 pages into the article, he gives a list of where he has seen a lot of various playwrights around the country in the season ending in May, 1935, and this may indicate his trip of 10,000 miles in Spring.

What follows is the whole "West of Broadway" as it was made into pamphlet and sent to Theresa Helburn:

A theater is emerging here and there throughout the country that is neither a part of the Road, nor an imitation of Broadway, a trying-out ground for the professional theater nor an extension of summer stock; and it is not a mere outgrowth of what is known as "amateur dramatics." To define and describe it is not easy, and it would probably be unwise to try to do so, if it weren't that a good deal has recently been said of it that is dictated by malice or prejudice, or based on insufficient evidence.

Partisans opponents have managed to becloud the issue by using generalized terms that mean little or nothing. Regional, Folk, Local, Little Theater, Community, Amateur, Civic Playhouse; Revolt against Broadway, Nonprofessional- such are some of the labels indiscriminately stuck to a thousand theatrical ventures which have only a few similarities in common.

I am trying here to define one distinctive type of theater whose function seems clear to me, whose present activities are worth watching, and on whose future certain important developments must almost inevitably depend. Conceived for the moment as a single unit, though its component parts are widely different, it is working steadily if unconsciously toward one goal. The theater I am thinking of is a group of units organized for the most part by the dramatic departments of colleges and universities and by private or semi-private corporations. These are scattered throughout the country in large and small cities and in rural communities, and are distinguished from professional theaters in that they are chartered and operated not for profit, and pay no actors for acting. This difference is fundamental since it throws emphasis upon the theater as an end in itself and not upon the making of money, enabling each group (no matter what its financial problems, which are many and serious) to persist year after year without having to depend entirely on box office receipts. So in one sense this theater is "amateur," though I prefer the term Nonprofessional. Of course there is another amateur or Nonprofessional

world of the theater, infinitely greater in extent, but for my present purpose I exclude the great high school, lodge, church and woman's club amateur world, and when I use the word Nonprofessional I don't refer to that.

I speak here of a nucleus of the best college and university theaters and so-called Little Theaters and community playhouses. There are approximately 700 colleges and universities that offer courses in dramatic work and make regular dramatic productions, but of these there are probably not over 100 with well equipped stages and staffs sufficiently trained to demand our serious consideration. Of the thousand or so Nonprofessional, Little and Community Theaters that have been operating more than two years, and are relatively solvent, there are probably not quite 100 that offer more than four fairly good performances a season. The group therefore that I now have in mind includes a bare 200 units. Almost without exception these give training to students or other beginners in acting directing, writing and all or nearly all branches of technical and mechanical work, and are run by competent staffs. In the colleges and universities alone there are probably 35,000 to 40,000 students regularly enrolled in dramatic departments. During the last few years I have personally investigated the plants of perhaps 75 of these and seen plays produced. Though not all the theaters not connected with educational institutions offer regular courses in training, most of the largest and oldest are in effect carrying on similar work; several are

training schools among the best of their kind, giving apprentices not only all the background that academic study can offer but actual training in studio groups and in the acting company.

It is with the achievements, the actual productions offered to the playgoing public that I am here concerned. The theaters I speak of average five or six major productions a season. It is not easy to generalize on the merit of these performances, which differ as widely one from the other as performances on Broadway or in stock. During the past twelve or fifteen years I have seen perhaps 300 plays done in these theaters and last spring I traveled from Coast to Coast investigating plants and productions in the college and little theaters of twenty-four states. I have for example seen performances, at the Cleveland and Pasadena Playhouses, Northwestern University, the University of Iowa, the University of Washington, and the Hedgerow Theater (near Philadelphia) far above the average of Broadway, performances as competently executed as all but the very best in the professional world. True, I have yet to see anything there as finished as the Moscow Art Theater, The Theater Guild at its best, or the best productions of such directors as Arthur Hopkins or Jed Harris; but by and large, except in the matter of acting, I would be content to spend the rest of my theater-going days watching performances of a picked dozen Nonprofessional groups, provided I might see just one Broadway performance of my choice every season. So far as staging and directing and the mechanics of the production go I would be fairly certain of being

just as well served outside New York, and be spared into the bargain a vast amount of expensive and tasteless pseudo-finery. The acting, by and large, except in two or three universities, and in such theaters as the Pasadena and Cleveland Playhouses is not up to the high standards of production, largely because the human material available consists almost entirely of young people; this is wholly true of the colleges and universities, and partly true of the Little Theaters; though among the latter there are evidently quite enough people able and willing to devote more time to acting, and for longer periods, than students can afford in colleges. This is especially true for example of the Seattle Repertory Playhouse and of the playhouses in Cleveland, Boston, Buffalo, Dallas and New Orleans; yet even among college students the thorough and business-like training they usually receive enables them to act parts that should have more mature players, in an intelligent fashion. For example, a performance of Dulcy played entirely by freshmen at Glenn Hughes' Penthouse Theater in Seattle last spring, was to me quite as delightful as the original New York performance, and a little more refreshing, though the girl who played the lead was as yet no Lynn Fontanne; and A. Dale Riley's production of Both Your Houses at the University of Minnesota, even allowing for the physical immaturity of the cast, was as carefully planned and worked out as The Theater Guild production. Without following up this comparison with too many examples, let me, however, extend it by referring to Sawyer Falk's production of Lynn Riggs' The Cherokee Night at Syracuse

University; Garrett H. Leverton's production of Green Grow the Lilacs at Northwestern University; E.C. Mabie's Tread the Green Grass at the University of Iowa; Gilmore Brown's Gallows Glorious at Pasadena; Hallie Flanagan's Sanskrit play at the Vassar Experimental Theater; and Frederic McConnell's Yellow Jack at Cleveland; all these being productions that showed more care, better direction and a clearer understanding of theater problems than are seen in most professional productions. In the matter of diction alone there is not one Broadway performance in a hundred that comes up to the standards set by the Nonprofessional groups just mentioned. Judging by rehearsals I have attended or reliable information from others who are familiar with finished productions, the same thing can be truthfully said of the Little Theaters in Birmingham, New Orleans, Mobile, Duluth, Omaha, and the Universities of Chicago, Oklahoma and Western Reserve.

So far as actual accomplishment goes, then, this adult Nonprofessional theater simply cannot be ignored as "merely" amateur. It is amateur in one sense, in that its chief aim is not the making of profit but the training of theater workers and development of audiences and the production of a large number of plays. In spite of a vast amount of decidedly inferior work, and a good deal of inefficiency and plain bad acting (shortcomings inherent in any theater system, amateur or professional) this theater is at last becoming firmly rooted, operating constantly in every part of the Union, and turning out fairly large numbers

of young people with better background, more taste and knowledge of what it's all about than we have ever before had in this country.

No better evidence can be found of its vitality, its apparent permanence and its worth to the communities where it operates than the Government's recent decision to put all unemployed theater workers outside New York under the supervision of the colleges and little theaters; had it not been for them it would have been necessary to build theater plants in every part of the land in order to house and give employment to 8,000 or 10,000 theater workers now on relief or out of work. And who are the regional supervisors in charge of local units? Exclusively the heads of colleges and university drama departments and Little Theater directors.

It is because the Nonprofessional theater is now the only theater outside New York regularly operating in this country that so many Broadway people are criticizing it and refusing to work under the Federal program; one distinguished manager refused to cooperate because too much of the administrative work was to be in the hands of "amateurs," and amateurs, he maintained, simply don't exist. Presumably possession of an Equity or other union card turns an amateur into a professional? Or do failure and bankruptcy make a regular manager?

What is happening to the thousands of students who graduate from college dramatic courses or leave little theaters when their period of apprenticeship is over? If my answer to this question is correct I have at least a part of the solution of a vexing problem ready to hand. Judging by

the answers I got last spring during my 10,000 mile journey around the country, at least 95% of the young people have no intention of going into the "profession"; they are working for the joy of it: in order to become teachers in high schools and colleges; and to work in Little Theaters. The remaining 5% are headed or think they are headed for New York. This makes it clear to me that the Nonprofessional theater is hardly a tributary to Broadway, a trying out ground for stage-struck youngsters; it is almost entirely an end in itself; neither the actor nor the scene designer nor the director has one eye on Broadway and the other on his immediate job; knowing the haphazard existence that seems a necessary condition of professional theater life the directors and other workers in Nonprofessional theaters are doubtless happier to remain where they are, occupied with their chosen work from season to season, than they would be looking for jobs in the big city.

The viewpoint, the aim and intention of these people is of importance; they know they are far better off consistently working at what interests them than in securing a job in the professional theater which they know must at best be temporary. It is their business to develop a theater which in some cases has become a recognized necessity to the members of their own community and which may in time become larger, better and more firmly rooted as a part of the life about them.

In putting down these somewhat generalized statements on the scope and achievement of the more advanced type of Nonprofessional

theater I have so far left out of account its more serious shortcomings; there are problems that seem further from solution than others, and there are dark spots in the picture that cannot be ignored. What I am after here is the broad outlines of an institution, or rather a whole string of institutions, that is now well out of the torchbearer category, that has already here and there become part of the life of our country, more naturally and more inevitably so than Broadway which, now deprived of the road and stock, is practically isolated from America. If we are ever to have a national theater, something that is neither a museum nor a political football, it must be based on the nucleus of the Nonprofessional theater.

While one theater, the Cleveland Playhouse, has found it necessary to over-step the dividing line between the amateur and professional by paying wages to some of its actors, this seems an exceptional case, since elsewhere there is no perceptible difficulty in finding enough workers able to devote their time to the work in hand without financial remuneration. It may be that as time goes on a few of our best Nonprofessional groups will become professional in the financial sense and there is no reason why they should not, since there will be other Nonprofessional groups ready to take their places and for some time to come there will be enough workers found to carry on, and so long as there are houses to play in and directors to direct there will in all likelihood be enough playwrights to furnish the plays. Those who have made our Nonprofessional theater are engaged in something that is more than a business, and no business can contribute

anything worth having that is run by those who must make profits or get out.

The point I am trying to make here is not that the Nonprofessional theater is more, or less, efficient than the professional; that it is greater, or smaller in extent; that it is better, artistically, or worse; it is at its best more intelligently organized and run than the theater of Broadway and its highest achievement is at least up to the level of all but the highest professional achievement. The thing that matters is that it is different, with aims and purposes directed toward expression and service, joy and exultation, that in the professional theater are necessarily accidental and temporary. True, the Nonprofessional theater is only too often weakened by the same sort of compromise that ruins too many plays and playwrights on Broadway; it is timid and only too ready to play down to the actual or supposed prejudices of its public; it prefers for the most part to play it safe and it is unduly worried and handicapped by purely economic considerations; but this is neither universal nor necessarily so, for here and there a director, knowing that his existence does not invariably depend upon pleasing a few paying audiences or pandering to a stupid or unenlightened board of trustees, has the courage and sense to experiment with a play, an idea, an actor.

It is because this Nonprofessional theater is free of certain disadvantages that hamper the show business proper and because it need not support everyone concerned in it, that I regard it as an institution with

a future; its more important contributions are doubtless going to be made in the years to come, since at present its chief business is to make itself a part of the life of the people where it happens to exist, to develop a

larger and more representative public by striving to reflect more truthfully and courageously every aspect of life and thought that can be compressed into plays; and, most important of all, to evolve and adopt some positive philosophy, to know just what it wants to do and become. It seems to me that here precisely is the heart of the matter, for however the problem is stated it must be conceived from the viewpoint of the principal creator, the playwright.

Passing now to the actual record of the Nonprofessional theater, I am somewhat encouraged, even though the majority of theater plants known to me are not yet ready to blaze trails or even to depart a little from the path already worn smooth by the professional practitioners. I admit that the Nonprofessional theater should reflect all that is worth having and preserving, wherever it originates, that any institution so democratic as this must usually follow rather than lead; but if only to assure its own future supply of new plays it must find some place in its scheme for experiment; and by this I mean give a chance to every writer who seems seriously trying to broaden the scope of his medium, either in subject matter or form, by offering him the means of saying his say as he likes, a thing particularly difficult in the professional world; not only offering it but thrusting it upon him, asking him to join with other theater workers in

ventures that may not, and need not, result in large boxoffice receipts or the unanimous approval of reactionary trustees. It need not be argued that one is ungrateful for the few instances of managerial courage and the few accidents that achieve beauty on Broadway if one agrees with Maxwell Anderson's recent statement that Broadway is as "transient as the real-estate values under its feet." Perhaps the beginnings of a consciously directed Nonprofessional theater such as I have outlined it are no more than a promise, but they are at least that.

And what are the plays to be seen in our towns and cities where Nonprofessional theaters operate during the eight months of each year? What evidence is there of life and energy as shown in the productions offered? I have heard it argued that since the Road is dead and the number of stock companies has dwindled from over two thousand to less than two dozen, the legitimate theater has ceased to function outside New York, but those who argue thus are professional actors and managers who either know nothing of the evidence I have submitted or refuse to recognize any theater not run for profit, on the assumption that a "business" that is ninety percent unsuccessful is legitimate, and one that is so organized that it can usually meet its expenses is not.

Every night of the year from October to May it is possible in almost any state of the Union to see plays of every conceivable kind; there is no part of the country where one cannot see some sort of performance of a play by Ibsen, Chekhov, Shakespeare, Moliere, Shaw, O'Neill, Howard,

Kelly, Barry, Anderson, Rice, O'Casey, Synge- to mention only writer whose plays were mentioned in one issue of a local magazine that lists a few of the current attractions in colleges for one month of the past year.

During the season ending in May I have seen rehearsals or performances in Nonprofessional theater of plays by Ibsen, Kaufman, Connelly, Sheridan and Sidney Howard in Washington; Ibsen, Riggs and the Capeks in Oregon; Van Druten, Rice and Ronald Gow in California; Shakespeare in Texas and Iowa; Maltz and Sklar in Pennsylvania; Van Druten, Shaw, Chekhov, Green and O'Neill in New York; Maxwell Anderson in Minnesota; Sidney Howard in Ohio; and Ibsen in Kentucky.

So much, briefly, to indicate that this theater is catholic in its offerings, though I have mentioned chiefly the more famous playwrights. Yet this is not enough: our decentralized theater must, if it would fulfill its function, open up new fields as well, give[sic] its audiences occasionally a little more than they expect or what they are supposed to want or enjoy; it must experiment by allowing the playwright to experiment. Here again I am in a position to give chapter and verse showing that here and there a beginning has been made. There is definite proof of progress of two kinds: encouragement of local writers in their own territory and a more or less successful effort to secure the new or (on Broadway) unmarketable work of playwrights, several of whom are already known in the professional world.

For many years Professor Baker, first at Harvard and later at Yale, not only conducted courses in playwriting but provided for the staging of his students' plays; after him Walter Prichard Eaton is carrying on the same kind of work. Professor Koch at North Carolina, emphasizing rather the folk and local material as subject matter, has done much the same sort of thing; and elsewhere (Cornell, Columbia, Grinnell, for instance) either in connection with writing courses or otherwise, local directors have sought out local plays and produced them. At the University of Iowa, professor E.C. Mabie has created audiences for his experimental showings, and has at present attached to his staff two playwrights on fellowships. Professor Garrett H. Leverton at Northwestern has given Lynn Riggs a chance to direct his own plays

Green Grow the Lilacs and, for the first time on any stage, More Sky. Besides these there are at least twenty other centers where each season's productions are varied by the introduction of new plays, either experimental or simply work that has no chance of professional production in a world where success is measured by gross receipts. The grand total of such productions is fairly large. Without referring to my records, I can recall the following first showings: B.J. Kinne's B.A. B.A. Black Sheep at Northwestern; Lynn Riggs' Rancor and The Cherokee Night and Albert Bein's Heavenly Express at the Hedgerow Theater; Paul Green's Tread the Green Grass, Frank Elser's Low Bridge, Owen Davis' The Harbor Light and Dan Totheroh's Moor Born at the University of Iowa; Martin Flavin's

Sunday at Syracuse University; Paul Green's Shroud My Body Down at the University of North Carolina; Maxwell Anderson's Seawife and Flavin's Amaco at the University of Minnesota; George Middleton's Hiss! Boom!! Blah!!! at New Mexico Normal University; George O'Neil's Something to Live For at the Cleveland Playhouse; Edgar Lee Masters' Andrew Jackson at the University of Chicago; and Eugene O'Neill's Lazarus Laughed at the Pasadena Playhouse. Among the other college and Little Theaters which occasionally do new plays are Amherst College, Pennsylvania State College, Columbia University, Dartmouth, Vassar, Western Reserve, Grinnell, and the independent playhouses at Omaha, New Orleans, Birmingham, Buffalo, and Dallas.

Gradually, the Nonprofessional theater is extending the life of an occasional play that failed to make the grade on Broadway. Here the prejudice against "flops" and the joke about Cain's are not always enough to scare off either the director or the audience. For example, Jasper Deeter has given over a hundred performances of Riggs' Roadside, which lasted just six nights on Broadway; Night Over Taos, Yellow Jack, Distant Drums, and Judgment Day are all to be seen throughout the country, in spite of their more or less quick demises in New York.

Of what importance is this attitude of the Nonprofessional theater to the playwright? What can the Nonprofessionals do with plays that possibly or probably would not interest Broadway? Let me illustrate. A year ago Elmer Rice turned his back on Broadway in disgust just at the

time his new play, Not for Children, was ready to go into rehearsal. A few weeks after it was published, in April, he consented to allow its production by Colleges and Little Theaters; it is at present scheduled in Ohio, Louisiana, Iowa, New York, California, Oregon, and New Mexico.

One more example: Maxwell Anderson's poetic tragedy, Seawife, an old play not yet seen on the professional stage, first saw the light at the University of Minnesota and is now announced for production elsewhere. Neither Not for Children nor Seawife needs "trying out." Mr. Rice and Mr. Anderson are not much concerned over the small income they may derive from such productions, but they must in the long run find audiences for whatever they may choose to write, and they are beginning to find them. A time will come when playwrights, unable or unwilling to write precisely the kind of show that professional managers want or think their audiences want, will turn elsewhere, seeking a public that is different, perhaps simpler, certainly less jaded and less conventional minded, less used to slickness and smartness, a public that will occasionally be willing to hear new themes, eloquence, even the delicate and splendid lines of dramatic poetry- in a word be moved by the sort of beauty that is hard to sell or keep going in our centralized market place. I hope I shall not be accused of sentimentalizing over an imaginary provincial public; most of it, I know, is just as stolid and superficial as we find it here in New York, but the wider audience of the country at large, comprising a more representative body of men and women than we now find on Broadway,

holds possibilities that are hardly to be hoped for there. The provincial theater (I use the term in its exact geographical sense alone) is beginning to realize that it has an existence of its own, to grow out of and reflect its image back upon that section where it has taken root; it is at last on the point of understanding something of its function in the world. For too long it has labored under the disadvantage of having to stand comparison with Broadway, and here and there it seems almost not to care what the professional world thinks of it, when it does think at all.*

* Barrett H. Clark, offprint, "West of Broadway, Some Reflexions on the Nonprofessional Theater," Beinecke Library, Yale, Theatre Guild Papers, Za Theatre Guild Correspondence, box 32, folder "Clark, Barrett H."

Appendix F: "Estimated Expenses, First Year"

Clark and Howard did come up with some financial estimates of how much it would cost to run the Service for the first year. The following estimate is undated, although it is almost invariably from 1936, and is very likely from around the time that the Dramatists' Guild was voting on the proposal. The estimate is part of the Sidney Howard Papers held in the Bancroft Library, Berkeley.

Estimated Expenses, First Year

Salaries

A @ 125. per week

B @ 100. per week

C @ 35. per week

260. per week.....13,520.

Legal expenses: incorporation, fee, etc.....250.

Allowance for temporary extra help500.

Light, per mo. 15.--180.

Telephone, per mo. 15.180.

Furniture, fixtures (if new)

3 desks, 10 chairs, filing cabinets, 2 tables, typewriter (2?),

bookcase, shelving, etc.500.

(Possible at 350.)

Office records

Cash book, ledgers (30.)

Cost of opening set of books (30.)	
Auditing (150.)	
Bookkeeping stationery, bills, etc. (50.).....	260.
Advertising	
General magazine (Th. Arts, college & trade papers; catalogue; monthly mimeographs; general leaflet or announcement....)	1250.
	(Possible at 1100.)
Advertising postage.....	500.
	(Possible at 400.)
Office stationery, etc.	
Letterheads, envelopes and postage.....	300.
Card indexes, filing folders, etc.....	50.
Incidental office expenses	100.
Manuscripts	
(Hard to determine. Where play is not available in printed form, set of MSS (@14. or 15.) or of mimeographs, with parts (@50.) is made. Such expenses are self-liquidating, since these are charged to account of each play.....)	1500.
Postage or express on MSS (Firm pays carriage one way).....	300.
Entertainment.....	200.
	19,590.

[On the back of this first page is a list of names, possibly those who looked like good prospects for an advisory board. I cannot read all of the

names, but I can read "Kaufman," "Sherwood," "Nicholson,"
 "O'Neill," "Connelly," "Eaton" and "Mike Blankfort."]

Remarks on above estimate

Rent is not included. This can be reckoned on a percentage basis,
 depending on the Dr. Guild's plans.

Legal fees (except in connection with incorporation) also not
 included. It is presumed that the Dr. Guild lawyer might be used in
 connection with transactions directly concerned with itself. Otherwise I
 can call on my own lawyer (Harry Weinberger) for a purely nominal cost.

In connection with the items Furniture, and Advertising note the
 same cuts are indicated. The former item is not important, but it is not
 [w]ise to reduce[sic] advertising. In connection with the use of MSS, a
 \$2.00 reading fee is the usual charge, and a \$5.00 rental on a MS and set
 of parts.

Plays:

Essential that the majority of the outstanding successes of the past
 season be secured. Unless Boy Meets Girl, First Lady, Ethan Frome,
Idiot's Delight, End of Summer are secured and offered at once (i.e. in the
 fall) for production, it will hardly be possible to get even a foothold. To
 these should be added a few other titles: Bury the Dead, Moon Over
Mulberry Street, Murder in the Cathedral, and perhaps a few more. [in the
 margin next to this paragraph are typed "Winterset, Dead End, Pride &
Prejudice, Victoria"]

In order to do this authors or agents should be instructed to stop what negotiations have already been made for disposal of amateur or stock rights.

The list must also be built up by addition of certain earlier plays not yet disposed of to amateur agents, even tho some of them have very small commercial pulling power. Among these are The Green Pastures; The Yellow Jacket; Awake and Sing; No More Ladies; 3 Men on a Horse (unless its too late); Yellow Jack; Bright Star; Success Story; Black Sheep; 20th Century; Farmer Takes a Wife; Spring Song;

Authors: The most important, commercially and as to reputation are Barry; Rice; Howard; Abbott; Lindsay; Kaufman; Connelly; Nicholson; Flavin; Kummer; O'Neill; Anderson; Rouverol; Crothers; Odets; Behrman; Sherwood; Davis; Raphaelson; Thomas; Dunning; Carpenter; Middleton; Kelly;

Among members of the Drs. Guild known to me and believed to be particularly anxious for the new set-up are: Siftons, Nicholson, Flavin, Kelly, Spewacks, P. Osborn, Entrikin, Wexley, Bein, Blankfort, Maltz, Rice, D. Powell, R.J. Powel, Raphaelson, Atlas, Basshe, Cushing, J. H. Lawson, Clugston, Kreymborg, G. O'Neil, Hatcher Hughes, Baumer, Ide, Jennings, Totheroh, Eustace, Lavery, (Regarding Green and Riggs, they are favorable but for a short period will probably be tied up by prior engagements.)

Foreign authors: At present the plays of Shaw and Barrie are handled by various agents, consequently no one pushes them. If these could be tied up on an exclusive basis, it would prove a tremendous advantage. Same thing is true of Coward, Novello, Maugham, O'Casey, Priestly, Van Druten, Dane, Drinkwater, and Dodie Smith.

Likewise, Eugene O'Neill. No one pushes the amateur end, except of Ah Wilderness, rights to which are exclusively controlled by S.F.

Non-English authors: Molnar, Toller, Obey, Bernard, Werfel, etc. Tie up if possible.

Advance announcements and tentative release dates: To be able to give this information will be to enable nonpro groups to fix their season well in advance. For example it will prove distinctly advantageous to state that Flavin has sold a new comedy ready for the fall; etc. The chief point is for the amateur to know that these things are going to be available for him.

[At the bottom of this page is a handwritten note: "Possible associates: Pierce, Hare, B. Loving, George, McMullen, Spence, Braun, Sprague, Harold, Reach, Taggart, Kirkpatrick"]*

* n.a., "Estimated Expenses, First Year," Bancroft Library, Berkeley, Sidney Coe Howard Papers, BANC MSS 70/185z, folder "Dramatists Play Service."

Appendix G: Draft of Incorporation Papers for Dramatists' Play**Service**

The following is a letter from Luise Sillcox to Sidney Howard, dated July 16th, 1936:

Dear Sid,

I am enclosing a draft of the certificate of incorporation for the amateur agency. I'm sending this as you can read it and I'll send my own comments by mail tomorrow.

As I wrote you before, these things are very general in terms. The by-laws are usually a little more clearly individual to the corporation. The things that are going to be very important in our case are not really either this certificate or the by-laws, though they have to be right, but the contracts we make with agents, the Guild, etc. One thing I wish you would let me have your idea about: what are we going to call this?

Nobody seems to have a good idea, since we have to discard the word "Cooperative." I have put "Dramatists' Play Bureau" in this, but I don't really like it. I have asked Barrett, Alec Lindey, Mr. Osborne and my entire office force for suggestions, but nobody has given us a good one.

Sincerely,

Luise Sillcox

[following is the enclosure mentioned, the draft of the incorporation papers]

CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION

-of-

DRAMATISTS PLAY BUREAU, INC.

Pursuant to Article II of the Stock Corporation Law.

-oOo-

We, the undersigned, for the purpose of forming a corporation pursuant to Article II of the Stock Corporation Law of the State of New York, do hereby certify:

FIRST: The name of the proposed corporation is DRAMATISTS PLAY BUREAU, INC.

SECOND: The purposes for which the corporation is to be formed are as follows:

(a) To act as agent and broker for authors and dramatists for the purpose of offering for rental, lease, sale or other disposition, on behalf of such authors and dramatists, their rights in their works or plays, known as amateur performing rights, semi-professional performing rights, and other similar rights; to charge and collect agency commissions thereupon; to buy, sell and otherwise acquire and dispose of such rights as owner, agent, broker or in any other capacity; and to enter into agreements for the rental, lease, sale or other disposition of such rights.

- (b) To print and publish such works or plays of such authors and dramatists and sell or lease copies thereof.
- (c) To manufacture, purchase or otherwise acquire, own, mortgage, pledge, sell, assign and transfer, or otherwise dispose of, invest, trade, deal in and with goods, wares and merchandise and real and personal property of every class and description.
- (d) To apply for, acquire, buy, hold, use, sell, assign, lease, grant license in respect of, mortgage, pledge, or otherwise deal in and dispose of letters patent of the United States or of any foreign country, and also patent right, licenses and privileges, inventions, improvements and processes, formulae, copyrights, trade marks and trade names, relating to or useful in connection with any business of this corporation.
- (e) To borrow money, to make and issue bonds, debentures, certificates of indebtedness, notes or other commercial paper, or other obligations of this corporation from time to time, and to secure the same by mortgage, pledge, deed of trust, or otherwise.
- (f) To acquire and pay for in cash, stock or bonds of this corporation or otherwise, the good will, franchises, rights, assets, stock in trade and property, and to undertake or assume the whole or any part of the obligations or liabilities of any persons, firms, associations or corporations engaged in the same or similar business.

(g) To acquire, purchase, hold, sell, transfer or otherwise dispose of shares of its own capital stock, to the extent permitted by law, provided it shall not use its funds or property for the purchase of its own shares of capital stock when such use would cause any impairment of its capital, and provided further that shares of its own capital stock belonging to it shall not be voted upon directly or indirectly.

(h) To subscribe for, purchase, acquire, hold, sell, exchange, pledge, hypothecate, or otherwise dispose of or deal in and with the stock, notes, bonds, debentures or other evidences of indebtedness and obligations of any private, public, quasi-public or municipal corporation, domestic or foreign, or of any domestic or foreign state, government of governmental authority, or of any political or administrative sub-division or department thereof, and all trust, participation or other certificates of, or receipts evidencing interest in, any such securities; and, while the owner of any such stocks, bonds, or other evidences of indebtedness or interest therein, to exercise all the right, powers and privileges of ownership, including the right to vote thereon for any and all purposes.

(i) To have one or more officers, to carry on all or any of its operations and businesses and without restriction or limitation as to amount, in any of the states, districts, territories or possessions of

the United States, and in any and all foreign countries, subject to the laws of such state, district, territory, possession or country.

(j) In general, to carry on any other similar business in connection with the foregoing, to do anything necessary or advisable in connection with the foregoing, and to have and exercise all the powers conferred by the laws of New York upon corporations formed under the act hereinbefore referred to, and to do any or all of the things hereinbefore set forth to the same extent as natural persons might or could do.

The foregoing clauses shall be construed both as objects and powers, and it is hereby expressly provided that the foregoing enumeration of specific powers shall not be held to limit or restrict in any manner the power of this corporation.

THIRD: The total number of shares which may be issued by the corporation is one thousand ten (1010), of which one thousand (1000) shares shall be preferred, of the par value of One Hundred (\$100.) Dollars each; and ten (10) shares shall be common without par value. The capital of the corporation shall be at least equal to the sum of the aggregate amount of consideration received by the corporation for the issuance of shares without par value, plus such amounts as, from time to time, by resolution of the Board of Directors, may be transferred thereto.

FOURTH: The designations, preferences, privileges and voting powers or restrictions or qualifications of the shares of each class are as follows:

(a) The holders of the preferred shares shall be entitled to cumulative dividends thereon at the rate of \$6.00 per share per annum payable out of the net profits of surplus of the corporation at such time or times each year as the Board of Directors shall determine, before any dividend shall be declared, set apart for, or paid upon the common shares of the corporation. The dividends on the preferred shares shall be cumulative so that if the corporation shall fail in any fiscal year to pay such dividends on all the issued and outstanding preferred shares, such deficiency in the dividends shall be fully paid, but without interest, before any dividends shall be declared, set apart for or paid upon the common shares. Except as hereinabove provided, the preferred shares shall not be entitled to participate in the surplus or net profits of the corporation.

(b) Whenever the full dividend upon the preferred shares for all past dividend periods shall have been paid, and the full dividend thereon for the then current dividend period shall have been paid or declared and a sum sufficient for the payment thereof set apart, dividends upon the common shares may be declared by the

Board of Directors out of the remainder of the net profits or surplus of the corporation.

(c) The corporation shall have the right, at the option of the Board of Directors, to redeem and retire all or any part of the outstanding preferred shares at any time after five (5) years from the date of issuance thereof by paying the par value thereof plus all accumulated and accrued dividends, subject however to the following:

(1) The preferred shares held by persons other than theatrical managers, play agents, and members of the Dramatists Guild of The Authors' League of America, Inc. shall first be redeemed in full; and in case of a partial retirement, on a pro rata basis.

(2) After the preferred shares held by such persons has been retired in full, the preferred shares held by theatrical managers, play agents and members of the aforesaid Dramatists' Guild may be redeemed in full or on a pro rata basis.

Written notice of redemption shall be mailed not less than thirty (30) days prior to the date upon which preferred shares are to be redeemed to each holder of such shares at his address as it appears on the books of the corporation.

The Board of Directors shall in its discretion prescribe the time and manner of redemption. If on or before the

redemption date named in such notice, the funds necessary for the redemption shall have been set aside by the corporation as to be available on demand to the holders of the preferred shares so called for redemption, then notwithstanding that any certificate of preferred stock so called for redemption shall not have been surrendered for cancellation, all dividends thereon shall cease from and after the date of redemption so designated; and all rights with respect to such stock shall forthwith cease and determine after the redemption date, except only the right of the holder to receive the redemption price therefore but without interest. Stock redeemed pursuant to the provisions herewith shall not be reissued.

(d) Except as hereinafter provided, all voting rights shall belong exclusively to the holders of the common shares who shall be entitled to one vote for each share of stock standing in their names on the books of the corporation. The holders of the preferred shares shall not have the right to vote, and such holders are expressly excluded from the right to vote in a preceding for mortgaging the property and franchises of the corporation pursuant to Section 16 of the Stock Corporation Law, for guaranteeing the bonds of another corporation pursuant to Section 19 of the Stock Corporation Law, for sale of the franchises and property pursuant to Section 20 of the Stock Corporation Law, for establishing priorities or creating preferences among the several classes of

stock pursuant to Section 36 of the Stock Corporation Law, for consolidation pursuant to Section 86 of the Stock Corporation Law, for voluntary dissolution pursuant to Section 105 of the Stock Corporation Law, or for change of name pursuant to the General Corporation Law, except that if at any time after the first three years from the date of issuance of the preferred shares, payment of dividends is in default thereon for three consecutive years, the holders of the preferred shares shall be entitled to vote as follows:

(1) They shall be entitled to vote for the voluntary dissolution of the corporation pursuant to Section 105 of the Stock Corporation Law; and for such purpose they shall have one vote for each preferred share held by them on the books of the corporation.

(2) A special meeting of the holders of the preferred and common shares of the corporation shall forthwith be called as provided in the by-laws of the corporation, for the purpose of electing new directors. The holders of the preferred shares shall be entitled at such election to elect two-thirds of the total number of the directors to be elected; and the holders of the common shares shall be entitled to elect one-third of such total number.

When, as and if the aforesaid default in the payment of the dividends on the preferred shares shall have been fully remedied, the holders of the preferred shares shall, with respect to voting,

be restored to the position they occupied prior to the occurrence of the default. In such event a special meeting of the holders of the preferred and common shares shall be forthwith called as provided by the by-laws of the corporation, for the purpose of electing new directors; and the holders of the common shares shall be entitled to elect the entire board.

(e) In the event of the dissolution or liquidation of the corporation, or a sale of all its assets, whether voluntary or involuntary, or in event of its insolvency or upon any distribution of its capital, there shall be paid to the holders of the preferred shares the part value thereof, to wit, one hundred (\$100.) Dollars per share plus all accumulated and accrued dividends thereon, before any sum shall be paid or any assets distributed among the holders of the common shares; and after the payment to the holders of the preferred shares of its par value and the accumulated and accrued dividends thereon, the remaining assets and funds of the corporation shall be divided among and paid to the holders of the common stock in proportion to their respective holdings of such shares.

FIFTH: The office of the corporation is to be located in the Borough of Manhattan, City, County and State of New York. The address to which the Secretary of State shall mail a copy of process in any action or proceeding against the corporation which may be served upon him, is

No. 9 East 38th Street, Borough of Manhattan,
City, County and State of New York.

SIXTH: The duration of the corporation shall be perpetual.

SEVENTH: The number of its directors is to be not less than six (6) nor more than eighteen (18). The directors need not be stockholders.

EIGHTH: The names and post office addresses of the directors until the first annual meeting of the stockholders are as follows:

[12 blanks are included, 6 for their names, and 6 for their addresses]

NINTH: The name and post office address of each subscriber of this certificate of incorporation, and a statement of the number of shares which each agrees to take in the corporation are as follows:

[6 blanks are included, 3 for their names, and 3 for their addresses, with each of the three taking 1 common share]

TENTH: All the subscribers are of full age; at least two-thirds of them are citizens of the United States, and at least one of them is a resident of the State of New York. All the persons named as directors are of full age and at least one of them is a citizen of the United States and a resident of the State of New York.

ELEVENTH: The corporation may issue and sell its authorized shares without par value for such consideration as, from time to time, may be fixed by the Board of Directors.

TWELFTH: The Secretary of State is hereby designated as the agent of the corporation upon whom process in any action or proceeding against it may be served.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have made, subscribed and acknowledged this certificate this day of July, 1936.

[Three spaces are included for legal signatures.]

STATE OF NEW YORK)

COUNTY OF NEW YORK)

On this day of July, 1936, before me personally appeared

to me known and known to me to be the persons mentioned and described in, and who executed the foregoing instrument, and they duly severally acknowledged to me that they executed the same.

[space included for the signature of the Notary Public.]*

* n.a., "Certificate of Incorporation of Dramatists Play Bureau, Inc.," Bancroft Library, Berkeley, Sidney Coc Howard Papers, BANC MSS 70/185z, "Authors' League of America, Dramatists' Guild, box 1, folder 1.

Appendix H: Complete Bibliography of Barrett H. Clark's Publications

About Clark, various

Davis, Wendell Eugene. The Celebrated Case of Esther Waters: the collaboration of George Moore and Barrett H. Clark on "Esther Waters: a play." Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984. *Contains Clark's version of the play in question.*

n.a. "Adjudicator to Come From United States." Curtain Call [Toronto] Apr. 1938. *Official publication of the Dominion Drama Festival.*

n.a. "Barrett H. Clark, Stage Expert, Dies." New York Times Aug. 7, 1953: 19.

n.a. "Queens College Gets Play-Writing Teacher, Barrett H. Clark, Author and Critic Named to Faculty." New York Times Aug. 31, 1941: 6.

Stoddard, Richard. "The Barrett H. Clark Collection." The Yale University Library Gazette Jan. 1971: 93-103.

Advertising pieces for Publication or Dustjackets

Anderson, Maxwell. Barefoot in Athens. New York: William Sloane Associates, 1951. *Clark wrote a blurb on the dustjacket entitled "Playgoing at Home".*

Bevan, Donald Joseph and Edmund Trzcinski. Stalag 17. New York: Fireside edition [Dramatists' Play Service], Jan. 1952. *Clark wrote "Playgoing at Home" for the back cover of the volume.*

Brown, Gilmor. General Principles of Play Direction. New York: S. French, 1936. *Clark wrote the blurb on the dustjacket for this.*

Hughes, Glenn. The Story of the Theater; a short history of theatrical art from its beginnings to the present day. New York: S. French, 1928. *Clark wrote the dustjacket copy.*

Toller, Ernst. No More Peace! New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., [c. 1937]. *Clark wrote the dustjacket blurb.*

Articles by Clark, in Alphabetical Order

Note: many of these articles are reviews, but I have listed them as articles, instead of using the citation format for reviews. This is because Clark's reviews often encompassed several different books, articles and performances. Clark also used

his reviews of books and performances to further larger projects (such as the growth of American drama).

This list is also based mostly on articles that I have actually been able to confirm and read. There are a few periodicals that Clark contributed to with a certain regularity, that I have not been able to see a copy of. In such cases, I have included whatever information I have, with hopes of filling in gaps at a future date.

- Clark, Barrett H. "About Books; George Moore, Artist." The Reviewer Nov. 1921.
- Clark, Barrett H. "The Actor's Problems." New York Sun Aug. 25, 1918, sect. 6: 11.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Adolphe Appia." Arts Gazette Sept 16, 1922 (continued in Oct. 21, Nov. 18 issues).
- Clark, Barrett H. "Advice to Young Playwrights." French's Bulletin 6.3 (Mar. 1931).
- Clark, Barrett H. "Aeschylus and O'Neill." The English Journal 21.9 (Nov. 1932).
- Clark, Barrett H. "Algernon Blackwood's Play 'Karma'." New York Sun Dec. 1, 1918, sect. 5: 18.
- Clark, Barrett H. "All Year Festival Program." Mohawk Drama Festival Program (Summer 1936).
- Clark, Barrett H. "Alice Meynell's Poems." New York Sun Nov. 24, 1918, sect. 5: 11.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Along Broadway." The Drama Dec. 1929: 76-77.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Amateur Play-Producing in War Time." The English Journal Nov. 1918: 637-43.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Amateur Producing." Drama League Monthly Sept. 1917: 455-6.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Amateur Theatricals Have Definite Place in All Modern Schools." Brooklyn Daily Eagle Jan. 25, 1925.
- Clark, Barrett H. "The Amateur's Prerogative." Player's Magazine [Flint, Michigan] May-June 1933.
- Clark, Barrett H. "America and the Little Theatre: The Revolt of the Road." New York Times May 2, 1926, sect. 8: 2.
- Clark, Barrett H. "American Art Discovers Itself." The Clubwoman (General Federation of Women's Clubs) (Mar. 1933).

- Clark, Barrett H. "American Drama Equal to Europe's." New York Herald Mar. 19, 1922.
- Clark, Barrett H. "American Drama in its Second Decade." The English Journal (Jan. 1932): 1-11.
- Clark, Barrett H. "American Drama: 1930-39." Mohawk Drama Festival Magazine (Aug. 1 1939).
- Clark, Barrett H. "An American Dramatist." Arts Gazette May 15, 1920.
- Clark, Barrett H. "American Dramatists." Arts Gazette Mar. 27, 1920.
- Clark, Barrett H. "American One-Act Plays Selected." New York Sun Nov. 2, 1919, sect. 6: 12.
- Clark, Barrett H. "American Plays on Broadway." The Drama Nov. 1927: 38-40.
- Clark, Barrett H. "America's Lead in Stage Design." Literary Digest July 15, 1922: 28-9. *Abridged from an article in the New York Times, also by Clark.*
- Clark, Barrett H., tr. "'Anarchy in the Theatre' by Alfred Capus." Poet Lore (Spring 1916): 180-184.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Anatol and Other Plays." New York Sun Feb. 17, 1918, sect. 5: 12.
- Clark, Barrett H. "And More New Plays." Stage Practice (Feb. 1940).
- Clark, Barrett H. "'Another Sheaf' by Galsworthy." The New York Sun Feb. 16, 1919, sect. 5: 3.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Another Thomas Preface." New York Times Mar. 1918.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Aristarchus Resartus: Mr. George Jean Nathan." New York Sun Nov. 2, 1919, sect. 6: 11.
- Clark, Barrett H. "An Artist Converts Fairy Tales into Plays for Children." New York Evening Post Nov. 13, 1926.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Arnold Bennett as a Literary Critic." New York Sun June 23, 1918, sect. 6: 9.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Arthur Symons Conjures Up a Vanished Paris." New York Sun July 21, 1918, sect. 6: 11.

- Clark, Barrett H. "Artists' Families." New York Sun July 28, 1918, sect. 6: 11.
- Clark, Barrett H. "As I See the Canadian Stage." Curtain Call [Toronto] Apr. 1938.
- Clark, Barrett H. "As Others See Us." Theater and School [California] 1926.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Augustus Thomas Talks About Playwriting." New York Sun Mar. 10, 1918, sect. 6: 4.
- Clark, Barrett H. "The Author 'Above the Battle.'" Literary Digest July 27, 1918: 23.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Background." Federal Theater of the South Oct. 1936.
- Clark, Barrett H. "The Bad Boys! Just Hear Them Cut Up!" New York Sun July 28, 1918, sect. 6: 7.
- Clark, Barrett H. "A Balkan Tour in Fiction." New York Sun Nov. 2, 1919, sect. 6: 14.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Barrett Clark Suggests: A Reform for College Theatres...in an Informal Letter." The Old Main Bell [State College of Pennsylvania] Dec. 1931.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Barrett H. Clark." Drama League Monthly (May-Sept., 1916): 62. *A response by Clark to a speech by Roland Holt "How Can the Gallery Audiences Be Won Back?" at the Drama League's 6th Annual Convention.*
- Clark, Barrett H. "Barrett H. Clark, Two New Plays." Contempo Magazine (Apr. 5, 1933).
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- Clark, Barrett H. "Barrie's War Echoes." New York Sun Mar. 16, 1919, sect. 5: 10.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Bedtime Story." Drama (the calendar section) or Drama Calendar (Mar. 7, 1929).
- Clark, Barrett H. "Belgian Drama." New York Evening Post Dec. 7, 1918.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Benavente's Spanishness." New York Sun Nov. 16, 1919, sect. 6: 13.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Bertha Garlan." New York Sun Oct. 20, 1918, sect. 6: 4.
- Clark, Barrett H. "The Best British Plays." New York Sun Apr. 13, 1919, sect. 5: 9.
- Clark, Barrett H. "The Betrothal." New York Sun Jan. 26, 1919, sect. 5: 12.

- Clark, Barrett H. "'The Big Idea' Unusual and good Reading." New York Sun Apr. 14, 1918, sect. 6: 11.
- Clark, Barrett H. "The Blush of Shame." Contempo Magazine (Mar. 15, 1932): 1 and 4. *Excerpt from pamphlet of same name published by University of Washington.*
- Clark, Barrett H. "Book Review." Modern Quarterly [New York] 1930: 553-5.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Books by Symonds." New York Sun May 18, 1919, sect. 6: 3.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Booth Tarkington, Dramatist." Outlook (Oct. 4, 1922).
- Clark, Barrett H. "Brieux and Contemporary French Society." New York Sun Jan. 26, 1918: 7.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Brieux Bigger Playwright Than Preacher." New York Sun Dec. 22, 1918, sect. 5: 2.
- Clark, Barrett H. "A Brilliant Editorial." Stage Practice (Nov. 1939).
- Clark, Barrett H. "Broadway and America As Partners." New York Herald Tribune Dec. 1936.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Broadway Brightens Up a Bit." The Drama (Mar. 1929): 170-171.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Broadway Censorship and a Couple of New Plays." The Drama (Mar. 1927): 171.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Broadway Gambling." The Drama (Feb. 1929): 142-144, 160.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Broadway Opens Shop Again." The Drama (Oct. 1928): 9-11.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Broadway Plays Pass in Review." The Drama (Dec. 1930): 11-12, 17-18.
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- Clark, Barrett H. "A Bronte Memorial." New York Sun Mar. 9, 1919, sect. 5: 7.

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- Clark, Barrett H. "The Buffoon Ballet of Larionow." Shadowland (Jan. 1923).
- Clark, Barrett H. "By Way of Introduction." Stage Practice (Dec. 1938). *This is the first issue of a short running newsletter of the Dramatists' Play Service.*
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- Clark Barrett H. "Canadian Drama Festival." Authors' League Bulletin (Apr. 1938).
- Clark, Barrett H. "Carl Sternheim, the Father of Modern German Comedy." The Double Dealer (Nov. 1925): 249-255.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Ce qu'a dit M. Barrett Clark de "Scampolo", du "Chant du Berceau" et de la piece de la Drama League." Le Droit Ottawa May 23, 1938.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Cervantes." New York Sun June 1, 1919, sect. 6: 5.
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- Clark, Barrett H. "Choosing the Play." Theatre Magazine (Dec. 1918): 365. *This article does not list any author, but at the bottom is a note "The material for this article was taken from Barrett H. Clark's book "How to Produce Amateur Plays," published by Little, Brown & Company.*
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- Clark, Barrett H. "Conversations with Maxim Gorky." Fortnightly Review (Dec. 1923).
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- Clark, Barrett H. "The Early London Season." The Drama Nov. 1913: 187-193.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Editorial." Stage Practice (Dec. 1940).

- Clark, Barret H. "Edmond Rostand: An Appreciation." Theatre Arts Magazine (Jan. 1919): 22-24.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Effect of Outsiders on Theater Art; the Experimental Theater Largely the Result of Their Invasion- Shaw Given First Chance Then." Springfield Sunday Republican Feb. 1, 1925.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Emile Augier." The Drama (Aug. 1915): 440-458.
- Clark, Barrett H. "The End of the Season in New York." The Drama (June 1931): 7-9.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Ernst Toller, Dramatist of the Proletariat." Theatre Magazine (June 1924): 22, 48, 50.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Essays by Prof. Matthews." New York Sun Dec. 7, 1919, sect. 6: 17.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Eugene O'Neill A Chapter in Biography." Theatre Arts Monthly (May 1926): 325-336. *Part of Clark's then soon-to-be-published biography of O'Neill.*
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Clark, Barrett H. New York Sun articles by Clark, most of them undated, from his clipping files (likely 1917-1919, when he was a frequent book reviewer for the Sunday book section). I was able to look through New York Sun from Jan. 1, 1916 to June 15, 1919 and from Sept. 1, 1919 to Sept. 30, 1920, and have included the articles above. I could not find articles of the following titles, which nonetheless exist in Clark's clipping files at the Beinecke Library, Yale. These articles are likely from between June 16 and August 31, 1919.

"Arnold Bennett's 'Judith'"
 "Arthur Symons's New Volume of Essays"
 "The Parish Theatre"
 "Free and Conventional Verse by Mrs. Seiffert"
 "The Play, 'Abraham Lincoln'"
 "A Belgian's War Novel"
 "The Craft of Mr. Tassin"
 "The Test"
 "A Cryptic Seven"
 "Bits of Background"
 (untitled review of Dunsany's Nowadays)
 "Three Tremendous Trifles" (April 1919)
 "Tolstoy, Nietzsche of Russia" (Spring 1918)
 "A Pageant Play"
 "Care Killed a Cat; 'Efficiency' the Kaiser"
 "More Harvard Plays"- 1919? 2nd series?
 "The 'C.O.' in Drama"
 "A French Romance"
 "The Little Daughter of Jerusalem"
 "The Marsh Maiden and Other Plays"- Felix Gould 1918
 "John Webster and the Elizabethan Drama"- 1916?
 "Numbers and Other One-Act Plays"- 1919
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Some book reviews by Clark that seem to parallel some of the New York Sun articles he was writing at the time. This is based on Clark's clipping file, but there is no indication of where they were printed.

"Rupert Brooke's Book on Drama Most Sophomoric" Mar. 1917

"Interesting Plays That Have Come From Presses" Dec 1916

"Book on 'Drama' about Ceremonies of Savages"

"The Tidings Brought to Mary" Oct. 1917 ("Books and Authors" page)

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Clark, Barrett H. and Arthur Edwin Krows, gen. ed. The American Theatre Manuals, published in cooperation with the Drama League of America. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1928.

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- Sanborn, Ralph, Barrett Harper Clark. A Bibliography of the Works of Eugene O'Neill. New York: Random House, 1931. *Reprinted by Benjamin Blom (New York, 1965 and 1968) as A Bibliography of the Works of Eugene O'Neill, together with the collected poems of Eugene O'Neill.*

Book Publications with Clark as Editor or Compiler

- Clark, Barrett Harper, general ed. America's Lost Plays: a series in twenty volumes of hitherto unpublished plays collected with the aid of the Rockefeller Foundation, under the auspices of the Dramatists' Guild of the Authors' League of America, edited with historical and bibliographical notes. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1940-1942. *Reprinted in 1963-1968.*
- Clark, Barrett H. and Kenyon Nicholson, eds. The American Scene. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1930.
- Clark, Barrett H. and Ralph Sanborn, comp and ed. A Bibliography of the Works of Eugene O'Neill. New York: Random House, 1931. Reprinted by B. Blom, 1965.
- Clark, Barrett Harper, comp. Favorite American Plays of the Nineteenth Century. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1943. *Another printing in 1969.*
- Clark, Barrett Harper, comp. Great Short Biographies of Modern Times: the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; a collection of short biographies, literary portraits and memoirs chosen from the literatures of the modern world. New York: A. & C. Boni, 1928. *Later printings in 1932 and 1933.*
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- Clark, Barrett Harper, comp. Great Short Stories of the World; an Anthology Selected from the Literatures of all Periods and Countries. New York: Albert & Charles Boni, 1925. *Another printing in 1931, 1932 and 1936. The publication of this book is rather confused. It appears to also have been published by Gallery Books (New York, 1925), Halcyon House (Garden City, 1925 and 1941), World (New York, 1925), Heath (New York, 1925), R.M. McBride (New York, 1925, 1926 and 1928), World Publishing Co. (Cleveland, 1925, 1947 and 1962), Heinemann (London, 1926, 1927 and 1928), a deluxe edition from Garden City Publishing Co., Inc. (Garden City, 1938 and 1947), Hamlyn Publishing Group (London, 1964), and Spring Books (London, 1964).*
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- Clark, Barrett Harper, ed. World Drama, an anthology. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1933. *Published in two vols. by Dover (New York, 1933, 1953, 1956, 1960, and 1969, with other reprints since.*
- Clark, Barrett Harper, comp. A World of Stories for Children: a one volume library of the great fairy, folk tales and legends of the world from the earliest times to the late nineteenth century, for the use of parents, teachers, and young people; collected, with notes, reading lists and bibliographies. New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1940. *Also printed in a slightly different edition in Indianapolis, 1947.*
- Eaton, Walter Prichard. Plays and Players; Leaves from a Critic's Scrapbook. Barrett H. Clark, ed. Preface by Barrett H. Clark. Cincinnati: Stewart & Kidd Co., 1916.
- Gorky, Maxim. (Alexei Masimovich Pyeshkoff). Story of a Novel, and Other Stories. Barrett H. Clark, ed. New York: Dial Press, 1925.
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- Augier, Emile. The House of Fourchambault, a comedy in five acts. Clark, Barrett H., tr. New York: Samuel French, Inc., c. 1915. *Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series*.
- Augier, Emile. The Post-Script; a comedy in one act. Clark, Barrett H., tr. New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1915. *Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series*.
- Augier, Emile and Jules Sandeau. "The Son-in-Law of M. Poirier" Barrett H. Clark, tr. The Chief European Dramatists. Brander Matthews, ed. Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1916. (p. 411-446)
- Banville, Theodore Faullain de. Charming Leandre; a comedy in one act. Clark, Barrett H., tr. New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1915. *Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series*.
- Benedix, Roderich. The Law-Suit, a comedy in one act. Clark, Barrett H., tr. New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1915. *Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series*.
- Benedix, Roderich. The Third Man, a comedy in one act. Clark, Barrett H., tr. New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1915. *Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series*.
- Bernard, Tristan. French Without a Master: a farce in one act. Clark, Barrett H., tr. New York: Samuel French Inc., 1915. *Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series*.
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- Bouchor, Maurice. A Christmas Tale, in one act. Clark, Barrett H., tr. New York: Samuel French, 1915. *Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series*.
- Bourdeaux, Henry. The House That Died. Clark, Barrett H., tr (as Harold Harper). New York: Duffield, 1922.

- Brandes, Edvard. "A vist [sic]; a play in two acts." Barrett H. Clark, tr. *An undated typescript in the New York Public Library.*
- Brieux, Eugene. Artists Families, in three acts. Clark, Barrett H., tr. Introduction J.R. Crawford. Garden City: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1918. *Part of Drama League Series of Plays, vol XXI.*
- Brueys. Master Patelin, Solicitor; a comedy in three acts. Barrett H. Clark, tr. New York: Samuel French, c. 1915. *Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series.*
- Caillavet, Gaston-Arman de. Choosing a Career, a farce in one act. Clark, Barrett H., tr and adaptor. New York: Samuel French, 1915. *Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series.*
- Capus, Alfred. Brignol and his Daughter; a comedy in three acts. Clark, Barrett H., tr. London: Samuel French, Ltd., 1915. *Part of French's Standard Library.*
- Capus, Alfred. "My Tailor; a comedy in one act from the French" Barrett H. Clark, tr (as Harold Harper). The One-Act Theater, new comedies and dramas vol. 1. New York: Samuel French, 1936. (p. 163-178)
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- Curel, Francois de. A False Saint, a play in three acts. Clark, Barrett H., tr. Introduction Archibald Henderson. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1916. *Part of Drama League Series of Plays, vol. XVII.*
- Donnay, Maurice. Lovers, The Free Woman, They; three plays. Clark, Barrett H., tr. and Introduction. New York: M. Kennerley, 1915. *Part of Modern Drama Series.*
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- Feuillet, Octave. The Fairy, a comedy in one act. Clark, Barrett H., tr. New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1915. *Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series.*

- Feuillet, Octave. The Village, a comedy in one act. Clark, Barrett H., tr. New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1915. *Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series.*
- France, Anatole. Crainquebille. Barrett H. Clark, tr. New York: Samuel French, 1915. *Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series.*
- Freer, Eleanor Everst. A Christmas Tale (Conte de Noel) Opera in one act. Milwaukee: Wm. A. Kaun Music Co., Inc., 1928. *Musical score, based on a play by Maurice Bouchor, and translated by Barrett H. Clark.*
- Giacosa, Giuseppe. The Wager: a poetic comedy in one act. Barrett H. Clark, tr. New York: Samuel French, 1914. *Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series.*
- Goldoni, Carlo. The Beneficent Bear, a Comedy in Three Acts. Clark, Barrett H., tr. New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1915. *Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series.*
- Gorky, Maxim (Aleksei Moksimovich Pieshkov). The Judge, a Play in Four Acts. Authorized tr. by Marie Zakrevsky and Barrett H. Clark. New York: Robert M. McBride & Company, 1924.
- Gyalui, Wolfgang. After the Honeymoon. Barrett H. Clark, tr. New York: Samuel French, c. 1915. *Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series.*
- Hervieu, Paul. The Labyrinth (Le dedale), a play in five acts. Clark, Barrett H. and Lander MacClintock, tr. New York: Heubsch, 1913.
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- Hervieu, Paul. "Modesty." Barrett H. Clark, tr. Contemporary One-Act Plays. B. Roland Lewis, ed. and compiler. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922. (p. 255-272)
- Labiche, Eugene. Grammar, a comedy in one act. Clark, Barrett H., tr. New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1915. *Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series.*
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- Lavedan, Henry. "The Prince D'Aurec." Barrett H. Clark, tr. In The Masterpieces of Modern Drama (2 vols). John Pierce Alexander, ed. New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1915. *Abridgement of the play as a plot summary, interlined with quotes from Clark's translation from Three Modern Plays From the French.*
- Le Sage, Alain Rene. Crispin, Rival of his Master, a comedy in one act. Clark, Barrett H., tr. New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1915. *Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series.*
- Loyson, Paul Hyacinthe. The Apostle, a modern tragedy in three acts. Clark, Barrett H., tr. Introduction George Pierce Baker. Garden City: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1916. *Part of Drama League Series of Plays, vol. XV.*
- Marivaux, Pierre Carlet de Chamblain de. The Legacy, a comedy in one act. Clark, Barrett H., tr. New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1915. *Part of the World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series.*
- Maurey, Max. Rosalie. Barrett H. Clark, tr. New York: Samuel French, c. 1915. *Part of the World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series.*
- Meilhac, Henri and Ludovic Halevy. Indian Summer, a comedy in one act. Clark, Barrett H., tr. New York: Samuel French, Inc., c. 1915. *Another printing in 1976. Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series.*
- Meilhac, Henri and Ludovic Halevy. Panurge's Sheep; a comedy in one act. Clark, Barrett H., tr and adaptor. New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1915. *Another printing in 1921.*
- Moliere, Jean-Baptiste Poquelin. The Affected Young Ladies, a comedy in one act. Clark, Barrett Harper, tr. New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1915. *Another printing in 1942.*
- Moliere, Jean-Baptiste Poquelin. The Doctor in Spite of Himself, a farce in two acts. Clark, Barrett Harper, tr. New York: Samuel French, c. 1915. *Another printing in 1942. Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series.*
- Moliere, Jean-Baptiste Poquelin. Doctor Love: a comedy in three acts. Clark, Barrett H., tr. New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1915. *Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series.*

- Moliere, Jean-Baptiste Poquelin. The Imaginary Invalid; a comedy in three acts. Clark, Barrett H., tr. New York: Samuel French, 1925. *Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series.*
- Moliere, Jean-Baptiste Poquelin. The Sicilian: a comedy in one act. Clark, Barrett H., tr. New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1915. *Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series.*
- Musset, Alfred de and Emile Augier. The Green Coat, a comedy in one act. Clark, Barrett H., tr. New York: Samuel French, Inc., c. 1915. *Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series.*
- Pailleron, Edouard. The Art of Being Bored, a comedy in three acts. Clark, Barrett H., tr. New York: Samuel French, Inc., c. 1915. *Another printing in 1920. Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series.*
- Picard, Louis-Benoit. The Rebound, a comedy in one act. Clark, Barrett H., tr. New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1915. *Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series.*
- Plautus, Titus Maccius. The Twins; a comedy in five acts. Barrett H. Clark, tr. New York: Samuel French, c. 1915. *Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series.*
- Rivoire, Andre. The Little Shepherdess, a comedy in one act. Clark, Barrett H., tr. New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1915. *Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series.*
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- Rolland, Romain. The People's Theater. Clark, Barrett H., tr. New York: H. Holt and Co., 1918.
- Rolland, Romain. The Wolves, a play in three acts. Clark, Barrett H., tr. New York: Random House, 1937.
- Rostand, Edmond. The Romancers; a comedy in three acts. Clark, Barrett Harper, tr. New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1915. *Later printings in 1942 and 1969. Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series.*

- Rostand, Edmond. "The Romancers." Barrett H. Clark, tr. In Best Plays: 7 Plays for Young People with Lessons for Teaching the Basic Elements of Literature: Advanced Level. Lincolnwood, Ill.: Jamestown Publishers, 1998.
- Sardou, Victorien. The Black Pearl, a comedy in three acts. Clark, Barrett H., tr. New York: Samuel French, 1915. *Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series*.
- Sardou, Victorien. Patrie! An Historical Drama in five acts (eight scenes). Clark, Barrett Harper, tr. and Introduction. Garden City: Doubleday, Page, 1915. *Part of Drama League Series of Plays. Facsimile reprint in 1987 by Howard Fertig*.
- Sternheim, Carl. "A Place in the World." Barrett H. Clark and Winifred Katzin, tr. Eight European Plays. New York: Brentano's, 1927.
- Tchekov, Anton. "The Boor." Barrett H. Clark and Hilmar Baukhage, tr. and adaptor. Contemporary One-Act Plays. B. Roland Lewis, ed and compiler. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922. (p. 155-173)
- Tchekov, Anton. "The Boor." Barrett H. Clark and Hilmar Baukhage, tr. and adaptor. Thirty Famous One Act Plays. Bennet Cerf and Van H. Cartmell, eds. Garden City: Garden City Publishing Co., Inc., 1943.
- Tchekoff, Anton. A Marriage Proposal. Hilmar Baukhage and Barrett H. Clark, tr and adaptor. New York: Samuel French, c. 1915. *Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series*.
- Terence. Phormio, a Latin comedy in five acts. "English version by Barrett H. Clark." New York: Samuel French, 1915. *Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series*.
- Terence. "Phormio." The Complete Roman Drama (2 vols.). George E. Duckworth, ed. Barrett H. Clark, tr. New York: Random House, 1942. (p. 311-357) *Clark's original acting edition was cut and abridged from the original length Terence's play. Duckworth "put back" the cuts and abridgments as listed on p. 357.*
- Theuriet, Andre. Jean-Marie; a play in one act. Barrett Clark, tr. New York: Samuel French, c. 1915. *Part of World's Best Plays by Celebrated European Authors Series*.
- Vanzype, Gustave. Mother Nature, Progress; two Belgian Plays. Barrett H. Clark, tr. and ed. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1917.

Contributions to books, pamphlets or articles

- Best, Mrs. A. Starr, compiler. Drama League of America Study Course No. 33: Popular Study Course, Based on the Plays of the Season 1926-27, Obtainable in Print. Chicago: Drama League of America, 1927.
- Bricker, Herschel L., ed. Our Theatre Today: a Composite Handbook on the Art, Craft, and Management of the Contemporary Theatre. New York: Samuel French, 1936. Clark wrote the chapter "Playwright and Theatre," p. 157-175.
- Chapman, John. Theatre '53: Reading Versions of the Golden Dozen Plays of the Year. New York: Random House, 1953. *Clark contributed the chapter "The Theatre in the United States," p. 15-36: the last thing Clark published before he died.*
- Clark, Barrett H. "European Theories of the Drama." The Theatre Handbook and Digest of Plays. Ed. Bernard Sobel. New York: Crown Publishers, 1940. (p. 330-331) *Later editions of this same book did not contain Clark's entry, but contained entries quite obviously derived from Clark's European Theories of the Drama.*
- Clark, Barrett H. "The Experimenter is the Most Important Factor in the Theatre" In a pamphlet called Beyond Broadway Detroit: n.p, 1931.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Maxwell Anderson." The Oxford Companion to the Theatre. Ed. Phyllis Hartnoll. London: Oxford UP, 1951. (p. 26)
- Clark, Barrett H. "Eugene Gladstone O'Neill." The Oxford Companion to the Theatre. Ed. Phyllis Hartnoll. London: Oxford UP, 1951. (p. 584-5)
- Clark, Barrett H. "Sidney Coe Howard." The Oxford Companion to the Theatre. Ed. Phyllis Hartnoll. London: Oxford UP, 1951. (p. 373)
- Ehrensperger, Harold A. "Taking Stock in a Lean Year." The Drama Magazine Dec. 1930: 25+. *Clark gives a single paragraph suggestion on what to do about the little theatre in reference to the bad year of 1930. This article is a collection of ideas and suggestions from important figures in the theatre to the members of the little theatre community.*
- Poultney, George W., Barrett H. Clark, Harry Earl James, Myna Brunton Hughes. An Index of Plays of the American Theatre in Manuscript Form from the Collection of George W. Poultney. To Accompany the Exhibit for the Dramatists' Alliance of Stanford University, August 1939. Calif.: Stanford University, 1939. *Clark's "Lost Records of American Drama" from NY Times, Sunday Jan. 31, 1937, XI: 1:4 is an appendix.*
- Renard, Jean. "Good-bye! A comedy in one act." Barrett H. Clark, tr. An offprint from Smart Set, perhaps 1916.

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- Clark, Barrett H. "Open Letter to the author of White Man." Accent on Youth and White Man. By Samson Raphaelson. New York: S. French, 1935. *Clark also wrote the blurb for the dust jacket.*
- Clark, Barrett H. Introduction. The Appleton Book of Short Plays (Second Series) Actable Short Plays for Amateurs. Ed. Kenyon Nicholson. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1927.
- Clark, Barrett H. Foreword. Big Lake, a tragedy in two parts as produced by the American Laboratory Theater, New York City. By Lynn Riggs. New York: Samuel French's Inc., 1927. *He also did a program blurb for the same show in April 1927, and the dust-jacket blurb for this edition.*
- Clark, Barrett H. "About E.P. Conkle." Foreword. Crick -Bottom Plays. By E.P. Conkle. New York: Samuel French, 1928. *Clark also wrote the dustjacket blurb.*
- Clark, Barrett H. Introduction. The Earth Between & Behind the Night. By Virgil Geddes. New York: Samuel French, 1930.
- Clark, Barrett H. Preface. Eight European Plays. By Winifred Katzin. New York: Brentano's, 1927.
- Clark, Barrett H. Foreword. The Fine Book Circle presents the first book appearance of Charles T Dazey's thrilling American Drama, In Old Kentucky. By Charles Dazey Turner. Detroit: Fine Book Circle, 1937.
- Clark, Barrett H. Preface. From Candles to Footlights: a biography of the Pikes Peak theatre, 1859-1876. By Melvin Schoberlin. Denver: F.A. Rosenstock, Old West Pub. Co., 1941.
- Clark, Barrett H. Preface. Gotham Book Mart Catalogue No. 33. New York: Gotham Book Mart, May, 1935.
- Clark, Barrett H. Foreword. How Your Play Can Crash Broadway; the Authoritative Handbook for a Successful Playwriting Career, the 36 authentic plost streamlined for your convenience. By Louise Howard and Jeron Criswell. New York: Howard & Criswell, c. 1939.
- Clark, Barrett H. Preface. How's Your Second Act? By Arthur Hopkins. New York: Samuel French's, Inc., 1931.
- Clark, Barrett H. Foreword. Little Ol' Boy, a play in three acts. By Albert Bein. New York: Samuel French's, c. 1935.

- Clark, Barrett H. Introduction. Lonesome Road. By Paul Green. New York: Robert M. McBride & Company, 1926.
- Clark, Barrett H. Preface. The Penthouse Idea. By Glenn Hughes. New York: Dramatist's Play Service, c. Spring 1939. A pamphlet.
- Clark, Barrett H. Preface. The Penthouse Idea, a Suggestion and a Challenge. By Glenn Hughes. New York: Dramatists Play Service, Inc., n.d. (circa 1940 or 1941). A pamphlet. *This pamphlet has two variants, with only slight differences in wording, neither of which are dated. This is an essay by Hughes, 12 pages long, that covers a history of the "circus" idea for performance, and deals with some of the needs of such production.*
- Clark, Barrett H. Foreword. So You Want to Go Into the Theater? By Shepard Traube. Boston: Little, 1940. *Clark also wrote the dustjacket copy for this.*
- Clark, Barrett H. Preface. Spindrift. By Martin Flavin. New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1930.

Notes in Performance Programs

- Clark, Barrett H. "David Pinski" In Provincetown Playbill 1928-9, No. 1
- Clark, Barrett H. "The Kalamazoo Civic Players and the National Theatre." The 100th Program of the Kalamazoo Civic Players. March, 1938,
- Clark, Barrett H. "Paul Green" A Provincetown Playbill; A Leaflet Issued with Each New Production at the Provincetown Playhouse, Season 1926-7 No. 2. This for "In Abraham's Bosom"
- Clark, Barrett H. "A Program Note" for Beechwood Theater (Scarborough) for the play, In the Name of God April 26, 1928.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Success Is A Failure" In New Playwrights Program, 1928.
- Clark, Barrett H. "Winesburg, Ohio." Program of Group Theater [New Orleans] Mar. 1935.

Pamphlets and Offprints

- Clark, Barrett H. and John Mason Brown, compilers and editors. George Pierce Baker; a Memorial. New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1939.
- Clark, Barrett H. "'Lost' plays of the American theater." (offprint) Briarcliff Manor, NY: (n.p.), 1937. A 12 page article, condensed from the New York Times.

- Clark, Barrett. The Modern Drama. Chicago: American Library Association, 1927.
A pamphlet that was part of the "Reading with a Purpose" series.
- Clark, Barrett H. An Open Letter to Mr. St. John Ervine. The Yale copy is printed from Briarcliff Manor, March 10, 1929. *Clark had difficulty finding a publisher for this, or a newspaper that would print it, so it was issued as an offprint. This was eventually printed in The Mask, out of Italy, in 1929.*
- Clark, Barrett H. "Our Most American Drama: Recent Developments, 1930-39." An offprint "from the English journal (college edition), vol. XXVIII, no. 5, May 1939." (p. 333-342) It is now at the University of Texas-Austin.
- Clark, Barrett H. The Plays of Eugene O'Neill, Offered for Production by Non-professional Groups in the United States and Canada. New York: Dramatists Play Service, Inc., n.d. *This is a list of O'Neill's plays, which were just then being offered for production in non-professional venues. It is organized into "Short" and "Full-Length" plays, with synopses of each play and the fees for production, as well as the production requirements. I think the latest O'Neill play listed is Days Without End.*
- Clark, Barrett Harper. The Production of Amateur Plays; a few notes for the use of independent producers and players. Chicago: Drama League of America, Drama Study Department, 1926. (a pamphlet)
- Clark, Barrett H. The Reading and Study of Plays for Enjoyment. Colorado: General Federation of Women's Clubs, 1925. *Also printed in The Billboard Oct, 34, 1925.*
- Clark, Barrett H. The Reading and Study of Plays for Enjoyment. Chicago: Drama League of America, Drama Study Dept., 1925. (a pamphlet)
- Note: *Clark wrote other pamphlets for the Drama League. He authored Drama Study Course #7 "A Modern French Course," #14 "Modern English Drama," and helped with seasonal play courses from 1921-2 through 1930-1, offered as pamphlets and in Drama Magazine, at inconsistent intervals, sometimes anonymously.*

Speeches given by Clark

Note: this is by no means a complete list of the speeches Clark gave, but lists some that I have discovered the specifics of. He, like his father was a very prolific public speaker.

- Clark, Barrett. "Barrett H. Clark" The Drama 17.5 (Feb. 1927): 140. *This is an advertisement for a lecture tour that Clark was doing for the Drama League of America. The whole ad reads: "Barrett H. Clark, Author of Eugene O'Neill, A Study of Modern Drama, etc. will lecture on "Eugene O'Neill" and "The New American Drama" in the vicinity of Chicago between March 30 and April 7. A*

few open dates left. Write immediately for details to: Drama League of America, 59 E. Van Buren St. Chicago." The exact same ad also ran in the following issue of The Drama, p. 191.

- Clark, Barrett. "Broadway and its Extensions." The Northwest Drama Conference. University of Washington, Seattle. Feb. 13, 1953. *A copy of this speech is in the Yale Library, Beinecke Za C546 +1, box 1, folder 1.*
- Clark, Barrett H. "'Broadway' or the People's Theatre." Southern Theatre Festival. Chapel Hill, North Carolina. April 6, 1940. *This was a radio debate with Archibald Henderson and Paul Green. It is discussed in: n.a. "A Regional Theatre Festival, Drama in the South" Carolina Play-Book, June 1940, vol. 13, no. 2, p. 108- 113. This was a two part Festival, with April 1-3 1940 being the 17th Carolina Dramatic Association Festival and April 4-6 being the Southern Theatre Festival.*
- Clark, Barrett H. Conference of the Intercollegiate Dramatic Association. New Brunswick, New Jersey. Nov. 1929. *This speech was reviewed briefly in an unattributed article: "Experimental Stages Assailed as Failures" New York Times, Dec. 7, 1929, p. 19, column 2.*
- Clark, Barrett H. Guest Speaker. Eighth Annual Dramatic Festival and State Tournament of the Carolina Dramatic Association. Chapel Hill, North Carolina. June 1931. *Paul Green and Lynn Riggs were also Guest Speakers at this same convention.*
- Clark, Barrett H. Keynote Speech. 2nd Annual Conference of the Little Theatre Council of the Southwest. Feb. 17, 1940. *As mentioned in Crowley, Edward J. "The Little Theatre Council of the Southeast" Carolina Play-Book March 1941, vol. 14, no. 1, p. 23- 25. Clark was also elected to the Board of Directors of this group for the following year.*
- Clark, Barrett H. Luncheon for the Drama League of New York City. Nov. 1926. *This speech was described in an unattributed article: "Drama is Dying Stage League Told" New York Times, Dec. 4, 1926, p. 14, column 1.*
- Clark, Barrett H. Mohawk Drama Festival. Schenectady, New York. July 1936. *A report of his speech is given in: n.a. "Young Playwrights Praised for Talent" New York Times, July 27, 1936, p. 20, columns 5 and 6.*
- Clark, Barrett H. New York Center of the Drama League. New York City, New York. March or April, 1928. *This is from an article about a forum which both Clark and Walter Hampden spoke at. It is mentioned in: "Hampden Decries Play Censorship" New York Times, April 2, 1928, p. 23, column 3.*

- Clark, Barrett H. New York Times National Book Fair. New York City, New York. November 1936. *It is briefly summarized in: n.a. "300,000 New Words Credited to U.S." New York Times, Nov. 10, 1936, p. 23, columns 1 and 2.*
- Clark, Barrett. "Our New American Drama." The Drama 19.1 (Oct. 1928): 28. *This is an advertisement for Clark who was apparently doing a speaking tour for the Drama League of America. The whole ad reads: "Barrett H. Clark Speaks on Our New American Drama. Three or four open dates available in the middle West between January 21 and January 29. For details write to Drama League of America, 59 E. Van Buren St., Chicago."*
- Clark, Barrett H. "Our New American Drama." Manhattan Theatre Camp. Peterborough, New York. March or April 1927. *The speech is mentioned in: Kenyon, Elmer. "A New School of the Theatre Arts" The Drama. April 1927, vol. 17, no. 7, p. 222.*
- Clark, Barrett H. "Proff Goes to Heaven." Southern Theatre Festival. Chapel Hill, North Carolina. April 5, 1940. *Discussed in: n.a. "A Regional Theatre Festival, Drama in the South" Carolina Play-Book, 13.2 (June 1940): 108- 113. This was a two part Festival, combining the 17th Carolina Dramatic Association Festival (April 1-3, 1940) and the Southern Theatre Festival (April 4-6).*
- Clark, Barrett H. "The Public and the Theatre." New York City Drama League Center, New York City, New York. January 31, 1931. *This symposium announced in: "New York City" The Drama Magazine. March 1931, vol. 21, no. 6, p. 37.*
- Clark, Barrett H. "Sauce for Propaganda." National Theater Convention. Hotel Astor, New York, New York. May 1937. *The speech is published in: Authors' League Bulletin July 1937.*
- Clark, Barrett H. "Sidney Howard A Few Personal Memories." Broadcast on WOR, New York City. September 2, 1939. *A shortened version of this speech is in: High School Thespian Dec. 1939. Also in The Curtain Call Dec. 1939 (p. 12).*

Translations in Journals

- Augier, Emile. "The Marriage of Olympe." Trans. Barrett H. Clark. The Drama 5.19 (Aug. 1915): 358-439.
- Brieux, Eugene. "A Letter Concerning Augier." [Trans. Barrett H. Clark.] The Drama 5.19 (Aug. 1915): 353-357. *Also titled: "A Letter from Eugene Brieux to Barrett H. Clark to be used in The Drama and as a preface to a volume of four plays by Emile Augier." I am assuming Clark was the translator especially since it is followed by Clark's translation of Augier's "The Marriage of Olympe." It was also used as a Preface for Four Plays by Emile Augier, translated by Clark (1915).*

- Capus, Alfred. "Anarchy in the Theatre." Trans. Barrett H. Clark. Poet Lore 27.2 (Spring 1916): 180-184.
- Capus, Alfred. "New Difficulties of the Stage." Trans. Barrett H. Clark. The Drama 10.4 (Jan., 1920): 129-131.
- Capus, Alfred. "The Subject of Plays." Trans. Barrett H. Clark. The Dramatist 6.4 (July, 1915): 583- 588.
- Claudé, Paul. "How My Plays Should be Acted." Trans. Barrett H. Clark. Theatre Arts 1.3 (May, 1917): 117-118.
- Dumas *fils*, Alexandre. "The Technic of Playwriting." Trans. Barrett H. Clark. The Drama 7.25 (Feb. 1917): 117-128.
- France, Anatole. "Crainquebille." Trans. Barrett H. Clark. The International 9.3 (March, 1915): 68- 77.
- Hofmannsthal, Hugo von. "The Theatre: Eugene O'Neill." Trans. Barrett H. Clark. Freeman (March 23, 1923). *This is also printed in an abbreviated form in: Houchin, John H. The Critical Response to Eugene O'Neill. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1993, p. 53-57.*
- Lavedan, Henri. "Technic of Scene Building." Trans. Barrett H. Clark. The Dramatist 9.3 (April, 1918): 906-911.
- Rolland, Romain. "The Wolves." Trans. Barrett H. Clark. The Drama 8.32 (Nov. 1918): 578-636.

Vita

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