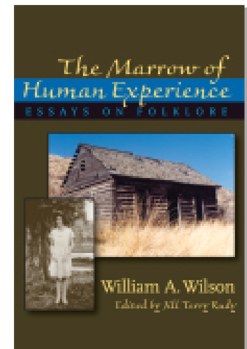
Marrow of Human Experience, The

William Wilson, Jill Terry Rudy



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Arts and Cultural Policy

Early in his career, Bert Wilson questioned the value of public folklore, which in America is mostly situated in the nonprofit arts sector. He then, and still today, worried about the political purposes to which folklore could be put. When I interviewed Bert in May 2003, I learned that it did not take long for him to accept the idea that helping people appreciate their own heritage through public programs like festivals and exhibits is a valuable endeavor (Thatcher 2003, tape 1, page 4 of transcript). Soon after this realization, which he says started when he participated in the 1976 Smithsonian Folklife Festival, he began actively to support public sector folklore by serving on panels and boards, participating in fieldwork, and consulting on presentation projects. After twenty years of such participation, he gave presentations and put down on paper some of his thoughts about government's role in the arts.

In "Arts and the Family," Bert discusses the creativity that is inborn in the human animal and makes a case for recognition of all kinds of artistic endeavor, whether it be performed by professionals on a concert stage, or performed in the living room by people who earn their livelihoods outside the arts. This notion of creativity as a human imperative is one embraced by most folklorists, but Bert brings it home, literally, by using his own experience with his family and their stories as examples. While he does not advocate directly for public funding of the arts, he suggests that if the public is to accept and appreciate all the arts, a beginning must be made by teaching children to recognize the creativity that flows within their own families. He suggests that schoolteachers should encourage children to recognize their families' traditions, along with teaching them about the world's great artists like Beethoven, Matisse, and Melville.

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This seemingly innocuous piece of writing stirred up a bit of a storm, however, when it was republished by the National Endowment for the Arts. The endowment, especially in the culture wars of the 1980s and 1990s, had become a lightning rod for some people with particular political agendas, and thus Wilson's words became fodder for the political press. He then wrote "Misquotes and Misfires" as a response to two conservative writers who had twisted his words and his intent. This piece is more informal and displays not only Wilson's considerable skills at forming an argument, but also his wit. Wilson's response to these politically motivated misrepresentations of public policy is more important than it might appear. Wilson was in a position to speak plainly about the value of arts in the public sector, and about the value of folk arts as one part of the arts. It is unfortunate that "Misquotes and Misfires" did not appear in every newspaper that carried the George Will column that inspired the piece in the first place.

The essay "The Role of Religion in Cultural Policy in Utah" is another important work on folklore and cultural policy because it speaks openly about issues and practices that are often guarded and controversial. With the thoughtful balance and articulate expression that are hallmarks of Bert Wilson's writing and speaking, the essay describes the Mormon/non-Mormon divide in Utah's arts. Wilson even-handedly discusses the biases of Mormon leaders and non-Mormon arts advocates and describes events from his own experience in which he had to walk the policy tightrope or advocate for consistent application of the rules in decision making. He communicates the truth of the matter that mixing religion, politics, and arts is a balancing act of no small proportion.

One of the reasons Bert's essays on folklore and cultural policy are so valuable is that few public folklorists have taken the time to write about the work they do. Notable exceptions are Robert Baron and Nicholas Spitzer, who edited *Public Folklore* (Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), and others who have written or compiled reports such as Ormond H. Loomis, who edited *Cultural Conservation: The Protection of Cultural Heritage in the United States* (Library of Congress, 1983). Most writing on public folklore has been for the folklore field and primarily focused on best practices or on the academic-public divide. Little discussion has dealt with the basic question of whether, or how, government should be involved in the folk arts. Wilson's writings have reached broader arts policy audiences with messages about the value of folk arts in the schools, in arts institutions, and elsewhere in personal and public life.

—Elaine Thatcher

ARTS AND THE FAMILY

I GREW UP IN A FAMILY OF RAILROADERS. MY FATHER AND AN UNCLE WERE section foremen, my brother a road master, one uncle a fireman, another an engineer, still another a train master. Holiday dinners at my grandparents' home

were day-long storytelling events. As my grandmother prepared a dinner, which was always an artistic feast, the cousins gathered in the back room and terrified each other with ghost stories. Later, as we gathered around the dinner table, my uncles, all excellent raconteurs, would regale us with heroic stories of how they had almost single-handedly saved the Union Pacific Railroad from disaster, each narrator trying to top the others in recounting dramatic exploits. Later, when the dishes had been washed and put away and the talk had finally died down, we children would curl up in corners of the room and listen to our parents join in song. My grandfather's and Uncle Albert's clear tenor voices would lead the way, and then other uncles and aunts would join in, harmonizing wonderfully. On the drive home, my head full of story and song, I would feel a closeness to my family that could not have been engendered in other ways.

Through all the years of my public education, no teacher ever suggested to me that what I had experienced in my family on those occasions was of any artistic worth. Art was something we read about in books, not a crucial part of our own lives.

The recent *American Canvas* forum in Salt Lake City, sponsored by the NEA, pondered the question of how the arts can strengthen families. Family bonds are tightened, of course, when family members attend and participate in artistic events together. Anyone who doubts this need only visit Cedar City's Shakespearean Festival and observe the families who year after year make that occasion a family pilgrimage.

But if we really hope to strengthen families through the arts, we must move away from the notion that art can only be found on the museum wall, at the concert hall, or on the performing stage. We must understand that art includes the expressive behaviors of ordinary people, like my railroader relatives, as they respond creatively to the circumstances of everyday life. If we will look, we will find art all around us—in the things we make with our words (songs, stories, rhymes, proverbs), with our hands (quilts, knitting, rawhide braiding, piecrust designs, dinner-table arrangements, garden layouts), and with our actions (birthday and holiday celebrations, worship practices, playtime activities, work practices). As Franz Boas noted long ago, "All human activities may assume forms that give them esthetic values" ([1927] 1955, 8).

Art, then, is not something that exists "out there" in a world alien to many families but is rather an essential part of the lives of most families. The problem is that they just don't know it. If we want to help families through the arts, we must help them recognize, nourish, and value the art they already possess. As they begin to recognize the artistic merit of their own creative efforts, they may discover also the creative power of those art worlds that once seemed so foreign.

It is important, of course, for teachers to acquaint their students with Mozart and Beethoven, with Matisse and van Gogh, with Shakespeare and Melville. But it may be even more important to acquaint them with their parents and grandparents, their aunts and uncles—to send them home with new eyes,

prepared now to recognize the artistic merit of what they had been led to believe was simply the routine flow of everyday life. The family pride that can develop from such endeavors is well worth the effort.

Teachers can enhance that pride even more by encouraging students to bring some of those relatives to the schoolroom to share their talents with the entire class—to sing for them, tell stories, show how to embroider an intricate pattern. The children of one immigrant couple always encouraged their parents to remain upstairs when guests visited because the children were embarrassed by their parents' old-world ways. Then these parents and their ways were discovered by a scholar who recognized the great worth of their customs and traditions. Suddenly the children saw their parents in an entirely new light—and the family was strengthened because an educator valued the art of ordinary people.

Similarly, I encourage students in my English and folklore classes to record the stories that have circulated in their families. Just last month one of these students completed a first-rate master's thesis on the stories told by her grandfather. She had always considered him rather cool and stand-offish. But as she for the first time listened closely to his stories and was captured by their artistic power, she discovered what an excellent narrator he was. More important, the grandfather to whom she had never been close now occupies an important place in her heart. And, perhaps equally important, members of her family, who initially questioned the value of such a research project, have now asked for copies of the thesis.

I am fortunate to have had a mother who read to my sister and me each night at bedtime and introduced us to the exciting world of books. I am equally fortunate to have had a mother who told us wonderful stories—stories that illuminate her girlhood in a homesteading community in Idaho; vigorous stories full of passion, humor, joy, and tragedy; stories that have shaped my life and persist in my mind as powerful and as artistically moving as the works of literature that line my library shelf. Once we realize that all people, from all walks of life, have the capacity to create and enjoy beauty, and once we begin seeking much of that beauty in our own homes, we will have taken great strides toward strengthening families through the arts.

MISQUOTES AND MISFIRES: WILLIAM WILSON RESPONDS TO CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL AND GEORGE WILL

Well, I've made the big time. In today's paper (*Deseret News*, April 5, 1998), I was quoted by the conservative George F. Will in his syndicated column. The summer before last I participated in a forum in Salt Lake sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts. In a project called *American Canvas*, the NEA held regional forums around the country, focusing on different themes at each forum. The Salt Lake meetings focused on the arts as a means of improving

family life and education. After the conference I wrote up the things I had said under the title "Arts and the Family," and the Utah Arts Council published them in *Ovations* (1996, 2). I sent the article to NEA as part of the follow-up report I was to make after participating in the Salt Lake forum. Gary O. Larson synthesized all the reports from the various forums in *American Canvas: An Arts Legacy for Our Communities*, published last year by NEA, and cited several passages from my article.

In February of this year, Christopher Caldwell wrote an article called "Arts for Politics's Sake," published in the conservative *Commentary* and attacking the goals outlined in *American Canvas*. Deploring the breakdown of the distinction between "high" and "low" culture, "in favor of the latter," he decries NEA's more inclusive approach to the arts. "This," he says, "is certainly what the Clinton administration had in mind in recently naming William Ivey, a folklorist and the head of the Country Music Foundation, to succeed the outgoing Jane Alexander as head of the NEA" (1998, 56). To underscore his point that folklorists can be trusted only to dumb down our culture, Caldwell quotes from a passage Olson had quoted from me:

> We must move away from the notion that art can only be found on the museum wall, at the concert hall, or on the performing stage. We must understand that art includes the expressive behaviors of ordinary people . . . things that we make with our words (songs, stories, rhymes, proverbs), with our hands (quilts, knitting, rawhide braiding, pie-crust designs, dinner-table arrangements, garden layouts), and with our actions (birthday and holiday celebrations, worship practices, playtime activities, work practices). (ibid., 56)

Caldwell conveniently omits, with the use of ellipsis, the important phrase in which I had argued that we should look at the expressive behaviors of ordinary people "as they respond creatively to the circumstances of everyday life." From Caldwell's perspective there can be no creativity among ordinary people. During the rest of the article, he scorns using art for such social causes as improving children's school performance, preventing crime, and contributing to the quality of life. All these efforts, he claims, are part of President Clinton's program of "mainstreaming the agenda of the Left, wrapping it in the uplifting mantle of populism, and co-opting as many sources of real or potential opposition as possible." He concludes that for the NEA these efforts mark "a pitiful coda to the career of a now hopelessly corrupt institution" (ibid., 56, 57).

Picking up where Caldwell leaves off, George Will argues that both the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities have taken a populist road to survival. Once again he quotes me, this time with the same omission as in Caldwell but without benefit of elliptical marks. He also drops any reference to me as the author of the passage and instead makes the NEA the author of my words, as though I were some sort

of synecdoche for the entire organization. As does Caldwell, Will deplores the "embarrassing embrace of cultural democracy" in which all can participate and gives as evidence of our downward drift the appointment of folklorist William Ferris as head of NEH and folklorist William Ivey as head of NEA. Immediately following the quotation from me he writes:

> Everything from singing in your morning shower to setting your dinner table is eligible for NEA support, which makes it easy to spread support, like honey on bread, across 435 congressional districts. The chairman of the NEA, William Ivey, is a folklorist. (1998, AA6)

Will, of course, gives no support for his argument. He merely refers to the expressions of ordinary people in mocking tones and assumes that all right-thinking people will see that such expressions can have no artistic merit. He argues that both NEA and NEH will exclude nothing from their purview and will devote their efforts to studying and supporting "mundane things [simply] because they are ubiquitous" (ibid.). No one I know would make the ridiculous claim that everything created by ordinary people is of equal artistic merit—that would be as foolish as saying that all novels, symphonies, and ballets are equally good. During the four years I spent on the NEA Folk Arts Panel, one year as chair, we did pay heed to the social implications of the grants we awarded, but at center stage was always our concern with artistic quality. One need look no further than Steve Siporin's *American Folk Masters: The National Heritage Awards* (1992) for ample demonstration of the NEA's concern with aesthetic excellence.

Will continues in the same vein throughout his article. He ridicules the notion that by studying food one can learn a lot about regions. And he derisively holds up for public scorn the following statement by Ferris:

> Today the lives of ordinary American people have assumed a place beside volumes of European classics in the humanities. . . . We must recognize those voices which seldom touch the printed page. A sharecropper in Alabama and a steelworker in Indiana have a voice in the humanities. Their view of truth and wisdom complements traditional learning in a new and exciting way. (ibid.)

Will completely misses the point that the new approaches suggested by Ferris "complement" rather than "replace" traditional learning. As one who has spent much of his life promoting what Caldwell and Will would probably accept as art, I am put off by their pseudo distinctions between high and low culture and by their assuming an either/or approach to the arts: either we can have William Shakespeare or we can have Ray Hicks, but we can't have both. Nonsense! That's like saying you can enjoy a vegetarian meal or you can enjoy fried chicken,

but you can't enjoy both. In our pluralistic, multicultural country, the greater variety of food we can put on the plate, the richer will be our lives—to say nothing of our honoring the long-ignored artistic traditions of many of our citizens. Neither Caldwell nor Will seems capable of recognizing artistic excellence in any but the established artistic canons (what a simple-minded approach that is: if it's in the canon, it must be good). They fail to realize that the artistic impulse resides not just in a privileged few but is inherent in the species, one of the few forces that separates us from the rest of the animal kingdom. Realizing that ordinary men and women everywhere have moved beyond necessity to create beauty in their lives ought to be cause for rejoicing, not denigration.

Aside from the fact that both Caldwell and Will jerk people's words out of context and distort them to drive home their own ideological agendas, the most disturbing thing about them is their cynicism, their inability to comprehend that some people might really prefer to act in other than self-serving ways. As they question the motives of others, they are, I fear, simply listening to the beatings of their own jaded hearts. They can't comprehend that some people might want to take a more inclusive approach to the arts because these people genuinely believe that the canonical approaches of the past have overlooked art of great significance and ignored artists of great accomplishment. As a result, Caldwell and Will have to explain a broader approach to the arts as nothing more than a populist attempt to win the financial support of Congress and to serve mean ends. I will never apologize for my own democratic approach. I am proud to belong to a profession that values the equal worth of all people and respects and honors their artistic efforts. I only regret that we have done such a poor job of getting our message across that we have left columnists like Caldwell and Will free to speak glibly and irresponsibly, and with impunity, about art worlds of which they are largely ignorant.

THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN CULTURAL POLICY IN UTAH

I have been asked to address the interplay between art and religion in making cultural policy. Because the connection between art and religion is far too broad a subject to treat in one paper, I will focus on that interplay as it occurs in my state—Utah—and address the topic from the perspective of someone who has spent much of his life in arts reviewing and programming and is also a practicing member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—the LDS, or Mormon, church.

While artistic and religious impulses seem to be fundamental forces in the lives of most people, it is obvious that these forces are sometimes mutually supportive and sometimes end up at cross-purposes (or at least the people who put them into action end up at cross-purposes). This has been my experience in Utah. I want to focus on three specific issues: the LDS church's support of the arts, the tension between the LDS church and LDS artists, and the tension between the LDS church and non-LDS artists in the state of Utah.

In Utah, it is difficult to separate church and nonchurch into two artistic camps—there is too much exchange back and forth. Many people think that all Mormons live in Utah, but in fact, 80 percent of them live outside the state, and more than half live outside the United States. It is true, nonetheless, that Utah is a Mormon state; approximately 65 percent of the state is Mormon. For Salt Lake City, that figure drops to 45 percent, which means that the great majority of residents in rural areas are LDS. These demographics have important implications for the arts. Since most members of the Utah legislature are Mormon (and almost all Republican), LDS values will guide them as they make decisions regarding arts funding. This is so not because the LDS church forces these values upon them but simply because they have absorbed a Mormon point of view in the process of growing up.

I would like to offer a brief example of how the lines between Mormon and non-Mormon cross. The church-owned *Deseret News* recently published an article about Salt Lake City's magnificent symphony hall, the home of the Utah Symphony Orchestra (Reichel 1999, Focus Section). For the first forty years of its sixty-year existence, the Utah Symphony had no home. In its first few years, the symphony played in whatever venue was available, in whatever high school auditorium could be rented for the night. In 1947, maestro Maurice Abravanel became the symphony's music director. He was not a Mormon, but he had a good relationship with the Mormon church and worked out an agreement in which the symphony could present its programs in the Mormon Tabernacle without paying any rent. This relationship lasted for thirty-two years, with the symphony using the tabernacle and the church providing support by waiving rental fees.

During the 1970s, when folks were planning the nation's bicentennial and looking for a bicentennial project in Utah, it was decided that the symphony needed its own hall. The U.S. Congress had initially promised to appropriate funds for such projects throughout the United States but then backed off and did not come up with the money. About this same time, leaders of the Mormon church issued this statement: "We are pleased that plans are being considered to construct a concert hall. . . . Our city and state have long needed such a facility. Its construction and use will coincide with the policy of the church followed from earliest days of our history of encouraging and supporting projects which improve the cultural and artistic life of our community" (Reichel 1999). The Utah legislature (our good Republican legislators) appropriated $6.5 million for the construction of the hall, and the symphony had to come up only with matching funds and private donations. Because the symphony had trouble raising this money, the Salt Lake County Commission ordered a bond election; the bond passed, additional money was appropriated, and the symphony got its hall. This would not have happened without the support of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Examples abound of the church encouraging and supporting the arts, from the time Mormons arrived in Salt Lake Valley in 1847 to the present. Brigham

Young shrugged off the prevailing asceticism of his day, teaching that God had given music, dancing, and theater for the pleasure of His children. Young frowned on the reading of novels, especially by young women, because he believed these fictional works might corrupt their morals. But from the outset church support for music, dance, theater, and the visual arts has been strong.

Most of that art, I must concede, has been didactic. Church leaders have seldom supported "art for art's sake." Rather, they have viewed artistic creation as a means of promoting spirituality and building faith in the church. Joseph F. Smith, president of the LDS church at the beginning of the twentieth century, told church members: "I wish to say to the Latter-day Saints that I hope they will distinguish themselves by avoiding the necessity of being classed with people who prefer the vulgar to the chaste, the obscene to the pure, the evil to the good, and the sensual to the intellectual" (Smith 1938, ch. 35). What is to be regarded obscene remains always open to interpretation, but Smith's view has become the policy Mormon artists have been expected to follow.

In spite of this stricture, during the Mormons' first century in Utah good results were achieved in all artistic fields except one, literature, where the results were pretty dismal. To counter the "corrupting" influence Brigham Young had attributed to novels, the church in 1888 began a home literature movement. The result was a series of sentimental, nonrealistic, didactic works that are still being produced and read in the church today. Not for almost a century later, when in 1977 church president Spencer W. Kimball made the following statement, was new terrain opened for literary exploration. Said Kimball:

> For years I have been waiting for someone to do justice in recording in song and story and painting and sculpture the story of the Restoration, the reestablishment of the kingdom of God on earth, the struggles and frustrations; the apostasies and inner revolutions and counter-revolutions of those first decades; of the exodus, of the counter-reactions; of the transitions; of the persecution days; of the miracle man, Joseph Smith. (1977, 5)

For many Mormon writers, Kimball's statement meant that they could now focus not just on the smiling aspects of Mormon life, but also on the conflicts, struggles, and frustrations. From that time to the present, there has been a flowering of Mormon short stories, novels, and personal essays written by faithful church members. In the 1930s and 1940s, an earlier generation of Mormon writers called "The Lost Generation" had produced quite good literature; but the authors, though coming out of the Mormon pioneer tradition, for the most part rejected the church and moved away from it (see Geary 1977). Those writing since 1977 have in the main stayed within the church and have argued for what they have called "faithful realism," a realistic view of the problems encountered in this world but a view motivated by faith (see England 1996).

There have been counter views, however, expressed mainly by Boyd K. Packer, one of the most influential members of the church hierarchy in the last twenty-five years. In 1976, a year before Kimball made his statement, Packer delivered a major address that has been widely republished. In “The Arts and the Spirit of the Lord,” he criticized Mormon writers for aping the style and techniques of non-Mormon artists and for not using their work to build faith and promote Mormon values (Packer 1977).

Despite President Kimball’s statement advocating fuller artistic expression, the opposing view tends to have prevailed at the church’s Brigham Young University, where I taught for many years. This view has not fully thwarted the creation and expression of Mormon literary arts, but it has at times had a chilling effect. As the English department chair at BYU, I frequently had to answer letters from angry mothers upset over their children’s reading assignments in their English classes, assignments they were convinced did not meet uplifting church standards. During those years we had a fine creative writing program—we still have a pretty good one—but we lost two of our best creative writers, both of them nationally recognized award-winners. One of them was forced out; the other left of his own accord, feeling stifled by the prevailing atmosphere. The theater department has some excellent playwrights, but they too have sometimes been confronted with the choice of rewriting parts of their work or of not seeing it produced.

Although I am not particularly sympathetic to the view that Mormon literature must always reflect church positions, I should say in defense of those who hold this view that the church has the right to establish whatever policy it wants for its people. What’s more, during my last years at BYU, I learned that the issue is more complex than I have presented it here, as I ran head on myself into the conflict between individual and institutional freedom. After stepping down as chair of the English department, I directed the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies. At that time, the center began moving away from promoting primarily historical interpretations of the West and began publishing serious creative works as well. We were considering publishing a fine collection of poetry by a friend of mine. Two of the poems were sexually explicit—not in a prurient way, but I knew they would present problems. I went to my friend and said, “Henry, I can’t publish these two poems. If I were the publisher myself and if the decision to publish would draw negative attention only to me, there would be no problem. But the university is the publisher, and I can’t afford to jeopardize the Redd Center by offending the powers-that-be.” Of course, I could have been heroic and said, “I’m going to publish these poems no matter what anyone thinks.” But that could have spelled the end of the center. I couldn’t bring myself to undermine what former directors had worked so hard to establish. And so, though I certainly did not relish the role, I was forced to become a censor myself, balancing precariously between the tensions of faith-promotion and faithful realism.

I served for eight years on the Utah Arts Council. The demographic makeup of the council was quite different from that of the rest of the state. Membership varied, of course, as some members retired and new appointees took their place. However, at any one time the council would be comprised of participating Mormons, lapsed (or nonpracticing) Mormons, and non-Mormons. One thing was clear: council decisions were not governed by the church position on the arts. The council wanted to make sure that Mormon voices were not the only voices heard in the state, that minority religious and ethnic groups would have their time in the sun, and that the values and interests of the 35 percent of Utah residents who were not Mormon would be protected and promoted. The council was successful in achieving this laudable goal, especially in folk arts and in community outreach programs; but the problem with this focus was that, in making sure minority groups and programs were not smothered and overwhelmed by the Mormon majority, Mormon artistic programs were often ignored or denied funding.

For example, the council wished to provide supporting funds for literary magazines at all of the universities in the state—with the exception of BYU's magazine, even though it had won national awards for artistic excellence. Because I was English department chair at BYU at the time, I could not participate in the discussion of BYU's grant proposal. I was permitted to stay in the room, but I couldn't speak or vote on the matter. I had to listen as council members argued that the church had lots of money and that BYU really did not need the funds. I knew exactly how much university money was available and that it was not sufficient to publish the kind of magazine we wanted. In the end, the council voted not to grant BYU's proposal and then began discussing similar proposals from the other universities. I was free to speak now. I said, "Well, I had planned to vote for these magazines and I would very much like to, but in turning down BYU's proposal, the council has established criteria that will make it impossible to fund these other proposals. If we are to be consistent, we must adhere to the criteria you have just set." The council backed off; it funded both the magazines at the other universities and BYU's magazine as well.

In another instance the 1999 Madeleine Festival, focusing primarily on an excellent series of musical programs and sponsored by Salt Lake City's Cathedral of the Madeleine, received partial funding from the Utah Arts Council. The 1999 Mormon Arts Festival—also a very good program featuring first-rate artists—received financial support from the Mormon Arts Foundation and the BYU College of Fine Arts, but none from the Utah Arts Council. I suspect, though I do not know, that Mormon Arts Festival directors did not even ask for Utah Arts Council money because they assumed they would not get any. Again the problem has been lack of consistency. The Utah Arts Council can give money to religious groups, so it has been argued, not to promote any particular religion, but to support artistic components of religious programming. That approach has worked fine for Catholics, Baptists, and Lutherans, but not very well for Mormons. Whenever the issue of funding Mormon arts

programming has arisen, the sometimes hostile sentiment against promoting the dominant religion has often come to the fore, and the funding has not been forthcoming.

Several decades ago, a group of the Mormon faithful wrote and produced a musical called *Saturday's Warrior*—a sentimental production that was disliked by professionals in theater and music groups both in the church and out but was almost universally acclaimed by Mormon popular audiences. The musical is still very popular and is still produced. Some years following the debut of *Saturday's Warrior*, a group in Salt Lake City put together a very salacious parody called *Saturday's Voyeur* and asked the Utah Arts Council for funding.

I still remember that discussion very well. The council had always been very careful not to offend different ethnic and religious minority groups in the state. Now, however, when we were dealing with a work directed against the majority religion, some threw that caution to the wind and argued that we should make our decision on this particular grant proposal on the artistic merits of the production only, a criterion that seldom came fully into play in making other awards. Just as publishing my friend's poetry might have brought about the demise of the Charles Redd Center, so too funding *Saturday's Voyeur* in a state 65 percent Mormon could have spelled disaster for the Utah Arts Council.

This issue also brought up the thorny question the National Endowment for the Arts has had to struggle with in recent years: How much should those who pay the taxes supporting the arts have to say about arts programming? Further, in a state in which nearly three-quarters of the citizens belong to a particular religion and pay the bulk of the taxes, is it all right to filter very little tax money through the state arts council to support art in harmony with the values and beliefs these taxpayers cherish?

As we have seen, religion can inspire and nourish artistic production, can suppress artistic expression, and can turn people from different religious persuasions against each other. So long as both religion and art continue to play significant roles in the lives of our citizens, questions like those raised above will continue to plague those who must develop and carry out public cultural policy.