

Robert A. Stebbins

# Amateurs

*On the Margin  
Between Work and Leisure*

*Foreword by Max Kaplan*

2d Steps

*Amateurs*

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*To my parents*

## *Acknowledgments*

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The social scientist who manages to finish a field project is indebted to many people. For it is only with their goodwill that he has been able to observe and interview them about their daily lives. One particularly critical group consists of those who control access to the research setting. They are an important set of scientific gatekeepers. Because they risk their positions in some measure by allowing outsiders to study the inner workings of their groups, they deserve special recognition. I am grateful to the following for helping me in this fashion: William Garber, Managing Director of the Fort Worth Community Theater; Doyle Granberry, President of the Dallas Archaeological Society; Alan Austin, President of the Board of

Directors, Senior Men's Open League (Arlington, Texas); James Williams and Dan Doorman, captains of two baseball teams in the Open League.

Following the completion of the interviews and observation, a small number of the respondents were called on to assist in still another way. Since this book is aimed as much at amateurs as it is at professionals and students in sociology, some of the former accepted my invitation to assess its validity and readability by perusing sections of the manuscript. Garber, Austin, and Doorman also contributed here. To their valuable comments were added those of actor Erwin Swint and archaeologists King Harris, Inus Harris, and Paul Lorrain.

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Finally, Sage Publications has given its permission to reprint, as Chapter 1, an expanded version of my article "The Amateur: Two Sociological Definitions," *Pacific Sociological Review* 20 (1977): 582-606. The excerpt from "Baseball: A Poem in the Magic Number Nine" by George Bowering in Chapter 10 of this work is taken from *Touch: Selected Poems, 1960-1970*, reprinted by permission of The Canadian Publishers, McClelland and Stewart Limited, Toronto.



## *Foreword*

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Three professional fields will gain from this important book by Professor Stebbins: (1) social-role theory of sociology and social psychology; (2) leisure studies in which both content and meaning of participation are present; (3) institutions, especially educational, that deal with the arts, science, and recreation. The general reader, less concerned with technicalities, will find here a fascinating account; although we are not all amateurs in theater, baseball, or archaeology. Millions on our continent and others have enough time now to turn, with more or less seriousness, to the pursuit of "free time" activities.

As to sociology as a whole, important analyses of social roles

were made by R. E. Park, E. T. Hiller, George Mead, E. W. Burgess, and Pitirim Sorokin. Well-known are Ralph Linton's anthropological formulation of "social role," W. Sombart's study of the bourgeoisie, Czarnowski on the hero, Klapp on the fool, Frazier on priests and kings (in *The Golden Bough*), Simmel on the stranger and the poor, Michel on the political leader. Florian Znaniecki's classic, *The Social Role of the Man of Knowledge*, notes that, "From the sociological point of view, the primary matter about an individual is his social position and function, and this is not a manifestation of his nature, but a cultural system he constructs with the help of his milieu, seldom creating, usually copying it from ready models." Therein lies Stebbins's valuable perception of the amateur within a cultural relationship — the "professional-amateur-public system" (P-A-P) — and the construct of seven functional links between the amateur and the other components of P-A-P.

Although the systematic study of leisure is still a young field, one might by now expect a refined set of studies on the roles of those who participate in physical, intellectual, social, aesthetic, civic, or other forms of activity. Indeed, is some form of less-than-professional commitment not at the heart of participation in "leisure?" Perhaps we remain too busy refining that umbrella term itself, and we are too engrossed (especially in the Western societies and Japan) in drawing correlations between participants and such factors as education, income, sex, occupation, and residence. The most massive of our statistical reports on leisure (*The Use of Leisure*, edited by A. Szalai, 1973) covered twelve nations and some thirty thousand persons on such items as what they did within a twenty-four hour period, with whom, for how long, and so on. Mihavilovich of Yugoslavia has surveyed the leisure of Zagreb. But even his intensive study of women is more a statistical than a social-psychological document. Govaerts of Belgium has a book on women in leisure, but from the point of view of their activities in relation to freedom of action. Swedner at Lund is known for

relating leisure to cultural concepts and changes, as in his work for the Council of Europe. Parker in England is concerned with relationships of work to nonwork values. Even Dumazedier, our leading scholar of leisure patterns, has not gone into socio-psychological depth in his valuable analyses of leisure attitudes, characteristics, and functions. The "roles" he discusses in his *Sociology of Leisure* (pp. 169-173) are those of the research worker, cultural expert, administrator, and politician — none of them considered as participants in leisure processes. Our socialist colleagues are skillful in analytic and statistical work, but inclined to enlarge it into ideological positions rather than to subsume the data into behavioral patterns.

Thus, Stebbins's contribution to leisure theory fills a major void. His use of interviews in three areas of leisure activity to draw larger constructs would, I suspect, have delighted Max Weber (a master of the construct as a tool), Florian Znaniecki (master, with W. I. Thomas, of the case study), and Oscar Lewis (exponent of a humanistic methodology in anthropology).

There have been, of course, many discussions of "amateur" and "professional" within the arts, as in the lamentably defunct *Arts and Society*, from the University of Wisconsin. The increasing literature in the "sociology of sport" frequently touches upon "amateurism," recently in response to the suspect economic patterns and motivations of university sports. A more academic and perceptive approach will be found in papers of the research commission on sports that is an integral part of the International Sociological Association, or in proceedings of scientific congresses on sport that take place during the Olympic Games (*Sport in the Modern World — Chances and Problems*, Springer-Verlag, 1973, papers from the Munich Games).

Archaeologists and anthropologists have long been concerned with vandalism in the field by "amateurs," but those thieves and desecrators do not qualify for Stebbins's use of the term. America has recently become even more dramatically aware of this breed from the King Tut Exhibition. In contrast to the

theater and baseball professionals, the professional archaeologist relies considerably on the genuine amateur — “a trained and committed source of help in the field and the laboratory,” as our author observes.

Many large questions remain as the result of Stebbins’s work, and he would be first to recognize and expand upon them: should the preparation for leisure (as for preretirement) not differentiate between the amateur, the hobbyist, and other degrees of serious endeavor? How can leisure “counselors” use these dynamic descriptions of leisure roles? Can the P-A-P concept be applied to volunteerism and community participation in such areas as conflict resolution, urban rehabilitation, improvement of welfare and health services, or the political process in general?

Now as Professor Stebbins moves into his expressed interests in astronomers, magicians, and other amateurs who are “serious about their leisure and therefore misunderstood by those of their associates — friends, neighbors, relatives, workmates — who participate only in *popular leisure*,” his work in this polyphonic pioneering book will itself be taken seriously by social role theorists, leisure educators, leisure policymakers, arts and science institutions, as well, we trust, as by his great university and country.

Max Kaplan  
Director, Leisure Studies Program  
University of South Florida

## *Introduction*

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If I were forced to identify a date on which the project reported in this book commenced I would have to select a day early in January 1974. For it was during that month that I began the library research that led eventually to a paper on amateur musicians, which was to be presented at a conference the following spring. Having been in amateur music most of my life (except for a two-year interlude as a professional), I was well aware that amateurism there is defined as something special by those who participate in it. That January day marked the first opportunity in my academic career I could find to study amateur music systematically and to record some of my thoughts that had been



collecting on the subject over the years.

My plan was to write a paper on amateur classical musicians based on my experience and the biographic, autobiographic, and philosophic literature that touches on their social life. That I did. In fact, I wrote and subsequently published three papers (Stebbins 1978, 1977a, 1976a). Yet, so far as this book is concerned, they were the least significant events of those early months of 1974.

The event of greatest significance during that period was my realization that neither sociology nor any other discipline had developed a substantial definition of amateur. This discovery was precipitated by my own search for a definition with which I could organize my ideas and data on musical amateurs. The search was in vain. It did compel me to meet the problem head-on, however; to develop my own definitions of amateur, which I have done and which comprise much of Chapter 1 of the present volume. But there are other consequences of my discovery.

The lack of social scientific definition of amateur meant that no one had actually conceived of him in the light under which he is examined here: as an adult in a unique marginal position within contemporary North American society. To be sure, amateur groups have been studied, but their status in the community as amateurs has never been the object of these investigations. Moreover, the groups have nearly always been composed of adolescents or children for whom the consequences of pursuing serious leisure differ greatly from the parallel consequences for adults.

It became clear, while wrestling with the problem of defining the amateur, that he is found throughout science, art, sport, and entertainment; that he is distinguishable by a variety of objective criteria from professionals who work in the same field and from dabblers who merely play at it; and that we need to know much more about what appears to be one of the most complicated and currently one of the most neglected facets of modern leisure. I set to work designing a major research project that would help answer many of the questions that had been

raised by my theoretical efforts.

By spring 1975, I had obtained the necessary funding to conduct an exploration of amateurism in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. It was to be a year in length centering on amateurs in theater, archaeology, and baseball. I began work the following October.

A number of people have asked why this curious mix of fields? My justification is partly practical. For various reasons, both financial and academic, the study had to be carried out close to my home. Thus I had to draw on fields that were represented locally. But I also wanted established amateur groups, so that the difficulties of becoming established could be avoided in research for the time being. They could always be scrutinized later. I further decided that collective amateurism, as opposed to individual amateurism (e.g., painting, writing, golf, tennis), ought to be my focus so that I could examine the extensive effects of social interaction. Again, the individual forms could always be dealt with some other time. And, since I could only study the groups in tandem (I had no assistants, for which I am thankful), I had to select ones that functioned at different points of the year. I also wanted to compare amateurs in art, science, and sport. My original plan was to include a group of entertainers, but problems arose when I tried to identify and locate them. Consequently, research on them had to be deferred as well. Finally I decided I must get away from music, with which I have an insider's familiarity, to study other fields that I knew initially only as an outsider. The amateurs in theater, archaeology, and baseball met these diverse considerations.

I collected my data by means of systematic observation and unstructured interviews, starting with theater and continuing through archaeology to baseball. Altogether eighty-three amateurs were interviewed in two-to-three-hour sessions on a host of questions (the same ones in all three areas) that are related to several themes covered in Chapter 1. Whenever possible the interviews in a field were preceded by lengthy observation of its routine activities. A handful of respondents from

each field subsequently read an advanced draft of the part of the manuscript of concern to them. As a result certain factual errors, ambiguous observations, and critical omissions were brought to my attention.

This book follows this same basic blueprint. Theater is covered in Chapters 2 through 4, archaeology in Chapters 5 through 7, and baseball in Chapter 8 through 10. Each field is introduced in an ethnographic chapter that describes its routine activities and social organization. Two more chapters follow, one of which is sociological, the other of which is social-psychological. The first is concerned with types of amateurs and amateurs in relation to their professional counterparts, their families, and their occupations. The second treats the amateurs' self-concept and other attitudes and the rewards and costs of amateurism. Chapter 11 organizes the major observations of the study around the leitmotiv of marginality and then places amateurism in the broader context of its contributions to individual, profession, and society. Comparisons and additional methodological information are entered at appropriate places throughout the work. Specific comparisons between theater and archaeology are found in Chapter 6 and 7 and comparisons among all three fields are made in Chapters 9 and 10.

One parting comment is in order before turning to the definitions and Chapter 1. Some consider it cruel to refer to amateurs as "amateur." Why not "nonprofessional"? The latter is more euphemistic; it better conceals the derogatory connotations, if not denotations, of the idea of amateur. I use amateur because the amateurs will have it no other way. The reasons for their preference are set out in the first chapter and, indeed, throughout this volume. But let it be clearly understood that amateurs, at least the ones with whom I have had contact, see no mediocrity in their performances and contributions. You may call them what you wish, but they regard themselves as anything but "amateurish," as the following pages demonstrate.

1

## *What Is an Amateur?*

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As professionalization spreads from one occupation to another, what was once considered play activity in some of these spheres is evolving quietly, inevitably, and unnoticeably into a new form, which is best named *modern amateurism*. The evolution of modern amateurism has been occurring alongside those occupations where some of the participants in the central activity are able to make a substantial living off it and consequently devote themselves to it as a vocation rather than as an avocation. Though there are possibly others, sport, entertainment, science, and the arts are the major types of occupations where work

was once purely play and where modern amateurism is now a parallel development.

What has been happening is that those who play at the activity are being overrun in significance, if not in numbers, by professionals and amateurs, a process that seems to unfold as follows: as the opportunity gradually appears in history for full-time pursuit of a skill or activity, we find that those with even an average aptitude for it are able to develop it to a level observably higher than that of the typical part-time participant. With today's mass availability of professional performances (or products), whatever the field, new standards of excellence soon confront all participants, whether professional or not. The performances of the professionals are frequently impressive for anyone who beholds them, but no one is impressed more than the nonprofessional participant who, through direct experience, knows the activity intimately. Once he becomes aware of the professional standards, all that he has accomplished there seems mediocre by comparison. He is thus faced with a critical choice in his career as a participant: restrict identification with the activity to a degree sufficient to remain largely unaffected by such invidious contrasts or identify with it to a degree sufficient to spark an attempt to meet those standards.

The first choice, which is still common, retains the part-time participant as a player, dabbler, or dilettante. Following Huizinga's (1955) perspective on play, it may be said that leisure for this type of individual lacks necessity, obligation, and utility and is produced with a disinterestedness that sets it, as an activity, apart from his ordinary, real life. The second choice, which is also common, and becoming more so, impels the part-time participant away from play toward necessity, obligation, seriousness, and commitment, as expressed in regimentation (e.g., rehearsals, practice) and systematization (e.g., schedules, organization), and on to the status of modern amateur for some and professional for others.

The player of old in sport and music, and quite possibly other fields, was referred to as a "gentleman" (Stone, 1972: 48; Ed-



wards, 1973: 311; Perry, 1904: 13-14; Shera, 1939: 46). First Huizinga (1955: ch. 12) and then Stone (1972: 48) have commented on his gradual disappearance from sport, a process that it still going on. Barzun (1956b: 61) points to this transformation in music.

Furthermore, there was a time when players and amateurs (there were probably differences between them even then) were alone in their activities without professionals to compete against, model themselves after, or simply mingle with. The early history of many contemporary professions was made exclusively by amateurs, the only people practicing in them in their day. For these endeavors were too new, too little in demand, or too underdeveloped to be pursued as livelihoods. In other words, there were, when their fields began, astronomers, archaeologists, teachers, musicians, painters, jugglers, soccer players, bowlers, and so forth who earned their living doing something else, but who were clearly expert in their respective areas of leisure. In some fields amateurism was an honorable tradition, where attempts at full-time employment, to say nothing of professionalization, were met with derision. It was despicable to make money in this way.

As professionals begin to dominate a field pioneered by amateurs, a transformation in the meaning of "amateur" seems to occur. During this process the old definitions cling tenaciously, combining in common discourse with new ones that have emerged to describe modern amateurism. The result is that, from a research standpoint, the idea of amateur is now used with an annoying imprecision in both everyday life and sociological thought. A brief examination of that entry in Webster's Unabridged Dictionary is illuminating. For example, an amateur is said, in one sense of the word, to be a devotee who loves a particular activity while, in another sense, he is said to be a superficial participant — a dilettante or dabbler. Dilettante, on the other hand, is defined, in the first sense, as a lover of the arts and, in the second, as a person who has discrimination or taste. Or, consider the logical difficulties posed by yet

another sense of "amateur" that holds that he is an inexperienced person (i.e., a player) and the patent fact that devotees of an activity quite naturally put in much time at it, thereby achieving remarkable competence in it (i.e., modern amateurs). Use of this term in sociology is beset with these same inconsistencies.

Thus, the object of this chapter is to develop a pair of definitions of amateur, which are at once flexible enough to serve as sensitizing concepts, while being precise enough to enable us to differentiate this idea from neighboring forms.<sup>1</sup> It is an attempt at the development of real definitions, or propositions about the essential nature of a phenomenon (Bierstedt, 1959: 127-28). In such an undertaking it is incumbent on the theorist never to lose sight of the central themes of common-sense usage of the notion to be defined. Still, a certain arbitrariness necessarily creeps in since precision is being striven for, which common-sense usage normally lacks when assayed against scientific needs. That is, common-sense usage, as in the case of "amateur," is often contradictory and ambiguous.

Real scientific definitions can only be developed from an empirical base. Since there is so little sociological writing that deals directly with the notion of amateur, one must turn, in part, for the data from which to generate a definition of the amateur, to the handful of philosophic essays on the subject and the profusion of biographic and autobiographic accounts. This literature, while unfortunately thin in most areas, is abundant in music, which is identified by Maher (1966) as second only to reading as an American leisure activity. Over two-hundred accounts can be found here, and nearly all have been examined in preparation for this statement. Writings of this sort about other amateur pursuits were studied when they could be located. Together, these constitute one source of ideas. Another was my own experience as amateur athlete and musician. In the second role, I have played in fifteen enduring amateur music groups and scores of ephemeral ones over the past seventeen years in four communities. A similar, though less extensive record of participation exists in athletics as well. To this background must be

added my countless conversations in the past with friends and relatives about their amateur involvement in art, acting, gardening, motion picture making, radio, and various sorts of athletics and games.

Two broad definitions of the amateur are developed here. He is first defined macrosociologically as a member of a professional-amateur-public system of functionally interdependent relationships. He is then defined social-psychologically by means of five attitudes that differentiate amateurs from professionals and differentiate both from their publics.

### **PROFESSIONAL-AMATEUR-PUBLIC SYSTEM**

Everyday English usage of "amateur" and related words frequently involves direct or indirect reference to "professional" and its related words. Indeed, this appears to be a central theme, which can serve as a starting point for a sociological definition. Webster's Dictionary, for instance, defines amateur in one sense as "one that engages in a particular pursuit, study, or science as a pastime rather than as a profession." "Amateurism" is defined in the same dictionary as "nonprofessional," while "amateurish" is the lack of professional finish. For the fullest understanding of the idea we are invited to compare it with the entry of "professional," and the latter entry urges comparison with the former.<sup>2</sup>

Two simple, popular ways of differentiating an amateur from a professional have emerged from such common-sense usage: (1) the professional gains at least 50% of his livelihood from his pursuit while the amateur, at the most, only supplements a principal source of income earned elsewhere; (2) the professional spends considerably more time at his pursuit than does the amateur. One could build a scientific definition of either person from these two truisms that would distinguish him from the other, but one would have achieved little. For such undimensional definitions fail to communicate the essence of amateur or

professional — indeed, as in sport, they may be misleading — while they also fail to tie in with existing sociological theory.

Fortunately, a more sophisticated, sociological definition is possible. The data sources for this work confirm the significance of considering the professional in attempting to identify the nature of the amateur, while adding another important element: publics. These sources suggest that the amateur be defined as part of a professional-amateur-public (P-A-P) system of functionally interdependent relationships.

The question is how are the professionals, the amateurs, and their publics interdependent? Let us start to answer by reviewing some of the sociological principles of the professional-client relationship. The characteristics of professionals that are relevant to the aims of this book can be stated in ideal-typical terms: (1) they turn out an unstandardized product; (2) they hold wide knowledge of a specialized technique; (3) they have a sense of identity with their colleagues; (4) they have mastered a generalized cultural tradition; (5) they use institutionalized means of validating adequacy of training and competence of trained individuals; (6) they emphasize standards and service rather than material rewards; (7) they are recognized by their clients for their professional authority based on knowledge and technique (summarized from Gross, 1958: 77-82; Parsons, 1968: 536; Kaplan, 1960: 203-204).

The term “professional” is reserved here for those who, within the limits of variation that have come to be established in occupational sociology, meet these seven criteria. All sorts of categories of people, including some sorts of deviants, are called professional by laymen and even sociologists who fail significantly to meet these criteria (cf., Klein, 1974). They are excluded from this discussion and consequently so are their so-called amateur counterparts.

Clients, in the present framework are referred to as *publics*: groups of people with a common interest, which are served by professionals or amateurs or both, and which make active demands on them. This revision in nomenclature fits better the

client groups served by professionals in the arts, sciences, sports, and entertainment fields, where the dyadic relationship implied in the concept of "client" is nonexistent.

Publics are functionally related to the other two groups in P-A-P systems in at least five ways: they provide financial support for the professionals, and sometimes the amateurs, in return for their services; they provide both groups with feedback on the adequacy of those services; and they provide role-support (and occasionally nonsupport) [in the arts see Collingwood, 1958: 314; in sport see Weiss, 1969: 192]. Additionally, publics sometimes have an actual part in the professional's services, as in audience participation in certain forms of entertainment (e.g., TV programs, magician shows); in such theatrical productions as *Hair*; and even in the performances of serious music (Noble, 1970). Finally, according to Collingwood, artists of all sorts may take the public's limitations into account when composing their works; it helps determine subject matter and meaning of the works themselves. Gans (1962) has studied this process in the Hollywood film industry.

## Amateurs

The dictionary entries and sources of data for this book suggest seven ways in which amateurs are functionally linked to professionals or publics or both. First, amateurs can also be described, ideal-typically, by the seven characteristics just used to describe professionals. True, some amateurs fail to attain professional standards with respect to points (2), (4), (6), and (7); but, as noted in the following section, this is a matter of *parallel gradation* in which both groups are clearly more advanced than their publics in these ways.

In other words, amateurs serve publics, as professionals do, and at times the same ones. And, they are oriented by standards of excellence set and communicated by those professionals. One example of this link is the college baseball team that plays before a crowd of spectators, some of whom turn up the following day at a professional game. Another, is the amateur theater



group that performs before an audience that only rarely has a chance to watch a professional production.

Second, a monetary and organizational relationship is frequently established when professionals educate, train, direct, coach, advise, organize, and even perform with amateurs and when amateurs come to comprise part of their public (in music see Shera, 1939: vii; Kaplan, 1955: 8). Among the spectators watching the professional baseball game the day after the amateurs' game will be some of those amateurs. Likewise, when a professional theater company does come to the community where the amateur theater group performs, it is certain that many of the latter will attend its performance. Amateurs play with professionals in "pro-am" bowling and in open tournaments in squash, tennis, and golf. These two types are often members of the same community orchestra or theatrical group. In science, amateurs' projects are reported in the professional journals.<sup>3</sup>

Third, there is an intellectual relationship among professionals, amateurs, and publics, which springs primarily from the amateurs. Having more time for such things, they can maintain broader knowledge of their activity than can most professionals. Professionals are often too busy polishing technique and making a living with it to find time for reading about the history of their endeavor or about forms, styles, periods, or persons beyond their bailiwick (Downes, 1951; Barzun, 1954: 22, 24-25; Drinker, 1967). Although there is a tendency even among amateurs toward speciality and limitation (Barzun, 1956a: 438), those that avoid it can give professionals and publics alike perspective on the activity, promote a common language for discussion and criticism, and work against the breakup of the profession into exclusive subdivisions. Professionals must specialize to succeed, whereas amateurs need not.

The amateur, as a special member of the public, knows better than the run-of-the-mill member what constitutes a creditable performance or product. After all, he himself is attempting to meet professional standards in his own fashion. Consequently,

he relates to both public and professionals in three additional ways: he restrains the professionals from overemphasizing technique and from stressing superficialities in lieu of meaningful or profound work or products; he insists everywhere on the retention of excellence; and he furnishes professionals with the stimulus to give the public the best they can (in music see Drinker, 1952: 577).<sup>4</sup>

For instance, a home run in baseball or a twenty-thousand dollar Stradivarius violin may impress many of the assembled public, but the amateur knows when these are superficial — that home runs are now always the best strategy for winning the game and that an old and famous instrument does not a musician make. And, knowing better, he can insist on good taste in, say, professional basketball by demanding a rule that requires players to attempt a shot within a specified period of time instead of stalling; just as he can insist that he be given genuine art rather than some put-on. Lastly, musicians, for example, know when they see a member of the audience following a miniature score of the symphony they are playing that he is likely to be able to spot their mistakes, spiritless solos, late entries, and other artistic flaws.<sup>5</sup> A sprinkling of knowledgeable, skilled, and concerned people among the spectators, readers, audience, or other public should be sufficient to encourage the best from performing professionals.

The seventh functional relationship, this time among professionals and amateurs only, concerns career. The professional who falls within a P-A-P system inevitably starts out in the amateur ranks and, unless he abandons his pursuit entirely or dies in this role, he returns to those ranks again at a later stage in his career. This subject is treated in greater detail in a subsequent section.

## IMPLICATIONS

The foregoing presentation of the professional-amateur-

public system suggests a number of implications that can assist us in achieving a clearer conception of the amateur. At present, the term "amateur" is applied to too many people with too little in common, such as practitioners, consumers (audiences, spectators, and so on), nonpracticing experts, and critics.

One implication is that amateurs are people who engage part-time in activities that, for other people, constitute full-time work roles. One cannot be an amateur butterfly catcher or matchbook collector; no opportunity for full-time employment exists here. Such forms of leisure are referred to later as "hobbies," which lie outside any P-A-P system.

It follows that amateurs are normally adults, though in some fields they may include late teen-agers. In general, only other adults can be functionally related to professionals in the ways set forth earlier. Children's activities are described, not by "amateur," but by other adjectives; for example, youth orchestra, peewee hockey, children's art, and so forth.

A third implication is that, even for the amateur, there is nearly always a public. Perhaps for him (and the professional too) the public is imagined some minor proportion of the time. And, his real public may be small, composed of friends, relatives, neighbors, or other amateurs engaged in the same activity. Nonetheless, most of the time most amateurs are serving a public, not simply themselves. In fact, many amateur pursuits are unavoidably social, inasmuch as they can only be carried out collectively. The lone piano player, however, is excluded from this aspect of amateur life. In one significant way he is no amateur at all.

The P-A-P system and common-sense usage also imply that "amateur" can be used only with activities that constitute, for some, a *professional* work role. That is, there must be a professional counterpart to the status of amateur. Unfortunately, judgments of an occupation as professional or nonprofessional are tenuous, because new professions are constantly emerging and no profession, even an established one, fits completely the seven characteristics presented earlier. But within these limita-

tions we may say that, currently, one is simply a canoeist, since there seems to be no professional complement to set the high standards that are attainable only through full-time involvement. As stated previously, it is the pursuit of these standards, with some measure of success, that distinguishes the modern amateur from his predecessor, the gentleman, and — it may be added here — from all other participants in leisure activities. Amateur tennis players are of recent origin when compared with some other sports, purely because professionals began to appear here much later. We may speak of amateur cabinetmakers or gardeners only if those who earn their living in this manner can be said by our sociological principles to be professionals. If full-time participants in these activities fail to meet the sociological standards of a profession or there are no full-time participants, then the part-time enthusiasts are more accurately described as hobbyists (discussed later) than as modern amateurs. With this implication in mind, it should be possible to eliminate some of the confusion engendered by Bliss Perry (1904: 10-20) who, incidentally, appears to have written the only book on amateurs in general.

The fifth implication centers on the widespread knowledge of a specialized technique held by professionals and, to a lesser degree, by amateurs. Both groups must use their knowledge and technique often enough to avoid their degeneration. Put differently, even the idea of amateur presupposes some level of consistently active use of the core skills and knowledge of a field. Today's extensive leisure makes this possible.<sup>6</sup>

Teachers in a profession (e.g., dance teachers, swimming instructors), to the extent that they maintain their technique and knowledge in order to teach well, may be considered practitioners. Such people as full-time administrators, nonplaying coaches, conductors, producers, directors, and critics who let these atrophy may not only lose their claim to professional status, but also lose their claim to amateur status. They tend to move to the periphery of their P-A-P system.

Inside this system but outside amateur circles are the *dabblers*: those whose active involvement, technique, and knowledge are so meager as to barely distinguish them from the public of which they are actually a part.<sup>7</sup> Undoubtedly every P-A-P system has a certain percentage of dabblers; even including such systems in science, where books are published containing instructions on how to amuse oneself with simple scientific procedures (e.g., Moore and Viorst, 1961; Swezey, 1948). Every system of this sort also has among its public, *novices*, or people who may someday be amateurs, possibly even professionals. They are beginners who are consistently engaged in the activity (not mere dabblers), but who have not yet grown proficient and knowledgeable enough to lay claim to the identity of amateur or professional. Indeed, neither dabblers nor novices are apt to refer to themselves as practitioners in their activity, which is one way of distinguishing them from amateurs there. Statements such as "I'm just learning to sculpt" or "I just fool around at golf" identify these people. Amateurs, while recognizing their limitations, identify themselves, as we shall see, as more seriously involved.<sup>8</sup> As one amateur musician put it:

It is time to recognize that amateurs are not necessarily novices. Everybody has to start as a novice, including even composers, and conductors; they do not need to remain so. If they are willing to study, practice, and to learn, they will build in something for good [Marsh, 1972: 168].

Toscanini was one of the Great Amateurs: he loved the music with the divine passion of the saint. I don't claim anything at these altitudes, being a very gentle and I hope, non-fanatical, amateur. But I can testify to the determination to play it well [March, 1972: 169].

A sixth implication rests on the etymological roots of the word "amateur"; he is an *amator* or one who loves. This definition, often naively used in the literature examined, needs qualification. First, though it is possible, as sometimes claimed, that the amateur is attracted to his pursuit more than his profes-

sional colleagues, perhaps because he engages in it less, the activity is nevertheless rarely an unalloyed joy for either category. Amateurs do get tired, bored, frustrated, peeved, and discouraged just as professionals do; the acquisition, maintenance, and expression of skill and knowledge always entails some of these feelings.<sup>9</sup> Take motocross for instance — a motorcycle race over a natural terrain course from which only the trees, shrubs, and large rocks have been removed.

It requires the balance of a gymnast, the durability of a halfback, the endurance of a long-distance runner and the occasional guttiness of a cardshark to consistently win in motocross. Those are rare gifts, obviously, and that accounts for the “any Sunday” aspect which brings 99 percent of the riders back for another try [Bauman, 1974: 7].

Or, consider the advice offered in some recent promotional literature to frustrated amateur bowlers:

So you rolled a gutterball. Stay cool. Kicking the rack won't help you. It won't help the rack either. The same goes for all other equipment in the bowling center. Most of it is expensive. Much of it is delicate. When your temper or carelessness causes you to interfere with, disrupt or destroy any of the equipment, you are hurting everyone's enjoyment of the game, including your own.

Second, the typical writer tends to infer from this definition that the professional dislikes his work, apparently because he *has* to do it in order to live (in music, see Antrim, 1956; Newman, 1919: 41; McDonald, 1973). But, this stance fails to square with a major characteristic of professionals; namely, that they emphasize standards and service rather than material rewards. Additionally, both professionals and amateurs often find the competition in their fields exhilarating, if not attractive (cf., Perry, 1904: 10). In actuality professional work is so engaging that it becomes an end in itself, erasing the lines between work and leisure (cf., Pavalko, 1971: 179; Orzack, 1959; Parker, 1974: 78). Or as T. H. Marshall phrases it: “the professional . . . does not work in order to be paid; he is paid in order

that he may work (in Gross, 1958: 79). Generally speaking then, the amateur loves his pursuit, or he would not pursue it; but it is erroneous to assume that the professional dislikes his. Many modern amateurs and professionals are highly dedicated to their lines of activity, which is part of their appeal. As a case in point, the strike in 1974 by professional football players fizzled partly because many players simply yearned to play football (*Times*, 1974: 74). Rafael Druian, recently retired concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, points out that the primary function of a symphony orchestra and those people that make it possible is to produce music.

The orchestra is not there to pay musicians. The orchestra is not there to provide ego satisfaction for conductors. The orchestra is not there to be a property of its board of directors and its manager. The orchestra is there to make music [in Chism, 1974: 7].

An amateur classical musician would put it no differently for the community orchestra.

Subjectively, love for and dedication to an activity are inevitably somewhat different among amateurs and professionals. Charnofsky (1968) has shown for major league baseball players that there are many aspects of their professional lives that they enjoy, among them the money, travel, meeting people, and attractiveness of the game itself. By contrast, no amateur, whatever his interest, is involved in it as a way of life. Hence, his attraction can only be to the central activity. Both groups can honestly say they enjoy their pursuits but for only partially overlapping sets of reasons.

The seventh implication is that amateur involvement in an activity is possible only when training, licensing, and equipment are available to those who intend to make it their avocation. Few people are likely to go through the rigors of medical training, for instance, just to practice medicine as an amateur, while those with less complete training would be refused legal recognition for such practice. Amateur medicine, law, education, nursing, and the like are, for the most part, lawful impossibilities as

we have been describing amateurism.<sup>10</sup> In harmony with this conclusion is the fact that one never hears these professional activities labeled as amateur in everyday conversation. The training for policemen and airline pilots, in that it is less rigorous than training for medicine, is more available to would-be amateurs. But official authorization to assume such a role would be denied them as would necessary equipment, such as uniforms, badges, patrol cars, and commercial airplanes. So, there can be neither amateur policemen nor amateur airline pilots.

Turning to the eighth implication, there is the possibility that professionals, such as those mentioned in the preceding paragraph, will augment their services with paraprofessionals or volunteers. Paraprofessionals, whatever their field, perform in a subsidiary or accessory capacity to their professional associates, doing *different* tasks — tasks the latter prefer, for various reasons, to avoid themselves. Volunteers, though they once did professionals' work in certain occupations, become excluded from it during the process of professionalization (e.g., social work; see Lubove, 1965: 51-52, 218). Our P-A-P system is comprised, in its professional aspect, of a more or less crystallized profession in which volunteers, if there were any, are now effectively debarred or consigned to peripheral activities that the professionals care to delegate.

Because amateurs engage in the *same* activities as their professional counterparts, paraprofessionals and volunteers who are normally excluded from the ranks of professionals are also excluded from those of amateurs. One might challenge the claim that amateurs do engage in the same activity as their professional counterparts, but common-sense usage and such dictionary phrases as "engages in a particular pursuit...as a pastime rather than as a profession" support it.

### The Hobbyist

So far, we have concentrated exclusively on the professional-amateur-public system, including two subtypes of public: the dabbler and the novice. We have also briefly encountered some



of those who are peripheral to this system; to wit, full-time administrators, nonplaying coaches, conductors, and the like. As the aim in this section is to bring the idea of modern amateur into sharper focus, brief consideration of another important outsider category — the hobbyist — is called for.

Hobbyists and amateurs have in common that they are both practitioners with a definite and enduring purpose about them. They are not, while in these roles, passive consumers of a performance or product, nor are they doing something aimlessly as a form of temporary diversion. A hobby is a specialized pursuit beyond one's occupation that one finds particularly interesting and enjoys doing, but that is external to any P-A-P system. Consequently, while hobbyists may have some sort of public, they lack or fail to interact with a professional counterpart (unlike novices and dabblers who are members of a public within a P-A-P system).<sup>11</sup> For this reason hobbyists also fail to qualify as paraprofessionals or volunteers. Indeed, they are likely to be enamored of pursuits that even fail to constitute a work role. So, hobbyists turn up at any age level. A number of well-known practitioners fall into this category; for example, canoeists, flytiers, collectors (of stamps, violins, rocks, matchbooks, and so on),<sup>12</sup> inveterate readers of a genre of literature (e.g., history, poetry, biography, novels), and bird watchers. Whether an activity belongs with the hobbyists or with the amateurs will often turn on the questions, considered earlier, of whether there is a genuine professional aspect to it and whether that aspect is functionally related to a set of amateurs and a public.

The *folk artist* is a type of hobbyist. Since the P-A-P system is based on a certain degree of social interaction among members of the three groups, nonprofessional practitioners having, as a group, little or no interchange with professionals or amateurs must also be excluded from the category of modern amateur. Lacking a more suitable term, these enthusiasts are referred to as folk artists, for there appears to be no equivalent outside the arts. They are not to be confused with commercial performers

and producers of these arts. Rather, they perform or produce strictly for their own enjoyment and perhaps that of others in the same community, while making their living in some other fashion. They know little about professional standards of music, art, or theater, although they may unwittingly meet some of them. Having no contact with a particular P-A-P system, they contribute nothing, as a rule, to any of its component groups, including its public. Certain folk artists in art, music, and theater are treated in greater detail by Blasdel (1968), Ramsey (1970), and Halpert and Story (1969), respectively.<sup>13</sup>

Hobbyists pursue their activities because they enjoy them, and, like the amateur their pursuit is enduring. This observation suggests that hobbyists and amateurs fit poorly in the contemporary do-it-yourself class. Painting the house, putting in a lawn, building a garage are one-shot affairs, or so much so as to be disqualified as hobbies or amateur activities. These *projects* may actually be odious, being taken on chiefly to save money for the drudge.

## TYPES OF MODERN AMATEURS

A theoretical undertaking, such as the present one, can make little real progress without a typology. While there are no doubt others dimensions, the empirical sources for this book as well as everyday speech hint at two important ones along which distinctions can be drawn. One of these — the seriousness dimension — is also implicit in Max Kaplan's (1954) work on music. When an amateur is highly dedicated to his pursuit, we will refer to him as a *devotee*. When he is only mildly interested, but significantly more so than the dabbler, we will call him a *participant*. Participants probably greatly outnumber devotees. They can be distinguished operationally by the amount of time they commit to practicing, rehearsing, performing, and studying in accordance with the accepted professional norms for these sorts of activities.

The second dimension concerns career. The *preprofessional* is an amateur who intends to join the professional ranks. The *pure amateur* has never seriously held such aspirations, or, if he has, he has failed, for some reason, to enter those ranks. The *post-professional*, though he has decided to abandon his profession, still wishes to participate in its activities on a part-time basis. Postprofessionals reach this status by retiring, accepting employment peripheral to their P-A-P system, switching to a career in a different field (e.g., the discouraged professional jazz musician who turns to insurance sales, but continues to attend jam sessions), and perhaps in other ways.

Six types of amateurs result from cross-classification of these two dimensions. The preprofessional devotees and participants draw attention to the fact that amateurs form a major pool for recruitment to professional ranks. Schools of music, art, and dance train explicitly for this purpose, though, interestingly, a number of writers feel the music schools should also train amateur devotees (e.g., Hendrickson, 1968; Boutilier, 1968). In fact, one music school does just that (Bain, 1967: 114). Community orchestras and to some extent summer stock and amateur theater (Manning and Hearn, 1969: 203) help develop future professionals. Undergraduate programs in the sciences produce numerous amateurs. Some of these continue with their education to become professionals; others use it in such a way as to contribute nothing new to the field; a smaller third group manages to make new contributions despite this modest formal background. Recruitment of professional athletes from college teams is a well-known practice.<sup>14</sup> The movement of amateurs to professional status appears to be more gradual, however, in fields such as chess, bridge, tennis, and bowling and in entertainment.

The distinction between devotee and participant, whatever the place on the career dimension, indicates there is a difference among amateurs in the same field in terms of their dedication to it and hence in terms of their developed skill and knowledge. This same distinction, of course, could also be drawn for pro-

fessionals, though, in general, levels of skill, knowledge, and dedication would be somewhat higher (in sport see Weiss, 1969: 201). In Barzun's words:

You have for every profession no company of mutually respectful equals but a regular gradation of imperfect aspirants to the good. A parallel gradation necessarily obtains among amateurs, and it follows that by applying rigorously any test of pure talent one would find many an amateur high up among the professionals and many a professional down among the duffers [1954: 21].

The postprofessional devotee is probably an impossibility in many strenuous sports and only a moderate possibility among scientists. He is most apt to appear in the arts, where as a musician he plays in chamber music groups and community orchestras or as an actor he takes minor parts in amateur productions. Moreover, many artists, including sculptors, painters, writers, and even some musicians, being independent entrepreneurs, never retire (Hearn, 1972).

Preprofessional *participants* stand the best chance of failing in the professional world and thus of being forced to retreat to the status of postprofessional participant. Indeed, they may even fail to get started professionally. They are forever participants, as in the case of the college baseball player who, snubbed by the professional teams, winds up playing in the municipal park board league, while making his living at another line. He, thus, becomes a pure amateur participant.

## ATTITUDES

Up to this point, we have been working on a macrosociological definition of amateur: he is part of a professional-amateur-public system of functionally interdependent relationships. A social-psychological definition is also possible, and it is to this that we now turn.

Five attitudes are presented here, variations which separate

amateurs from professionals and separate both from their publics (including dabbler and novices). These attitudes consist of: confidence, perseverance, continuance commitment, preparedness, and self-conception. Other attitudes, of course, have been discussed in the preceding pages; namely, dedication to and love for the field and identity with one's colleagues. But, amateurs and professionals are too much alike in these orientations for them to function as adequate differentiae.

Confidence, on the other hand, is a prominent quality of experienced professionals, but absent in most amateurs (in sport see Weiss, 1969: 201-205). Questions dart through the typical amateur's mind, such as: is this scientific finding significant? is this the correct entry for my solo? what if I should fall while doing this dance step? I get so nervous in overtime that I cannot control the ball. The amateur, more than the seasoned professional, doubts his abilities, expresses them timidly, loses control through nervous tension, and the like. Professionals experience nervousness too but, as actress Katherine Cornell points out: "You learn to control it better all the time" (in Funke and Booth, 1961: 200).

Perseverance similarly distinguishes these two groups. Any professional, seasoned or green, knows he must stick to his pursuit when the going gets tough (in the arts see Collingwood, 1958: 313-314). Assisting him here is the professional subculture. It helps him interpret vituperative comments from critics, coaches, conductors, directors, editors, and others, comments that the amateur is less likely to get, if he gets any at all. That subculture also encourages him to persist at shaping skills that seem to have reached a plateau in their development by pointing out that progress will resume in the future if certain steps are taken. Additionally, certain tricks of the trade that facilitate progress and that infrequently seep down to the amateurs, circulate among the professionals. One of these, found in certain professional sports, is how to foul an opposing player without detection by the officials, a skill that helps control him. Finally, injuries, especially a series of them, can be

discouraging for any athlete, professional or amateur. Again, the former are aided, not only by continuous encouragement from colleagues, but also by medically trained personnel whose expertise in athletic injuries ensures the fastest possible recovery.

The greater perseverance of professionals is fostered, in part, by their greater continuance commitment. The concept of "continuance commitment," developed by Becker (1960), Kantor (1969), and Stebbins (1970a, 1971a), is defined as "the awareness of the impossibility of choosing a different social identity...because of the imminence of penalties involved in making the switch" (Stebbins, 1971a: 35). Although continuance commitment to a professional identity is a self-enhancing matter — being forced to remain in a status to which one is attracted — penalties still accumulate to militate against its renunciation. For example, such movement is limited, for some professionals, by legal contracts, pension funds, and seniority. Others may have made expensive investments of time, energy, and money in obtaining training and equipment. With few exceptions amateurs never experience these sorts of pressures to stay at their pursuits. They have a "value commitment" but no continuance commitment (Stebbins, 1970a), while professionals have both.

Professionals also evince a greater preparedness than amateurs. By "preparedness" is meant a readiness to perform the activity to the best of one's ability at the appointed time and place. It refers to punctuality at such events as rehearsals and games and to arriving at these events in appropriate physical condition (not worn out from a day's work or woozy from too many beers beforehand) with the required equipment in good repair and adjustment. Sir John Gielgud states the case for professional acting: "the discipline of an actor is getting there every day a good hour before you go on, which I usen't to do when I was young, but which I would not dream of not doing now — being ready" (in Funke and Booth, 1961: 21). Amateur cellist Leonard Marsh (1972: 127) describes how he was unprepared to

play in a chamber music concert:

I...signified my readiness to play, and we started. It was only then that I found that, in my haste, I hadn't put on my music glasses. My music glasses are carefully adjusted to read cello music at just the right distance. ...I could manage fairly well by cocking my head at an awkward angle, but if I did it too much, it would look as if I were querying the interpretation of my companions. ...Toward the end of the movement I felt confident enough to take my eyes off the music and "look natural." That was the mistake: I lost the vision of a whole line of music, and started playing the wrong notes.

Moving on to self-conception, it need only be mentioned that professionals and amateurs conceive of themselves in these terms. Just what the content of these conceptions are for each group in each field must be discovered through research. But, self-identification as one or the other is perhaps the most reliable operational measure available at present for separating them.

These five attitudes comprise a social-psychological definition of amateur. The assumption should be avoided that professionals hold them in ideal form. This seldom happens. Even though they are significantly more confident, persevering, committed, and prepared than amateurs, they generally fall short of the highest points on these continua.

### **MARGINAL MEN OF LEISURE**

A major conclusion can be drawn from what has been said so far: amateurs of today, in all fields, to the extent they can be said to be guided by professional standards and share the same spirit of satisfaction, are the marginal men of leisure. They are neither dabblers who approach the activity with little commitment or seriousness, nor professionals who make a living off that activity and spend a major portion of their waking hours doing so — for whom it is an occupation. Amateurs, as this

chapter has tried to demonstrate, fall between, possessing a constellation of qualities unique to themselves. There are several aspects to this marginality.

One is that amateurs, though neither dabblers nor workers, are serious about their leisure. Thus, more often than not, they are misunderstood by their friends, neighbors, relatives, and even spouses who, having no amateur interests, spend their leisure as spectators, dabblers, or participants in some nonserious activity. The seriousness of amateurs is evident in their orientation to their activities, in their talk about them, and, most significantly, in their willingness to work toward perfection. "No scientist, no doctor-fiddler," writes Catherine Drinker Bowen (1935: 68), "comes to quartets with strings broken from neglect or a bow stiff from lack of practice." In bridge:

Most of the players, aside from the professionals, insist that bridge is not really a passion, that they only do it for fun, because they enjoy it. Their friends scoff. "If all they want is fun, why don't they go sailing, or play backgammon or tennis, or go to a movie? Bridge isn't fun, it's hard, hard work. But it's mental stimulation you can't get any other way" [Sweeney, 1974: 6].

Seriousness at leisure sets the modern amateur off from the majority of other people who find such an orientation foreign, possibly a bit quaint or snobbish, and rarely, even admirable.

Another aspect of marginality is the tendency toward uncontrollability. For instance, having spent himself the evening before playing soccer or performing in a play, the amateur finds he is in less than optimal condition to work at his occupation the next day. And, there is always the temptation to add time to amateur interests by subtracting it, where possible, from work or family obligations. "Rachel — never marry an amateur violinist!" a professional violinist counselled his daughter. "He will want to play quartets all night" (in Bowen, 1935: 93). For those who find the small and occasional monetary rewards of amateurism attractive, this tendency is only further encouraged.



On top of these inclinations are the nearly universal desires to own a better set of golf clubs, buy a more powerful telescope, take more dance lessons perhaps from a more renowned (and consequently more expensive) professional, and so forth. In short, amateur activity stands ready to devour all the time and money its practitioners have for it to feed on.

Likely, the tendency toward uncontrollability is evident in other forms of leisure, should we care to look for it there. Implicit in the present statement, however, is the hypothesis that uncontrollability is significantly greater among amateurs in all fields, particularly devoted amateurs, than among, for example, dabblers or spectators. Moreover, many avocations and pastimes, no matter how unmanageable, are not marginal, but solidly of the sphere of leisure.

A third aspect of the amateur's marginality is based on the fact that he can never gain total entry to the professional world and remain an amateur. He is consigned by his overall life-style to a peripheral role in the activity system of his significant other, the professional. Being peripheral in this way leads to a feeling of inferiority with respect to a sense of the ability of capable professionals. As Walter Grueninger (1957: 72) says of the amateur classical musician: "All players would like to play better and," he adds, "forever." Among many amateurs the feelings of awe and inferiority seem to engender a type of gullibility: a propensity to accept, unquestioningly, any statement or judgment made by a respected professional about the activity.

Fourth is the aspect of frustration that arises for amateurs from internalizing high professional standards of performance, accompanied by lack of time and possibly experience, training, and equipment with which to meet them. Amateurs try to reduce their leisure aims to some more manageable level, but there are no specifically amateur or in-between standards to guide them. Nor are there ever likely to be any, so long as high-level professional attainments (made possible by full-time striving) remain visible and dominant throughout the P-A-P system. The performance of a community orchestra is judged by such

criteria as intonation, ensemble playing, and dynamics, just as that of a professional orchestra is. Critics have been known to observe that such performances are “pretty good *for a community orchestra*,” which simply indicates that they have accepted, for the moment, a truncated expression of professional standards. At bottom, however, there is no double standard in sport, science, entertainment, or the arts. Today, products of or performances by amateurs and professionals alike are truly meritorious only to the extent that they approach perfection on these dimensions (in sport see Albinson, 1976).<sup>15</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This treatment of today's amateurs as the marginal men of leisure has brought us full circle in our search for a definition of them. It was noted earlier that professionals may be distinguished from amateurs by two facts: the former gain at least 50 percent of their livelihood from the focal activity while the latter do not and they put in considerably more time at it than the latter. Though these two truisms provide us with useful operational definitions for certain research questions, they do so only because they relate both amateurs and professionals to the underlying theme of occupational continuance commitment — professionals are committed to the activity and amateurs to some livelihood outside it.

But, as pointed out, these definitions give us only false leads in tracking down the essence of “amateur” in the twentieth century. This discussion of marginality shows us why. The modern amateur would like to spend more time and sometimes more money at his avocation than time and income permit. And my observations suggest that he is in no way opposed to making money at his pursuit — even a lot of it — so long as the pursuit continues to be more or less enjoyable. For instance, in bowling, it has been said that “amateurs accept every penny they can get their hands on” (*Dallas Times Herald*, 1974: 6E). In the syn-

licated cartoon "The Small Society" Mensch was asked: "What is the difference between amateur and professional athletes?" His reply was that "the pros get paid by check." To the amateur's family, if he has one, the money may help justify his participation in, say, amateur art while compensating for its expenses and generally augmenting the family budget. At times such earnings even help pay for the coveted items, mentioned earlier, that amateurs seek. It is their marginality that steers us from simplistic definitions, which are adequate for defining other types of leisure users, to more complex definitions that rest on their social and attitudinal organization.

In other words, we must avoid the unidimensional thinking that pits the amateur against the professional in terms of, for example, little versus great skill, intrinsic versus extrinsic reward, avocational versus vocational orientation, or leisure versus work. While *under certain conditions* such dichotomies accurately describe their relationship, under many other conditions, as I have attempted to demonstrate, they badly distort that relationship. The way out of this conceptual morass is to shift our theoretical perspective to broader, more sociological definitions of the amateur as member of a professional-amateur-public system and as one who has a distinct attitudinal structure. The aforementioned dichotomies have been integrated into these two definitions, where the contradictions among them have been worked out, to a substantial degree, and their tendency toward overgeneralization contained.

### Notes

1. Blumer (1969: 148-149) states that a sensitizing concept "lacks . . . specification of attributes or bench marks and consequently it does not enable the user to move directly to the instance and its relevant content. Instead it gives the user a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances."
2. By stressing the professional references made in the dictionary definitions of amateur, I am simultaneously and arbitrarily ignoring the pejorative references of "inexperienced," "incompetent," "dabbler," and the like also made there. Both conceptions are prevalent. But a single scientific concept should never contain such opposites. One must choose. Dabbler appears later in this book as the

category of nonprofessional, part-time participant with these unflattering characteristics.

3. The existence of amateur science may be unexpected for some. Yet, at least three national amateur science societies are functioning today: the Amateur Entomologists Society, the Amateur Astronomers Association, and the Western Amateur Astronomers. The many state and provincial archaeology societies include amateurs. Further, amateur scientists communicate with their professional colleagues through the latter's periodical literature. Each issue of *Scientific American* carries a report of an amateur scientific project (edited by C. L. Strong). Likewise, *Sky and Telescope*, a professional journal, publishes a column devoted to amateur astronomical projects as well as news about organized amateur events. Herb S. Brier wrote a column entitled "Amateur Radio" for fifteen years in *Popular Electronics*. The same content now appears under the heading "Communications" in *Electronics World*. Articles by amateurs appear from time to time in the professional archaeology periodical, *American Antiquity*.
4. These contributions of the amateur are sometimes missed by professionals (e.g., Howes, 1956: 36).
5. It should be evident from this example that, although professionals tend to set and communicate the standards, they occasionally fail to live up to them.
6. Even people employed professionally outside their avocation, manage to sustain consistent, active involvement in it. There are doctors' symphonies in New York, St. Louis, Los Angeles, and Boston. A businessmen's symphony operates in Chicago. Most community orchestras contain a conspicuous minority of professional people from fields other than music. On the practice habits of these busy artists, see Bowen (1935: 101-102) and Marsh (1972: 15).
7. Kaplan (1955: 12) equates *lack* of skill and knowledge with amateurism which, of course, fails to square with the argument tendered here. Amateurs are often *less* skillful than professionals, the levels of skill being a matter of parallel gradation.
8. In this paragraph the development of a sociological definition of "amateur" becomes somewhat arbitrary. Though novices and dabblers are occasionally treated as synonymous with amateur in everyday usage, they are here being clearly distinguished from it.
9. Amateurism is apparently not what Dumazedier (1967: 18-19) would consider "semileisure." The latter activity is partly practical, partly nonpractical and contains elements of obligation as well as leisure. His discussions of semileisure (pp. 18-19, 81) always center on workshop and do-it-yourself projects and similar money-saving efforts.
10. A psychiatrist who has moved into hospital administration might see a few patients in his spare time which, from our discussion, could be regarded as amateur practice. This would be high-level involvement, until his skill and knowledge dwindled owing to part-time use. The possibility of such part-time employment in medicine, law, education, and other licensed professions, after a career of full-time employment, suggests that there may be, in each field, a handful of what are referred to later as postprofessional amateurs. For further discussion of legal restrictions to the practice, vocational or avocational, of licensed occupational activities, see Gellhorn (1956).

11. Dictionary and everyday uses of "hobby" and "hobbyist" are even vaguer than those of "amateur." An absence of any significant connection with a professional counterpart is implied, however, and it is this theme that serves as the starting point for the sociological definition presented here.
12. It is doubtful that there are professional collectors of paintings, violins, or similar valuable objects. Hobbyist collectors will sell one of their collection to get enough money to add a still better item to it. Commercial firms may collect, too, as William E. Hill and Sons of London collects rare, old violins. Though they deal in violins commercially, those in their collection are not for sale. If they were, the proprietors would be purely dealers, not dealers and collectors.
13. Again, this is a somewhat arbitrary distinction forced on us by the ambiguity that would result if folk artists and other hobbyists were regarded as amateurs. They are nonprofessionals with no relationship to any professional group or activity, which stands in contrast to the central theme of professional-amateur comparison noted earlier.
14. Etzkorn (1973: 196), drawing on the later writings of Paul Honigsheim, notes a similar form of recruitment of professional musicians from amateur organizations in Germany and Russia.
15. This is the participant's viewpoint. The average member of his public, being neither amateur nor professional, may enjoy a performance or a product that pleases the participant somewhat less because it is, by his reckoning, substandard.

## 2

# *The Routine of Amateur Theater*

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By all the usual signs it was just another October day, a small part of that seemingly endless string of days that constitute the academic year. The adjustments to a new set of students had been made. The annual confusion of the first two weeks of the term had passed, and we were now bearing down on the initial round of examinations.

Yet, on that October day I was scheduled to see the Chairman of the Department of Communications who knows the local theater scene, both amateur and professional. For various reasons I had had to postpone the start of my study of amateurs, so that I now pushed my way through the

knots of students to this appointment with a sense of urgency. I remember that day more vividly, however, for the sense of eager anticipation I always feel at the beginning of a research project; the excitement of embarking on a voyage into an unfamiliar social world where fascinating new personal experiences and human encounters await the visitor.

The conference with the Chairman of the Communications Department was lively and informative. He understood what I needed. I learned there are at least fourteen amateur theaters in the Dallas-Fort Worth area that, together, encompass a wide range of talent and quality of production.<sup>1</sup> Some of these theaters are more active than others. After presenting the criteria I hoped to use in selecting the theater to be studied, he recommended I contact the Director of the Fort Worth Community Theater, or "Scott Theater," as the amateurs often refer to it (after the name of the theater building).

The following week the Director of Scott and I sat down to discuss my project and, if approved, to get an overview of the history of Scott and its present routine. We sat in his large office that looked out on a spacious tree-filled lawn. The building in which the office is located, and which was recently erected through a private arts endowment, houses all his production space and equipment: rehearsal and dressing rooms, storage rooms for costumes, sets, and props, and open space for scenery construction including the necessary tools. There is also a reception room and small kitchen off the lobby and a greenroom adjacent to the dressing rooms. The auditorium and stage were built expressly for acting, with a rounded, protruding (and removable) forestage that resembles that used in Elizabethan theater.

In other words, Scott is now a well-established community theater. It was in its twenty-first season at the time of the study, during which time eight plays were presented. The daily operations are carried out by a professional director and small staff whose activities are supported from box office receipts and municipal government funds. Policy is set by a board of gover-

nors composed of citizens from the metropolitan area. Special committees organize and run the usual support activities associated with acting; for example, selling tickets, giving receptions, and acquiring and storing costumes and props. Actors and actresses, or players as they are referred to in this book, may contribute to these efforts but, unlike many amateur theaters, this is optional.<sup>2</sup> Scott is purely amateur; it has no contract with the League of Resident Theatres (LORT).<sup>3</sup>

Of course, Scott once had its lean years. In the early days it operated out of an old store on a back street of the city. Since there were no paid staff, players constructed the sets, made costumes, sold tickets, all in and around a taxing schedule of rehearsals and performances. Some of the respondents in the present study recall those days with nostalgia, but also with obvious relief that they no longer have to participate in such labors in order to act — their chief interest in theater. As the quality of productions improved so did the level of community support, which included, eventually, funding from the municipal arts council. Appointment of a professional director and movement into a new building specially designed to meet its needs has brought Scott to an enviable point of development and success in comparison with most amateur theaters in the Dallas-Fort Worth area and, indeed, North America.

Scott has no fixed size, a result of the director's policy to recruit new talent to his productions whenever possible. Given its prominent place in the community and its backing from public monies, he believes his theater should never become an exclusive club. Still, some dramatic parts are too difficult to fill and some local amateurs too capable to give unswerving allegiance, at every casting, to the principle of open selection.

So, the line organization of Scott is best portrayed as three concentric circles. The inner circle or core is composed of reliable, experienced players who, though they may also appear in the productions of other community theaters, appear in at least one Scott production a season. Even when not performing these people are often connected with a particular play as part



of the crew, through ticket sales, through extramural events, or simply as interested onlookers at rehearsals and performances. The core is surrounded by those players whose participation in theater and its associated activities is severely limited by occupational or familial obligations or both. They act when time and responsibilities permit and when a part for which they are suited becomes available. Newcomers to Scott are found in the outer circle. They may be residents who gained their experience in high school or college or in another local community theater or both. They may be recent arrivals in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Some of them will move, either sooner or later, to one of the other circles.<sup>4</sup>

## REHEARSALS

When I made my initial contact with the director, a play was being rehearsed for a run of performances less than a month off. Typically, Scott holds twenty-five evening rehearsals of three hours or more in length (including technical and dress rehearsals) prior to a run of eight performances given over a period of ten days. I entered this sequence somewhat short of the middle with thirteen rehearsals left before opening night.

My plan was to observe everything I could concerning the amateur player's avocational life. In large part this meant taking an extended look at rehearsals as they progressed toward opening night and several performances as the run progressed toward final night. But, the plan also included observation of extramural activities, such as after-hours gatherings and the cast party following the final performance. With all this background, I would be well prepared to conduct intensive interviews with selected players. I was generally able to stick to this blueprint.

In a typical North American theater, nearly all rehearsals for a play are held in a rehearsal room rather than onstage. Scott does hold tryouts for its plays on the stage (free of sets and

props). Thus, those chosen to act in a production start eight or nine weeks before the final night onstage, move to the rehearsal room for five to six weeks, and eventually return to the stage for the technical and dress rehearsals. Some players, in fact, come full circle from the empty stage of tryouts to the empty stage left by "strike," the practice of dismantling the set so that the stage is cleared for the next activity scheduled.

In the early rehearsals the principal goals of each player are to learn their lines, interpret them, and begin to coordinate them with the lines of other players. Gaining familiarity with props, costumes, and scenery comes later. The uninitiated would have difficulty identifying a typical theater rehearsal room as a place for that sort of activity. For the room is largely empty, except for a few strategically placed chairs and tables and positions taped on the floor.

The first rehearsal is the "reading," wherein all parts of the play are read aloud by those cast in them without stage movement or stage business.<sup>5</sup> Though a reading serves many purposes, one of its main functions is to acquaint each player with the themes of the work and the cues to his lines. On the basis of this overview, the director can begin work on the details of his production.

During the early weeks each rehearsal is usually devoted to a single act of the play, as the director works on expression, diction, gestures, blocking, and the like.<sup>6</sup> His goals are similar to those of a symphony orchestra conductor: to achieve an aesthetically pleasing synthesis of parts as an artistic whole. The process by which this occurs in orchestras is referred to by Kaplan (1955) as "telopractice," a term which can also be used to describe what happens in theater. In theater, as in orchestras, the director talks more at earlier rehearsals than at later ones. The initial concentration on lines and their delivery gradually gives way to a concern for their coordination. In the process, players (orchestral and theatric) grow more serious about their task and joke less (Stebbins, 1976a). The final dress rehearsal in both arts is a largely uninterrupted performance of the entire

play or program (which closely resembles the procedure of the first rehearsal where the overview is established).

Four kinds of people are present at a Scott rehearsal, which is probably no different in this aspect from other amateur theater rehearsals across North America. These are the *director*, the *players*, the *stage manager*, and the *onlookers*. The stage manager is the director's assistant who, during most rehearsals, follows the script to ensure that the parts are being accurately delivered and in the proper order. He may also read the lines of an absent player. It is probably true of many amateur theaters that the stage manager can put away the "book" only in the final rehearsals, for it is only by this time that all players have learned their lines and entries sufficiently well. This functionary has other duties once the technical and dress rehearsals and actual performances commence, some of which are treated later.

The onlookers are a mixed group of cast members awaiting their turn to rehearse and noncast people, such as crew and outsiders. The outsiders are commonly actors and actresses associated with Scott who, as mentioned earlier, drop in because they are interested in the show and enjoy the theater life. But nonacting onlookers also join this set from time to time, as when the mother of a youngster in the play being rehearsed stopped by one evening to observe.

This collection of people, the size of which is constantly changing, serves several useful purposes. One, it is an audience; even in rehearsals players benefit from the opportunity to deliver their lines to appreciative listeners. Two, since the group is composed partly of thespians, it can be a source of ideas for the director.<sup>7</sup> Three, onlookers, through their humorous remarks and observations, help supply a sort of comic relief from the seriousness of rehearsals (Stebbins, 1976a). Four, onlookers furnish the director with an outlet for his own thoughts on how the production is developing and for his humorous observations and comments. Five, the director occasionally uses one of them to run an errand.

Onlookers undoubtedly advance the aims of a rehearsal more

than they obstruct them, though obstructions do occur. For instance, they may talk too loudly among themselves, eventually forcing the director to silence them. Little else must be as distracting to concentrating players as rowdy joking on the sidelines. Moreover, onlookers come and go, thereby producing a further distraction. Some are crew who have their own responsibilities. Some are players who, after a brief rest, depart for the greenroom to get a soft drink. Even if they stay in the rehearsal room, onlookers may move around inside and chat with players who are, in effect, offstage awaiting their cues.

These four kinds of rehearsal room habitués comprise, on an evening, a system of interaction — a “focused gathering” as Goffman (1961: 8-14) would call it — the members of which are linked to each other through the script of the play. At all rehearsals the main directions of interaction are between players, players and stage manager, and players and director, with the intensity of the latter two diminishing to a minimum by opening night. Onlookers participate overtly in this system only occasionally. As an audience, however, they participate in the system every time a player delivers a line.

This system of interaction is illustrated by the following passage from my field notes. The pattern and content of the exchanges are probably typical of many amateur rehearsals that have reached the mid-point of the rehearsal sequence.

*The director stops the acting to discuss several points. This is followed by a humorous comment from the leading lady that brings laughter from everyone. The director gives more advice, then asks the scene to be redone. As it is progressing the leading lady offers advice to the leading man. Again, the director stops the acting, this time to instruct the cast as a group. Having finished, he orders:*

*“This time I want to go back through that scene; I want you to do everything right. . . .” More discussion follows between him and the players, and the scene is started a third time. Soon the director motions advice. This is followed by a cue from the stage manager. Then the director prompts two young actors in minor roles. Shortly thereafter the leading lady pauses:*

*“There’s some lines in there.” The stage manager reads the forgotten lines. Less than two minutes later the manager gives the leading lady another prompt. The scene continues as the director goes to the side of the room to instruct a necking couple in the arts of pantomime. More cues follow from director and stage manager. Again the director stops the acting to advise and to request a repeat of the scene. It is repeated, and the players move on through the script. Soon the director is giving more instructions. Next one of the young actors gets a prompt from the stage manager followed by another. Then, forgetting his line a third time, he explodes:*

*“Oh crap! I forgot it.” The director cues him this time and tenders some advice in the same breath. Within a minute the same actor stumbles on a line, which gets a laugh from the onlookers. The acting resumes until the director stops it for more instructions. The same young actor forgets more lines, which brings prompts from director and manager. Then another memory block:*

*“Oh crap! I forgot again.” He gets his cue and goes on. “Oh shit!” And another prompt from the manager. After still another jog he sighs: “I’m sorry. I’m really out of it tonight.” Then the technical manager (in charge of building the set) enters the room to ask the director a question. They confer and the manager leaves. Soon the leading lady stops in the middle of her lines:*

*“Something went wrong.”*

*“No,” the stage manager counters, “it’s alright.”*

There is a sense of industry and intensity here, that abates as the cast gets its lines down and internalizes the director’s wishes concerning the delivery and coordination of parts, blocking, and (later) use of props and costumes.

The auditory and visual aspects of these interchanges are augmented by other activities in the theater. Since the shop in which the sets are constructed is nearby, the scream of a power saw or bang of a hammer can be heard from time to time. Once in a while shouted communications between members of the crew echo through the rehearsal room, prompting the director to dispatch an onlooker to remind them of the virtues of muffled talk. There is also a telephone just outside the rehearsal

room, the occasional ringing of which drifts into the acting and brings an onlooker (again dispatched by the director) to answer it. The crew are also visible, sometimes as mere onlookers, sometimes as functionaries with questions for the director. The costumer also wanders in and out to take measurement, to fit various items of apparel, or simply to display his handiwork.

Some of the talk associated with rehearsals is stereotyped, and that, too, helps engender a sense of "theater" for those present. That is, there are certain phrases, usually uttered in the course of acting, which are probably emitted unconsciously. The expression "I'm sorry" is frequently heard as a player excuses a missed line or, as he may do in the analogous situation in daily life, apologizes for intruding on another's part. A memory lapse may bring the simple request of "line" or "my line," to which the stage manager is supposed to respond with the forgotten portion. Some players have their own personal, though habitual, reactions to missed lines, as did the young actor in the earlier illustration who exclaimed "oh crap!" when his memory failed.

In short, the activities in the rehearsal room are even more than a focused gathering, they comprise a peculiar type of social situation (MacIver, 1942: 295; Goffman, 1963: 18; Stebbins, 1975: 6-7). Life tends to run in a series of more or less discrete situations bounded temporally, physically, and socially in countless ways. These boundaries and the events that occur within them give each type of situation a uniqueness and enable those present, such as the actors and actresses in the rehearsal room, to identify it for what it is and to define and respond to it in an appropriate manner.

### **Peripheral Activities**

Players do more at rehearsals than rehearse. The practice of devoting an entire evening to one act, which is characteristic of early rehearsals, enables people with small parts or no parts in the act to take that night off. Later, however, when two or more acts are being rehearsed and opening night is near, they must be

present. Except for the principals there is thus a certain amount of time when one is not acting, which is spent in various ways.

This is when players get fitted for costumes. And many of them take this opportunity to work on their lines, some by finding an isolated corner of the greenroom, others by sitting on the toilet, and others by stealing off to a remote cranny in the building. It is also a time for conversing with members of the cast, actors and actresses associated with Scott who have dropped in, and crew. This talk may be technical; it may concern problems of producing the current play. Or it may be about the local theater scene, both amateur and professional. Some of it is about matters completely unrelated to theater. Students use these intervals to study. Others play cards, often solitaire. Rarely, someone even naps.

There is usually a break or two (commonly at the end of an act) in each rehearsal. This is often the only time during the evening when everyone present for that rehearsal can be together informally. At this time crew, cast, director, and stage manager tend to converge simultaneously on the greenroom where, at least in the rehearsals I observed, conviviality prevails. Some shop is talked here, though there appears to be an equally strong inclination to depart completely from theater by discussing matters distant from it.

Postrehearsal gatherings among members of the cast and crew are common from the start and provide those who attend a chance to unwind. Rehearsals can be stimulating, which makes sleep difficult immediately following them. But, if a player partakes in too much of this socializing, it may drain the stamina he needs to get through the remaining weeks of the production.

## **THE CAREER OF A DRAMATIC PRODUCTION**

As the weeks of rehearsal go by, the performance of the play improves. The players can see this progress in themselves and

their colleagues as fewer lines are dropped, timing is perfected, stage movements are learned, props are handled with greater assurance, and so forth. Certainly, in both the amateur and the professional spheres, there are productions that fail to jell as expected or hoped. But, even in theatric failures, some improvements is effected. And by these perceptions a sense of direction is achieved. For experienced players who have come to expect this sense with every production, it may be described as the most important aspect of the career of the production. It is the "subjective" side of that career (cf. Stebbins, 1970b), or the players's personal feeling about how the production is advancing.

On the objective or impersonal side, the amateurs I observed (and quite possibly others) also establish a sort of collectively recognized "timetable" (Roth, 1963), with which they measure the progress of any production. As Roth observed in groups as diverse as TB and psychiatric patients, business executives, airline pilots, army draftees, and prisoners, actors and actresses use a set of "benchmarks" to help chart the passage of time through major sequences of events.

One such sequence in theater is the development of the production. Its first benchmark is the arrival at that point in the string of rehearsals where publicity pictures are taken. This is possible once the costumes for the principals are more or less completed. It must be done enough in advance to allow time for printing and at least two weeks of publicity.

Movement to the stage is a somewhat later benchmark. Some of, though by no means all, the scenery is in place by this time. However complete the set, players greatly prefer acting on the stage to acting in the rehearsal room. One can now gain a sense of how one's part and character fit in the theater environment. From here on players begin to meet and cope with the physical hazards of the set, their costumes, and their props, such as walking to and from the stage in the dark, using rickety stairs, tripping over long dresses, and the like. These problems are usually solved, but often only after they are encountered



firsthand.

Four special rehearsals occur prior to opening night, the first of which is the “technical” or “tech” rehearsal. At this benchmark the cast works for the first time with lights, sound, and curtain procedures as they will be employed during performances. The tech rehearsal is followed by two dress rehearsals and a “preview.” Time is clearly limited now. Consequently, these rehearsals ordinarily run well over three hours. The preview is given to a small audience that pays a token admission. Among them are some of the local critics whose reviews will be published on opening night or shortly thereafter.

These reviews constitute another benchmark in the career of a production. Reactions are likely to be mixed, since reviews are seldom totally complimentary. The accuracy of each critique is debated, sometimes excitedly, among groups of players in the dressing rooms and the greenroom as they await their turn onstage. The biases and other inadequacies of veteran critics are known and used to explain their printed reactions to the production in question. Personal animosities between players occasionally find expression in their responses to these outside assessments, as when one player delights in a harsh review given the performance of his adversary. The play I observed at Scott was reviewed in at least three local and university newspapers. The reviews were generally unfavorable.

### **The Performances**

The reviews are simply one facet, albeit an important one, of opening night. More significant is the presence of either *eager anticipation* or *apprehension* or both. Since these emotional states are covered in detail in Chapter 4, it must suffice here simply to mention that, for some players, open night, more than any other performance, arouses their most extreme feelings. There is the thrill of reaching the ultimate goal: the opportunity to present the many hours of work before an audience whose reaction, it is hoped, will be enthusiastic. At the same time nearly all players experience a certain degree of apprehension over

their ability to perform at their best.

Another side of opening night is the practice of well-wishing, which also occurs with less frequency at later performances. It includes such verbal assurances as "good luck" and the clichéd phrase "break a leg." Small gifts are exchanged among some of the cast (e.g., flowers, plants, wine, humorous figurines) usually accompanied by a short note, such as: "To Jack from the thorn in your side" (with cactus); "Thanks for the use of your belt" (with wine); or "To Tom, the sexiest guy I know." Telegrams may be received from external admirers. The amount of well-wishing a player receives, whatever its form, appears to be related to the size of his part.

The eager anticipation of the night's performance (opening or otherwise) is lodged partly in the expectation of a favorable audience response to one's acting. This expectation is affected by the reports of the first players to return to the greenroom following their appearance in the first act. They quickly voice their opinions of the house that evening: "They're not laughing at anything," "Pretty good audience tonight," "The audience is beginning to warm up now." Its size is also noted.

No matter how the audience is generally identified, an individual's definition of its reactions to him vary, and this definition is likely to be postmortemed in the greenroom among fellow players. These discussions often note the remarkable events in or characteristics of the house, such as their audible comments (e.g., "Look the kid even has a dagger," "Look at the shoes on him") or their behavior (e.g., the obese elderly women in the front row with legs spread wide apart, the man with his feet on the stage).<sup>8</sup> Events and comments of this sort, if sufficiently bizarre, become institutionalized in the culture of local amateur theater. During any performance one may also hear comments by players about each other's acting that night. These may be complimentary, derogatory, or simply queries, such as "What was the matter with Marcie to tonight? She stomped on a couple of lines, then she got a couple."

Opening night also brings a flock of visitors to the

greenroom. Those who visit during the performance are usually theater amateurs who have appeared in earlier shows at Scott. They share in the general descant about audience, personal reactions to it, individual presentations of parts, and so forth. Friends and relatives of the players in the current production are most apt to turn up after the performance, either in the greenroom or at the opening night reception held in a room adjacent to the auditorium. The latter affair, which is a recent innovation at Scott, is announced in the program. Players in the production attend in costume and, along with certain technical personnel (e.g., costumer, set designer) and the director, mingle with members of the audience in an atmosphere of punch and sandwiches. The main purpose of this gathering is to improve attendance at opening night.<sup>9</sup> The players' reactions to the reception are presented in Chapter 4.

The Sunday matinee is the approximate midpoint in a set of performances at Scott. It is seen by its veteran players as the dulllest of their public appearances in the run. Two situations foster this view. One is the peculiar composition of the house that day; it is the day that institutionalized people in the community (e.g., those in hospitals, homes for the aged) are best able to get to the theater. Free passes are distributed to encourage them to do so. There is apparently less life in an audience filled largely with such people; the show and the acting are typically received with less enthusiasm than at other performances.

The other situation is "picture call," which follows the matinee. Here the cast is photographed in costume. The resulting pictures provide a permanent record of the show and may also be purchased by the players. Since this session cuts into time that could be used for family or other recreational activities, picture-call is disliked though generally understood as necessary.

Final night, which is on Saturday at Scott, has its own special atmosphere. One, a good audience is expected. Two, for some players, the entire production, from the first rehearsal on, has

been taking its toll in fatigue and postponed obligations to family and job (see Chapter 3). Soon it will all be over. Three, the thought of the cast party to follow adds to the spirit of the evening, even for those who are tired. In the production I observed, some of the women in the cast had bought or made clothing appropriate to this affair. Four, other amateurs planning to attend the party collect in the greenroom as the evening progresses, as do friends, relatives, and spouses of the players. The food and wine there, spontaneously contributed by members of the cast for the consumption of all, augment the festive atmosphere. By the end of the third act, the place resembles more a downtown street corner at rush hour than a lounge for performing artists.

### **CAST PARTY AND BEYOND**

At Scott the cast party is ordinarily held in someone's home. The party observed for the present study took place at the director's house and drew between thirty and forty people. If this cast party was typical, it would be difficult to distinguish this institution from middle-class gatherings of similar size. In general, people sat or stood in clusters of two to four and chatted on a variety of topics, including the production just concluded. Drinks were served, and by one o'clock they were eating their way through a buffet of food.

Two aspects of that cast party do separate it from the common middle-class soiree. One was the presentation, sometime after midnight, of a cast gift to the director. The other, which would characterize amateur cast parties everywhere, was the mixture of people. A theatric production brings together a variety of individuals suitable for filling particular dramatic roles. In this case a young boy, a teen-age girl, several men and women in their early twenties, and four other adults ranging in age to over fifty comprised the cast. Few middle-class parties would encompass such a range of ages and diversity of marital and occupational statuses. Notwithstanding this variation and

the requirements of theatric roles, the conversational units at the party tended to form along age lines.

Possibly in contrast to such a gathering among professional actors and actresses who work by night and sleep by day, the numbers at this cast party began to dwindle by half-past two in the morning. Conventional habits of family and work life tend to dominate even one's leisure pursuits.

For many of the cast this party concluded another chapter in their amateur acting history. But, for others, that conclusion was delayed until the next day at "strike." Strike is the dismantling of the set, and the preparation of the stage for general use. At Scott it occurs, appropriately, on the Sunday afternoon following the final night and the cast party. Some players enjoy strike, others dislike it. And some of the latter group stay away. Thus, Scott usually has trouble recruiting enough help for this chore.

The justifications given for absenting oneself from strike are legion. Previous obligations were frequently mentioned, even though every player knew of it and its place in the schedule. Family pressures play a major role here. Certain players, often women, indicated they have no ability with tools and would therefore be useless at such a task, though the crew hold a different view. One person had house guests to entertain. Those who do attend get to continue the afterglow of the cast party, for beer is available and the job is carried out with a cheerful spirit.

Perhaps the most poignant justification for shunning strike given by these amateurs is that strike is painfully symbolic of the closing of the show. A show from which they have gained so much and for which they have worked so hard. Strike, for them, is a funeral, and one they would as soon avoid.

### Notes

1. This total includes six college and university theaters and one LORT (League of Resident Theaters) theater (see note 3).

2. Many amateur thespians have no choice, if they wish to continue their avocation, but to live by the following principle: to go onstage you must be willing to work backstage. At least one amateur theater in the Dallas-Fort Worth area rehearses and builds its sets in an initial location. Just before opening night its players dismantle the set and transport it to an auditorium where they rebuild it. They then give two or three performances. The set is torn down the evening the show closes. All this backstage labor is sometimes justified as needed training in technical theater.
3. A LORT contract is an alliance with Actors Equity, the professional union, that grants a theater permission to use four Equity performers and cast the rest of any play with amateurs. LORT, itself, is an organization of professional theaters that seeks to advance the cause of the professional stage through regional acting organizations.
4. Scott is not, strictly speaking, a repertory theater. Though it presents several productions in succession, the cast and crew of each are quite different. The former, in fact, is determined by publicly announced auditions. Few amateurs, if any, have time to act in eight plays a season even if they could get cast in them all.
5. "Stage business" refers to the minor gestures called for by the script or improvised by the players in order to give realism to a part.
6. "Blocking" or "blocking out" is the process of establishing the main positions and movements (including major gestures) of the players along with their entrances and exists.
7. Some directors, even in amateur theater, are known for their unreceptiveness to suggestions from any source. The director at Scott is not one of these.
8. Such observations are possible at Scott, because the stage is on the same level as the first row of seats. In fact, the audience is so close to the players that the use of thick makeup is precluded.
9. The opening night reception is conducted by one of the "Guild Committees," which is composed mostly of nonacting volunteers.



### 3

## *Amateur Theater in Everyday Life*

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The closing of the show had its special meaning for me, as well: by then I had acquired a background sufficient to hold an intelligent conversation with amateur actors and actresses about their avocational lives. I hoped, too, that I had demonstrated the sincerity of my interest in amateur theater and the value of my research to them, social science, and the public. What I proposed was an impartial, comparative review of the amateur life-style, a life-style they have voluntarily adopted because of its attractions. They themselves crave more information about their avocation and its way of life and many feel strongly that out-



siders should know more about it.

I proceeded to my first interviews, which were with the principals in the production I had just observed. Later, I interviewed others who have been associated with Scott at various times, but had no part in that show. Altogether, twenty-seven amateurs (thirteen men and fourteen women) were interviewed for two to three hours or more on the themes discussed in Chapter 1. The twenty-seven constituted a purposive sample drawn by the Director of Scott and me from his file of active players in the area. He knew my criteria: I needed an approximately equal assortment of young and old and experienced and (relatively) inexperienced actors and actresses. Three married couples (all are players) were included in this group.

### **TYPES OF AMATEUR THESPIANS**

Two-thirds of the interviewees are essentially pure amateurs; they have never been professionals and have no plans for pursuing that status. Three young actresses may be classified as preprofessional, since they are progressing toward more or less full-time acting as a livelihood. Seven of the amateurs interviewed have spent at least a year in the professional ranks during their acting career. They are postprofessionals today. Many of the respondents, whatever their type, indicated they would jump at the chance to perform for pay if it interfered in no serious way with other obligations. This signified movement toward professionalism, however, only for the three women.

Beyond the problem of the mesh of a professional engagement with other obligations, lies the one of membership in Actors Equity. An "Equity card" is necessary if one expects to act much with professionals. But, once one is qualified thus, acting with amateurs, except under special circumstances, is precluded. A sizeable majority of the respondents cherish the freedom of choice afforded them through their amateur status. They may try out only for plays that appeal, for roles that are attractive,

and at times that are convenient. So, while part-time acting for pay (full-time acting being scarce in the Dallas-Fort Worth area anyway) would be acceptable to some amateurs, since existing responsibilities could be met, the wish to retain one's freedom of choice militates against such involvement.

Establishing who is a devotee and who is a participant among the respondents turned out to be a complicated procedure. Since acting opportunities vary over time in a community, I decided to average the number of plays in which each performed over the two previous seasons and the number of major and supporting roles (as opposed to bit or walk-on roles) in which each had been cast. There was great similarity between the two years when considered separately. When combined the respondents played in an average of 1.25 major and supporting roles in 2.2 plays a year. Three respondents had acted in nothing in either one or both of the two seasons under scrutiny.<sup>1</sup> At the other extreme a handful of players had appeared in nine productions in that period and in as many major roles.

The role:play ratio of roughly 1:2 and the play:year ratio of 2:1 provide empirical standards with which to identify typical participants. That is, the typical actor or actress performs in one major or supporting part in one or two plays each season. This is a suitable operational definition of participant.

What, then, about the devotee? If we are to be consistent with the definition presented in Chapter 1 — namely, that he commits more time than the typical participant to rehearsing and performing — then his role:play and play:year ratios should be significantly higher than those of the participant. To establish these indices for the devotee four respondents were selected who are known in local theater circles for their exceptional acting ability, commitment, and fervor for appearing in several shows a season. Two of the four had a role:play ratio of 3:4 (the other two were even higher) and a play:year ratio of 3:1. These two ratios became the operational definition of devotee in amateur theater.

By applying these operations eight of the respondents were

found to be devotees, nineteen participants. One devotee was preprofessional, four were postprofessional. All but two were men. Nine more women would have qualified as devotees had only the role:play standard been employed. However, they acted in roughly one play a year (1.1:1). This discrepancy may reflect what is believed, by many amateurs, to be widely different acting opportunities for men and women in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. The belief is that there are more such opportunities for actors than for actresses because there are fewer men available for participation in amateur theater. Hence, men get a chance to demonstrate their devotion that is denied, by dint of the heavier competition for each part, to women.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, several actresses mentioned that family obligations that run into the night (e.g., child rearing, preparation of meals for husbands) have restricted the expression of their devotion to theater.

## **AMATEURS AND PROFESSIONALS**

In Chapter 1 seven general functional relationships between amateurs and professionals were examined. The present task is to describe these links as they exist in amateur theater.

The first — amateurs serve publics, possibly the same ones that the professionals do — needs no extended treatment. It goes without saying that theater amateurs perform before audiences, though they may be distressingly small or unreceptive at times (problems that also haunt professionals).

The second relationship is the monetary and organizational one. At Scott the director is professional, which gives every respondent at least one professional contact. Approximately three-quarters of the respondents have also performed with a professional. The same proportion, though not the same people in every instance, have friends or relatives who are professional. A third of the sample have studied with one or more professionals in acting classes in college or at workshops. Six

respondents have taken private acting lessons from a professional.

These amateurs also support professional theater. They attended an average of five performances during the season preceding their interview for this study. Three players made special trips to New York to take in that city's dramatic offerings. Yet, they supported amateur theater even more, by seeing an average of six plays during the same period.

The intellectual relationship between theater amateurs and professionals takes a variety of forms. For the amateurs' part they are most likely to be linked to their professional counterparts by reading plays or watching their televised production. The respondents frequently mentioned the desirability of reading a play before seeing it performed or simply reading new plays in order to keep up with the latest trends onstage. Moreover, it is likely that most, if not all, seasoned thespians, amateur and professional, see themselves in one or more parts of the play they are perusing, possibly along with appropriate staging. That is, reading a play for them is more than following a plot; it is a vicarious acting experience. One couple regularized their efforts to keep abreast of the dramatic literature by subscribing to a service, modeled after the Book-of-the-Month Club, that offers a play each month. Upon receiving a play they choose parts and go through it reading them aloud.

Amateurs also keep up-to-date with local amateur and local and professional theater through the reviews. Several respondents faithfully read the reviews in the *New York Times*. Five players receive theater magazines that contain plays and reviews. Some meet periodically in literature discussion groups that cover dramatic works as well.

Only five respondents read in the history of theater, whereas even fewer read on a technical aspect of it or read a scholarly analysis of a play. With a couple of exceptions those interviewed read to broaden their knowledge of certain plays and the theater scene rather than to aid their performances. Four of the twenty-seven read nothing whatsoever in theater, being too busy with a combination of acting and raising children or making a living to

study their avocation.

Scott amateurs specialize to some extent because their opportunities force them to do so. That is, comedy and modern drama (e.g., Neil Simon's works) are the two main types of plays that consistently draw adequate audiences in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Still a number of respondents indicated no strong preference for any type of theater so long as their part is challenging, the cast good, and the director competent. In other words, the experience of acting must be satisfying — otherwise why volunteer for it? A satisfying experience can as easily come in an Elizabethan, a classical, or an experimental play as in the more routine comedies and dramas. As one young actress put it:

*It depends on the part in the play. I've done it all. I've done theater of the absurd and I've done musicals and I've done classical drama. . . . I enjoy it all and that's the reason why I like to be in the Fine Arts Group. Because there I have a taste of everything. . . . We did Shakespeare, we did improvs, we did pantomime for the first grade and theater of the absurd for the high school. . . .*

Some respondents long to try their hand at one or more of these types of theater, having had few, if any, opportunities to perform in them.<sup>3</sup>

Five respondents prefer comedy to the exclusion of other types of theater. In these players we see a tendency to specialize despite their amateur standing. And the majority of respondents, even with their broad theater interests, are pushed toward specialization, owing to their perception of their own limitations. One veteran player noted: "An actor becomes mature when he recognizes there are some roles he cannot play." Many of these amateurs, for example, avoid musicals because they are unable to sing and dance. Only two of them hope someday to act in this type of theater.

## “Look at Me” and Other Flaws

The fourth and fifth functional relationships between amateurs and professionals are especially significant to these respondents. In Chapter 1 it was argued that amateurs restrain professionals from overemphasizing technique and from stressing superficialities in lieu of meaningful or profound performances and that the amateurs insist on the retention of excellence. The present study can provide no evidence that theater professionals heed or respond to the judgments of their amateur colleagues, but the second definitely have judgments they feel the first ought to consider seriously.

A list of no less than eight flaws emerged from the interviews, flaws that, in the opinion of a large majority of these amateurs, describe far too many professional performances. And most respondents mentioned attitudinal rather than technical flaws. Over half the sample cited the *look at me* orientation: the tendency among some professionals to regard themselves as stars, which leads them to present their own personality instead of the character of the part. Such “egotistic” or “non-artistic” acting engenders poor integration, connectedness or, as one respondent phrased it, “ensemble feel.” To wit, the performance fails to come off as a coordinated whole produced by a team. Rather, while most members of the cast are striving for this effect by trying to present the role in which they are cast in an artistic manner within the framework set out by the playwright, one or two “prima donnas” are using the moment to present themselves.<sup>4</sup> In comedy the look-at-me stance may take the form of “milking” a humorous line for every possible laugh. This extends the line, in effect, and may upset the timing of other parts and the balance of the play as a whole. In the words of a devoted actor of four years’ experience:

*It is still very hard for me to get over a person acting like a prima donna [laughter]. . . . It would seem that . . . they would get more out of the play and working with the rest of the people if they acted more in tune with the rest of the cast, rather than establish*

*themselves as the star in the lead or that type of thing. That is probably the biggest problem I've seen regarding professionals.*

An actor of fifteen years' experience who has worked with several professionals and who came to the point in his dramatic career where he had to decide for or against full-time theater had this to say:

*It bothers me to see a star — a name star — take a role in a show and not play that role. To feel that the audience is there particularly to see that person and does not really care about the creating of a role. To me, in a show that I am playing, there is the object to make it as believable as possible and to make it as real to the audience as possible. And the minute you start stepping out of that character to be Pearl Bailey or Danny Kaye or Milton Berle or whoever it is, I don't enjoy that any more. I'm not doing the show. If I wanted to go to see Pearl Bailey stand up by a piano and do a routine or Milton Berle... I would do that. I want to see a re-creation of what this playwright wrote. I want to see an interpretation. ... Mind you, in the case of the stars it's not their fault; it's what the masses are paying for. It is what makes most professional theater survive.*

Another major flaw identified by these amateurs, though not in the same frequency as look at me, is *uninspired performance*. Some professionals tend to get jaded as they repeat their performances. When this happens their blocking, delivery of lines, and interpretation of the character become perfunctory. Though there may have been a good deal of artistry in the acting of their part at the start of the run, their development of it has stagnated, with the resulting lack of spontaneity communicated to the house. The respondents variously described this weakness as "lazy," "superficial," and "lacking freshness." Many stressed the theatric ideal that players, professional and amateur, have an obligation to do their best before an audience, which is spending time and money to see good theater. A preprofessional actress who has already had intermittent professional engagements waxed poetic at this point in the interview:

*Along with that, which infuriates me, is the tendency to become mechanical. But it's more than that, it's not caring about your audience any more. You need to be having a love affair with your audience. No matter who you are, you owe them something and you must... [pause] the whole thing can be the greatest prayer in your life, the greatest form of prayer, and that should be your expression of love for these people. I think wanting to do well, as well as a sense of personal achievement in your art, is an expression of love for the audience. And, to me, when I act, it is my form of prayer; it is the highest form of creativity in my life. Therefore it is my prayer, my gift, my piece of God that I'm sharing. They [professionals] don't see it that way any more, I guess. . . . They see it as a job and when they see it as a job they ought to get out because you no longer have. . . the sparkle that's needed. . . . They've forgotten why they started to act in the first place or maybe they started to do it for the wrong reasons. . . . I don't know, you should remember that you. . . would do this for no money because you love it. That's incredibly naïve, I realize, and probably not at all functional in the real world if you are going to survive as an actor. . . . There'll be nights when you feel zero, but you care when you feel zero. You care that it didn't quite come across as you wanted it to. The thing they [professionals] forget is that some hick, some hayseed, from Podunk. . . has spent \$200 to fly to New York and \$25 to sit in the seat that he's got. They just have no right to be lazy and condescending.*

Look at me and uninspired performance were the main flaws cited by the respondents. Six others were mentioned, but by only two or three players. One of these is *condescension* or playing down to the audience, such as by overacting, in order to get a message across that the player believes the audience, in its naïvety, will otherwise miss. One actor saw an element of arrogance in this weakness. Furthermore, condescension usually leads to *inconsistency* in that the character is unevenly portrayed. This flaw, however, can occur independently of condescension, as in the failure to maintain a uniform linguistic accent.



A few respondents scored the run-of-the-mill professional on *inauthenticity*: where the interpretation of the character he is trying to present is somehow unbelievable. *Faulty blocking* was cited by three interviewees, upstaging being the prevailing manifestation of this flaw. A couple of the amateurs have also noticed *verbal* flaws in some professional acting, including weak voice projection and sloppy diction. Finally, *inadequate timing* is occasionally noticed as, for example, in the failure to pick up a cue at the optimum moment or allow time for the audience to react to a line before introducing another.

It might appear as if these respondents were simply expressing the human tendency once noted by Mead (1931: 205) that one tries “to realize one’s self in some sort of superiority over those about us.” Still, these respondents were quick to admit that amateurs may also be plagued by these inadequacies and that when this happens it is equally lamentable. They noted, too, that there are professionals whose excellence is based on, among other things, a conspicuous absence of flaws. It is the typical dinner-theater player who is commonly seen as guilty of these dramatic blunders, in part, because his career is held to be in decline. And three respondents see no typical flaws in professional acting.

The sixth functional relationship between professionals and amateurs — that the latter provide a stimulus for the former to do their best for the audience — is unanswerable by means of the present study. It is the professional who must be questioned about this proposition. The seventh relationship concerning the place of amateurism in a professional career was considered in the preceding section.

### **FAMILY MESH: THE PLAY’S THE THING**

The mesh of family life and amateur theater is examined from three angles: the effect of theater on family activities, the effect of family activities on theater, and the reaction of the family to

the theatric involvement of one or both of its adult members.

Turning first to the effects of theater on the family, each interviewee was asked to describe the activity conflicts with other family members that develop from assuming an acting obligation and to describe how these conflicts, if any, are solved. Roughly half the respondents, including seven of the eight devotees, experience little or no such conflict because they are single (two), divorced (three), widowed (one), have no children (five), or have spouses who are willing to baby-sit (three) while they go off to rehearse or perform. But some players are flexible, too. One actress voluntarily compromises her dramatic interests by avoiding theater involvements to be with her child during those periods of the year when her husband's hobby takes him away from home a great deal. Two other actresses take on acting engagements only after they are satisfied that their prolonged absence from home poses no threat to their children's interests.

Baby-sitting may be a problem. Although a sitter is occasionally hired on a particular evening to allow both mother and father to pursue separate activities, regular service of this sort over the long span of rehearsals and performances is beyond the financial means of most of those interviewed. Amateurs whose spouses cannot or will not shoulder this burden during a production must simply quit acting until another solution to the problem is found or their children outgrow the need for close supervision.

Other respondents do have schedule conflicts. These are usually met by putting theater first and working family and other leisure obligations around it. Sometimes this means these obligations are simply never met, met late, or met in a less-than-optimum way. One actor, for example, once faced the simultaneous requirements of being at rehearsal and picking up his wife from work. Now that his wife has taken up acting their theater schedules are now of mesh at times because they may be in different plays for different theaters and have only one car. A knack for scheduling various activities is an obvious asset,

which most amateurs have and are proud of. In itself successful scheduling is a source of satisfaction. "Oh, I'm so organized," beamed an actress with a small child and large house. "I can tell you on a Monday morning what I'm going to be doing the entire week."

During a production home duties and other leisure pursuits, except the unavoidable ones, normally get postponed. The typical actress-housewife cooks and washes dishes and clothes, but housecleaning and mending, for instance, tend to be left for the end of the run. Fortunately for them most claim having only modest standards of household cleanliness. Actors often have a similar approach to the man's work around the house; the grass grows long, the faucet leaks until after the cast party. For some amateurs cooperative nonacting husbands and wives eliminate some, perhaps all, of this accumulation. For those who lack this assistance, whatever the reasons, a certain pressure builds as the production advances. The call of various tasks and the need to associate with family help explain the generally poor attendance at strike following the termination of the show.

Amateurs acquire time for their *leisure*, an activity that minimizes necessity and duty, by taking from that broader part of daily life known as *free time* or time spent away from work (cf., Torbert 1973: 21). According to de Grazia (1964: 64-65), Neulinger (1974: 69-73), Zweig (1961: 75-76), and others, we actually have rather little leisure, and that that we do have has been dwindling, even while free time has been growing. A variety of necessary activities devour our free time — thereby reducing our leisure; for example, eating, sleeping, fixing the car, going to the dentist, cleaning clothes, moonlighting, painting the house. In other words most of the amateurs in theater, as well as those in archaeology (Chapter 6) and baseball (Chapter 9), find additional time for their avocation by postponing or ignoring altogether many of the constraints that fill other people's free time. Perhaps the minority of respondents who do manage their home duties with dispatch define them as "semileisure" (Dumazedier, 1967: 18-19) instead of drudgery, as somewhat

pleasurable though required.

Another effect of theater on home life comes from being preoccupied with the demands of acting. Of the twenty-two respondents who had a family whom their theater activity could influence, all but two indicated some degree of preoccupation during rehearsals and performances. Preoccupation is a problem because it excludes others; the preoccupied individual is lost in a world of thought in which nonacting associates are often unable to participate. Such exclusion springs from either the mental state that builds prior to a performance or audition or the need to cope with certain problems connected with acting, such as interpretation of the part, learning lines, perfecting physical movements, and coordinating work, leisure, and domestic activities. Since we consider preperformance apprehension and eager anticipation in the next chapter, it must suffice to indicate here that a majority of the respondent believe either state preoccupies them. Apprehension, however, also tends to make them irritable, a condition exacerbated by the fatigue that is felt by opening night. In the words of one postprofessional devotee:

*It [theater] never fails to envelop my own life. This has been a very substantial sore point through the years. How much should or may one permit an activity like this to encroach upon domestic life, family life, parental responsibilities? I never found the answer. . . .*

An actress of sixteen years' experience and a mother responded to the question, are you preoccupied with theater while at home with:

*Oh yes! Oh, my God, of course! If I've got a performance that night don't look at me crosswise; I'll go bananas. Just the tension of knowing you're about to get up there in front of all those people. And I've never gone blank onstage during a performance. Almost everybody else I know has at one time or another. It's one of those things — I know it's going to happen to me — and this is a sort of heightened anxiety. Anxiety level is sky high on the day of performance.*

## The Show Must Go On

Events in the family can also affect the player's avocational life. Many of those interviewed could recall times when crises or rites of passage in their families forced them into an unpleasant showdown with their theater commitments. The most common of these is the illness of children, and this affects actresses more than actors. But other events intrude, too, such as weddings and graduations. Exceptionally difficult to manage, however, are the deaths of close relatives during the production. If they occur during a rehearsal, the player simply leaves, possibly skipping the next one or two meetings. Absence even under these conditions creates considerable strain in committed amateur players, for missing rehearsals menaces the quality of the final product; namely, the performances. Unlike orchestras, where one or two of the rank-and-file may be away but not missed, theater parts are filled by one person who must be present so that the other players can respond to him as a character in the play.

But if bereavement comes during a performance, the player stays on and fulfills the obligations he has assumed. As a rule no understudy exists in amateur theater. Thus illness of a player or death of a relative are universally considered inadequate reasons for compelling the director and fellow thespians to resort to drastic substitution measures. An actor (participant amateur) who has performed in over forty plays gave the following account:

*I was in the middle of doing Light up the Sky for Fireside Theater [a pseudonym], when my mother died over in Corsicana. And I didn't miss a performance because it was my idea of what mother would have wanted me to do. . . . That is something that really gets you. When you're doing a play and you put in as many man-hours and as much energy, and as many people are relying on you being there and doing your role, you lose the right to have ordinary problems. The Man Who Came to Dinner at Scott Theater. . . . I was in that against doctor's orders. I would stay home, take all my medication, and then would get dressed, run down there and do my role, and come*

*home. So much is riding on it. If you have a sense of responsibility, you do it. The old cliché, the ancient statement about "the show must go on," is really still powerful because of that confluence of energy, discipline, and hard work and all the dependencies are all interrelated. You don't take a role unless you're willing to give it your all.<sup>5</sup>*

If the worst happens — that is, the player is unable to act — then a pinch hitter is found who goes onstage with the book and reads the missing part at the appropriate cues.<sup>6</sup>

Bereavement and family sickness, even when they fail to prevent players from performing, do clearly preoccupy them. No doubt cues have been missed and a certain quality of acting lost as a result of their minds being elsewhere. Though never offered as a reason for missing even a rehearsal, quarrels with a spouse over the consequences of theater for their domestic lives have also continued to ring in the heads of some of the respondents throughout a night of acting, be it a rehearsal or performance.

### **Family Reactions: Pro and Con**

Family reactions are best considered from two perspectives: those of the player's children and those of his spouse. The children, the respondents believe, always regard the theatric work of their father or mother (or both) favorably, even if it does remove that person from home for extended periods. Inevitably, older children somehow get involved in theater. At a minimum they attend a performance of the play in which their parent is cast. Faced with the baby-sitting dilemma and perhaps the belief that one's acting life will be lengthened if the family enjoys theater, too, some players bring their children to rehearsals as well. For the younger ones whose interest in the actual rehearsal quickly wanes, the entire theater beckons with its fascinating activities to observe (e.g., set construction, costume making), interesting rooms and passageways to explore, and rows of seats to scamper through. Other players object to this practice because of the distractions it creates. Moreover, those who engage in it occasionally find themselves concentrating

more on the whereabouts of their children than on theater.

More direct theater involvement by children comes with "cuing" their parents, which assists the latter in learning their lines. Teenagers may help with costumes, sets, lighting, or even land a bit role or walk-on in their parents' play. In a couple of instances teen-ager interest in theater has developed to the point of regular acting lessons from local professionals.

The large majority of spouses have no active interest in theater. Only half were reported to accept, generally and sincerely, the respondent's avocation. This acceptance does lead to a degree of interest in theater, which is expressed, among other ways, in watching the players' performances. Accepting spouses may also cue their acting partners from time to time, and they occasionally take a minor part in the same play or join the crew.<sup>7</sup> Since they find theater attractive, they usually enjoy the company of theater people at cast parties and other ingroup functions.

The following case approaches the ideal of family theater participation and acceptance. This successful integration of avocational and domestic interests clearly rests on the direct involvement of both parents.

*Phil and Nancy Turner have been acting in amateur and, occasionally, professional productions for roughly fifteen years. Nancy (a devotee) is the more active of the two, having appeared in between forty-five and fifty plays over her dramatic career. It is evident that they accept and encourage each other's theatric involvement, although they both agree that Nancy, who also teaches part-time, has a tendency to bite off more parts in a season than she can chew.*

*Their children have always known them as committed thespians. They learned at an early age that acting can be fun. As soon as they could read scripts, they would attempt to learn the lyrics and lines of the parts in which their mother and father were cast. These children delight in playing their roles in family skits or in acting a part at home in the play their parents are currently rehearsing. The oldest has recently become interested in the director's functions.*

*The Turner children are "stagewise," or well acquainted with theater terminology and routine. "To them," says Nancy, "the theater is home; that's where they've grown up." One child believes he has reached the age where he can participate in his parents' rehearsals. All of them have been in several theaters, for mom and dad have acted in a number of them both inside and outside Texas. Their experiences include riding a summer stock company bus.*

*What is more, they have their tastes in theater. Once they develop a fondness for a particular show, they clamor to see every rehearsal and performance. But, they can also be critical of a production. For example, they know the script well enough by opening night to spot "dropped" and improvised lines.*

The respondents whose spouses take no active interest in theater contrast with Phil and Nancy and the others with accepting partners. This set separates about equally into those whose spouses take the middle stance of tolerating (cf. Stebbins, 1971b) their husband's or wife's avocation and those whose spouses staunchly oppose it. The first described their mate's attitudes in such phrases as: "My wife, I think, would rather I didn't [act], but she knows I enjoy it"; "He realizes I'm going to continue in theater. He understood this when we got married." The player's avocation is neither encouraged nor discouraged, usually because the uninvolved partner is, at best, lukewarm about theater.

The second group, which includes at least two respondents (both devotees) whose broken marriages can be traced, in part, to their powerful theater allegiances, left no doubt about how their spouses felt. Consider the case of Terry Flynn:

*Terry Flynn has acted in nearly thirty plays during his eight-year career, including a brief stint as a professional. Several years ago he married an actress with whom he did nearly a dozen shows in the course of their first two years together. But a combination of factors caused their relationship to deteriorate to the point where it dissolved in divorce and Terry remarried.*

*Toward the end of the first year of his earlier marriage, Terry's wife gave birth to a child. The responsibilities of*



*motherhood interacted with certain problems she encountered in theater. For instance, she was rather uncompetitive. She allowed others to get cast in parts she could have landed had she given more effort at tryouts. Their move, in the second year of marriage, to the Dallas-Fort Worth area seemed to weaken what competitiveness she possessed. Now she had to contend against strangers. And competition in this part of the country is stiff for ingenue roles, the ones for which she was best suited. Added to all this was Terry's increasing devotion to acting. He was also a college student which, along with theater, kept him away from home from eight o'clock in the morning to past eleven at night most of the week. With him gone so much his wife decided to work during the day.*

*The pair quickly became estranged. She insisted he quit theater to spend more time with her. But by now he was beginning to accept professional engagements. These took him far from home. They were heady experiences for Terry and frequently kept him after-hours where he inhaled the underlife of professional theater and wound down from the excitement of the performance. At the peak of his career he could hardly think of giving it all up. At the same time he was frustrated at being unable to see more of his wife and especially their child.*

*In the end their marriage collapsed and theater won out, albeit only temporarily. Shortly thereafter an accident onstage forced Terry out of acting for close to a year. As he worked at a more conventional daytime job, his outlook on professional theater changed. Then he met his second wife. Though no actress herself, she encourages him to do theater. But he is now content with his amateur status and a moderate involvement in his art.*

Terry's case suggests several issues that may spring up between an amateur player and his spouse. One is the *exclusiveness* of acting. Its thrills, its disappointments, its technical problems, its social relationships are all difficult to share with someone else, especially if that person has had no acting experience. The nonacting partner feels left out; at best he is a distant observer of the theater scene. He may never care to join that scene, but he also dislikes being excluded from its excitement and being regarded as unsophisticated.

Another issue is the *engrossingness* of amateur theater; acting absorbs one's time and attention (see earlier discussion on pre-occupation). In some cases it sucks the willing neophyte into its vortex before either he or his spouse realize what is happening. Some of the married respondents whose attachment to theater developed long after their wedding day, indicated that their partners were alarmed and opposed to this sudden transformation in their leisure habits.

The exclusiveness and engrossingness of theater may be effectively met by encouraging one's spouse to take up acting (in major or minor parts) or join the crew backstage. This is how some of the respondents have managed to keep their avocation afloat in the rough marital seas that have arisen over the subject. But, assuming the spouse is interested, the presence of young *children* may still preclude this solution for some. Whatever the reasons they are unable to integrate their offspring into their leisure as the Turners do. In short, children are a third potential issue in the married life of the amateur player.

We have here a situation that Gross et al. (1958: 248) have classified as "inter-role conflict." The individual experiences salient tension as he realizes that others hold different expectations for him as an incumbent of two positions. The amateur's predicament, though, is typically one of positive role conflict, at least initially: he would like to be at home with his family, but he would also like to be at the theater. He must choose, but the alternatives are attractive. That is, they are attractive until his nonacting mate has had enough and begins to try to do his choosing for him. Now, the conflict becomes unpleasant, for he is faced with the ugly possibility that he may have to renounce theater to save his marriage or renounce the marriage to continue in theater.

## OCCUPATIONAL MESH: WORK IS FIRST

In this section, as in the preceding one, amateur theater can

be treated as a "dependent variable" and as an "independent variable." We turn first to the effects of the job on theater and then to the effects of theater on the job. Eighteen of the respondents were self-employed or employed in upper-level white-collar positions. Seven housewives and two students who also worked part-time completed the sample.

The respondents made it clear that work comes first in any competition between it and their avocation. In no instance did anyone admit failing to carry out their occupational responsibilities because of theater commitments. Nonetheless, the two sets of obligations are demanding. Sometimes the only way to meet both is to subtract the needed time from one's normal sleeping hours, as does one self-employed actor who may return to his office *after* the evening's rehearsal or performance. Half of the twenty respondents who currently hold a full-time job said their employment, which is strictly nine to five, five days a week, poses no problems for their leisure. The other half indicated that past or present work has prevented them from trying out for or accepting at least one role they wanted.

Some respondents find it possible to devote the time they do to theater only because certain flexibilities exist in their occupation. Since they punch no clocks, travel around the community (and are therefore away from the office), can reschedule overtime, can arrange for substitutes, and the like they find it possible to finagle the necessary time to pursue their art. Whether or not a particular amateur actually does this, some employers suspect this type of employee of trying. Hence these employers are alert to schedule irregularities and inadequate job performances of the amateurs and are ready to blame theater if any are found. Bosses with this attitude are uniformly seen as scorning theater by those respondents who currently work or formerly worked under them.

By contrast other employers are friends of theater. They enjoy it. They encourage those employees who show an interest to engage in it and help arrange work schedules to accommodate acting needs. These bosses occasionally attend the amateur's

performances. Indeed, two respondents said they got their present jobs because their employers were in the house during one of their performances and noticed attractive occupational skills in their acting. In this connection six respondents believe their dramatic talents are an asset to their job. Such work as insurance adjusting and selling demand a controlled presentation of self and a clear and pleasant delivery of ideas, which experience on the stage develops. And, even in a large urban area, acting increases one's community visibility which may, in turn, facilitate the conduct of certain occupations.

Some players are too attached to theater to forego it simply because occupational requirements may potentially clash with a rehearsal or performance. A few of the respondents who performed while doing military service recalled being ordered to certain duties on the night of a performance, which gave them no choice but to leave their fellow players in a lurch. A couple of respondents also mentioned being forced to quit a show, owing to unexpected occupational demands.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, job expectations may be vague beyond normal working hours. Karen Pedersen's work illustrates this:

*At times, Karen Pedersen's position as a counselor has prevented her from trying out for roles she would like to play at Scott. At other times, when no vocational-avocational conflicts appeared on the horizon, she would audition and get cast in a part. Yet, the requirements of her job are such that she is never entirely free of it. That is, she is on call at any time for clients who are suffering a personal crisis. But, for Karen, these occasional and unpredictable after-hours demands obligate her less than those that occur during the customary workday. At least theater takes precedence over them. How does one explain this hierarchy to a client? "I hate to say to a person who is having a personal crisis and feels real terrible, 'I can't deal with you right now because I've got to go to the theater.' That's a little hard to do. 'You just have to have your personal crisis in the morning.'"* And, when Karen exercises her priority of theater over extramural work claims, she feels guilty. But there seems to be no solution to this dilemma. She has tried to call on another

*counselor, but finds it nearly as difficult to convince her colleague of the seriousness of her theater obligations as she does her anguished client.*

In attempting to integrate work and family life with their leisure, theater amateurs develop a sharp awareness of the value of *time*. It is obviously a scarce resource to be efficiently utilized. As mentioned earlier, in connection with the family mesh, these people are proud of their ability to organize the many activities in their daily lives. They tend to wring maximum benefit for themselves from every moment of their waking hours (which they extend). This is done, for instance, by memorizing lines or reflecting on a technical problem while en route to work and during breaks and lunchtimes once there. Some players record the reading of the play at the first rehearsal in order to study the parts of the other players while ironing, washing dishes, driving somewhere, and so on. The practice of cuing by other family members helps meet two obligations simultaneously by improving one's grasp of one's part and by spending time, perhaps in a somewhat superficial manner, with spouse or children.

This brings up the question of whether these people are members of Linder's (1970) "harried leisure class" or participants in Godbey's (1975) "antileisure." It is clear that they are often rushed, though the actual pursuit of their leisure seems not to be scamped, as Parker (1976: 35) has charged some amateurs and hobbyists with doing. The following paragraphs suggest, however, that the respondents are more accurately viewed as participants in *animating* leisure. They convey little sense of being harassed by disturbing problems or anxieties. And in the next chapter we shall see that they have discovered a number of enduring personal and social rewards in theater, including self-actualization.

One subtle effect of work on theater is fatigue, for amateurs here frequently burn the candle at both ends. Curiously, less than a quarter of the working respondents, none of whom are devotees, said their efforts on the job wearied them for acting. Many players, though tired when they reach home in the late

afternoon, are rejuvenated once they arrive at the theater for a rehearsal or, more significantly, a performance. This is but another example of the influence of high interest and motivation on fatigue, which is partly a state of mind (Morgan, 1961: 581-82; Mednick, 1964: 82-83). In other words, amateur theater is a leisure activity that genuinely re-creates its practitioners. A fifty-one-year-old actor observed, "there's a charge of energy that comes when you get to the theater and start to work. You override fatigue." Another, twelve years younger, pointed out: "I can get home at night from work and just dread going to rehearsal, and go and rehearse for three hours and get home less tired than I was from work. . . ." Housework for actresses and the analogous duties for actors (who own homes) may also tire them but, again, their effects often fade against the strong appeal of theater.

So the mounting fatigue goes unnoticed. The stimulation of theater masks its effects until the show closes. It is after the cast party that exhaustion overtakes a player, which undoubtedly contributes to his distaste for strike.

Many players are proud of their stamina, even though a slight majority of those who work admitted that theater does occasionally leave them fatigued for their jobs. To get through the six to eight weeks of rehearsals, performances, cast party, and strike without physical collapse is an achievement in itself and one that distinguishes these amateurs from most of their friends, relatives, and work associates. Understandably, many respondents lose weight during this period, owing chiefly to the necessity to rush from the dinner table.

That some are fatigued at work but not at the theater merely hints that their leisure may be more appealing, more challenging, than their occupation. Though, it should be noted that fatigue following a rehearsal or performance may be traced to after-hours partying or an exceptionally long rehearsal. Still, all but one player believes that, occasional fatigue notwithstanding, the quality of their effort at work remains the same.

Another side to the consequences of theater for work is preoccupation with the former while engaging in the latter. Thirteen of the twenty employed respondents indicated that acting interests creep into their workday.<sup>9</sup> Preoccupation at work is fundamentally the same as at home; the player learns lines, frets over audition results, ponders his interpretation of a role, and the like. For example, the preprofessional actress mentioned earlier indicated that she resents customers coming to the store where she works because they interrupt her memorization of lines. Still, she does find that some of them have fascinating linguistic accents, about which she then questions them to learn where they are from and to hear them talk. This is done in the interest of improving her ability to handle accents onstage. Another actress and college theater student related how she spent an entire afternoon at work reflecting on her good fortune of being cast in a coveted part, the news of her successful audition having reached her at noon that day.

But it is not only preprofessional amateurs who work at temporary jobs who are preoccupied. A pure amateur in his early thirties who enjoys his insurance career noted:

*Yes, I find that I do that [get preoccupied] very often. In fact, it might be just because there's a lull in my work activity. And I might have got to a point where I'm doing something that maybe I can't get or it is getting dull for me. And so I start thinking of a show that I'm doing or maybe I'll pick up a script that I happen to have with me and start learning my lines. . . .*

Karen Pedersen, the counselor discussed earlier in this section, responded to the question about preoccupation with theater while at work:

*Oh Lord! Yeh! I'm real terrible about that. It seems that, when I get into a play more than any other thing, it carries over into practically everything. Even personal problems I can usually put out of my mind — a play, no way. At the most inopportune moments I'm caught thinking about the play when I really shouldn't.*

It should not be overlooked, however, that for a substantial minority of the employed interviewees, work is too “exhilarating,” in the words of one player, to allow thoughts of acting to penetrate their attention. Additionally, some jobs, while intellectually dull, demand full concentration and so obviate preoccupation of any sort.

With the temptation always in the wings to take on more theater, coupled with the routine demands of work or homemaking, the question arises as to whether a player ever commits himself to do so much acting that he does a poorer job at it than normally. With one exception the answer from the respondents was no. The exception, an actress, suggests a condition under which this might happen. Though an experienced postprofessional, she found her performances deteriorating when she was a principal in two plays that ran back to back. By contrast, two bit parts in consecutive shows produced no noticeable strain for another respondent.

This, then, is our portrait of theater in the amateur player’s everyday life. In the next chapter we narrow our focus to his perspective on himself as a thespian and on his theatric lifestyle.

## Notes

1. These three, all actresses, regard themselves as amateurs who are temporarily committed to other activities that keep them from the stage. One remains in contact with theater by assisting with costumes and props, which takes less time than rehearsing and performing. Another achieves the same end by holding a position on Scott’s Board of Directors and participating in certain Guild activities.
2. Several respondents, usually actresses, pointed out this differential availability of acting opportunities.
3. Scott is trying to break the grip of modern drama and comedy on its community theater scene by producing less commercial plays during the summer. While the amateurs are widely enthusiastic about this experiment, it is too early to discern the public’s reaction.
4. A number of respondents noted that audiences often wish only to see the star qua star rather than his ability to present a character. Acquiescence to audience preferences, however, fails, to impress these amateurs.



5. Seasoned players and directors, amateur and professional, know local physicians who are willing to prescribe the palliatives and other treatment needed to get an ailing performer through his night onstage.
6. This occurs unless, by some miracle, a substitute is found who has played the missing part so recently that he can recall the lines with sufficient accuracy to present them without the script in hand. And he must be a local amateur, for there is rarely enough money to hire a local professional or send to another community for someone.
7. By accepting minor parts family members perform a vital service for amateur theater. Amateurs, be they participants or devotees, want substantial involvement. They will take walk-ons and bit parts because they realize community theater can survive only if someone does these as well. Still, they are delighted to have such roles played by others. The husband of an actress, for example, can justify coming to a large number of rehearsals to work on a small part because he is with his wife. The actress who thrives on major roles gets comparatively little from minor ones besides being away from her spouse.
8. The outrageous act of quitting a show is treated in the next chapter.
9. Somewhat fewer respondents are preoccupied with theater when at work than when at home.

## 4

# *The Amateur Perspective in Theater*

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The amateur's perspective is treated here in two parts: those attitudes, considered in Chapter 1, that differentiate him from his professional colleagues — his view of himself — and the sweet and bitter sides of doing amateur theater — his view of the core of his leisure life-style. We turn first to the perspective on self.

### **PERSPECTIVE ON SELF**

On the five attitudes that define the amateur — self-concept, preparedness, confidence, perseverance, continuance

commitment — social-psychological theory suggests that his definition of himself is most important to him. Each respondent was asked the following: do you consider yourself professional or amateur in theater? Twenty-three of the twenty-seven replied they are amateur, two others claimed a semi-professional identity (because they are mixing paid and unpaid engagements), and the remaining two defined themselves as professional (actually postprofessional). As noted in Chapter 1, common-sense usage of the idea of amateur contains some unfavorable connotations, a theme that three-quarters of the self-identified amateurs immediately addressed.

This subgroup see themselves as amateur only in the superficial sense of acting without pay. With respect to their attitudes toward theater, their standards of performance, and their seriousness about their art, they left no doubt that in their view, they are as professional as the professionals (an orientation shared with the four who claim semiprofessional and professional status). Their comments at this point in the interview expressed the conviction with which this viewpoint is held:

*I'm a highly-qualified, competent nonprofessional.*

*I feel that I'm qualified to be a pro... but I am an amateur, because I don't get paid. ... I have professional qualities. ...*

*I don't think I've ever been in a nonprofessional performance, but I've not been paid. ...*

*I'm an amateur. But I define amateur as loving to do what you do; a sense of calling. It doesn't imply that your skills are inferior. ... People in theater are really serious about what they do; they don't want to get onstage with someone who is going to mess up.*

*I consider the quality of performance I turn in professional. ... I take it very seriously — it's important to me.*

I consider myself an amateur professional. I have high standards. What I do I like to do and I do it as well as though I were a pro.

By my approach I'm a professional; by my situation I'm an amateur.

I consider myself amateur, but the quality of my amateurism is professional. . . .

I'm a pro in every sense of the word, but I'm not paid. . . .

Some respondents (always participant amateurs) hesitate to class themselves with professionals under all conditions. But many of these strongly believe that, in the shows they have played, they have done as well as the typical professional. One actor put it this way:

*I feel that every single performance that I give — every time I take on a role — I work the hardest I can to achieve the character I am portraying. Consequently, when I get on that stage to give a performance, there isn't a professional alive that can do a better job than I can.*

Another player who has acted in over fifty plays replied: "as far as my parts are concerned — the parts I have played — I feel that I have played them as well as a professional would."

### **Preparedness and Confidence: Concentrate!**

These two attitudes are considered together since, in theater, being prepared engenders confidence. The present study was never designed to demonstrate if theater amateurs are any less prepared than their professional colleagues. On the one hand, the former have a number of domestic and occupational responsibilities that compete for the time they would use to work up a part. On the other hand, they have more rehearsals in which to prepare than professionals do.

Whether professional or amateur, adequate preparation in

theater is rooted in *seriousness* and *concentration*. Seriousness is manifested in numerous ways among amateurs: punctuality at rehearsals, speed with which lines are memorized, attention to the director's advice, continuous interpretive development of one's part, perfection in blocking and stage business, avoidance of idle talk during rehearsals, and the like. Concentration is a mental skill; an ability to shut out all extraneous thoughts and attend only to one's acting: interpretation, delivery of lines, and associated movements. No matter how serious one has been throughout rehearsals, a lapse in concentration during a performance often means trouble. "When you let your concentration slip, you're in trouble," observed one actress. "It [acting] is a very new experience." Another commented: "That's the whole thing in a nutshell — *concentration* — total, complete concentration."

Strictly speaking only the seriousness component of preparation leads directly to confidence. For, except under special circumstances, it is logically impossible for concentration to foster confidence. After all, confidence is a *conscious* belief that one can do it, a belief one is unable to have if one is concentrating on nothing else than the process of acting. But a dropped line because of inadequate concentration could rattle the player so that he is now unable to concentrate on subsequent lines. In other words, lack of concentration may drain confidence, even though the presence of concentration fails to build it.

By opening night the respondents said that, in general, they are confident in their ability to present their part. In their words, they are "secure in their lines." Many indicated, however, that there are inevitably a couple of lines in any play that give them trouble; lines on which they are insecure. This situation is apt to arise from, among other ways, awkward wording by the playwright (which may be changed) or from awkward placement of the line in the script. The following incident occurred in the rehearsals I observed, and illustrates the difficulty awkward wording can cause:

*The male lead was having trouble with the line: "walks in wearing a suit of fine tailored clothes. . . ." Twice one night he tried to say it correctly, but the man in question came out first "wearing a fine suit of tailored clothes" and, after another attempt, "wearing a tailored suit of fine clothes." Finally, with a gesture of exasperation, the lead announced: "I'm cutting that line — he simply walks in with a fat cigar."*

It is possible that the confidence of amateurs differs most from that of professionals just prior to their first entry for a performance. Many of those interviewed, though generally confident, acknowledged feeling rather less so in this situation.<sup>1</sup> They also said they would probably be much less confident if they had to prepare their part in two weeks, as professionals do. It should be added here that the level of confidence among amateurs appears to be consistent from play to play. This is due, in part, to their tendency to restrict themselves, and to be restricted by what is commercially successful, to certain types of theater. The skills they need have been more or less perfected. Were the interviewees ever cast in a musical, many of them would become apprehensive over the requirement that they would have to sing and, possibly, dance; skills they currently lack.

### **Perseverance and Commitment: That Hunger**

The remark of a devotee sums up the orientation toward acting of two-thirds of the sample: "No, I never felt I was acting enough. . . . You've got that thirst, that hunger that you've got to be doing it all the time." And most of the remaining nine respondents said their appetite for theater is satiated only occasionally. This usually occurs just after a show closes or when there is a major strain between work or homelife and acting.

The amateur's perseverance, however, appears to be different from the professional's. For the latter must persist at theater in the face of roles that are unappealing, unchallenging, boring, or extremely difficult to perfect. The amateur, this research suggests, can more easily avoid these dispiriting circumstances by auditioning only for those roles that attract him, at times that

more or less harmonize with home and work routines, when his craving for theater returns after his last play (be it two weeks, two months, or a year). "Yes, any time I'm out more than a couple of months," said a middle-aged male, "I get restive and want to get back in [to theater]."

Some of the sample had, at one time, gone for long periods without a stage appearance, owing to military duty, child-rearing obligations, pressures of work, or family resistance. A husband and wife recently returned to theater after an absence of seventeen and twenty years, respectively. These amateurs were all participants; the devotees, with one exception, have a remarkably consistent record of involvement.

Those who signified that there are few, if any, times when they thirst for an acting engagement evince the optimum adjustment between their avocation and the rest of their life. Ample opportunity exists for them to satisfy their stage desires, while the appeal of theater is moderate enough to keep it from colliding with other spheres of activity. These players, however, are participants rather than devotees. The latter have learned to live with a *gnawing* hunger for theater.

Generally, the amateur, since he enjoys what he does, has to persevere at theater only when opposition to it is encountered at home or work. The professional who probably meets comparatively little of this sort of resistance must persevere through the unappealing aspects of his work because of a continuance commitment to his occupation. For the professional, theater is his livelihood; for the amateur, it is his leisure.

Hence, amateurs exercise a choice in theater in a way that few professionals can ever do. Somewhat better than half the sample have never accepted a part they knew in advance to be repugnant. All the respondents carefully assess each acting opportunity that comes along. If they think they can schedule a production at that time, they then establish who the director will be (and thus whether they can work with him), who the members of the cast are likely to be (and whether they can work with them), what part they can reasonably expect to land given their

qualifications and the competitors for it, how attractive the play is as a whole, and what technical work will be required of them (e.g., how much backstage assistance they must give).

Even if, after this assessment, they would prefer to steer clear of certain plays, a sizeable minority of players said they have, at times, accepted parts in them. It is here only, where special conditions exist, that the amateur experiences continuance commitment and, perhaps, the need to persevere. Having said he will take a part, there is a great deal of pressure to stick with it through the final night. The special conditions that generate this commitment are legion: once in a while a player will do a part as a favor to a friend (also likely to be the director of the play); to repay a director for casting him in a "plum" role in a past production; to curry favor with a director; to break into a clique of amateurs; to support community theater; and even to avoid the implication, potentially communicated by refusing the part, that one is too good for it.

Quitting a play at any point in its production is anathema in the theater world, amateur or professional. In fact, it is done, as already acknowledged, but the circumstances must be extreme. Quitting simply because one dislikes the show is unpardonable. Examples are known among Dallas-Fort Worth amateurs of individuals who backed out of a play without exceptional cause. The sanction was usually ostracism from community theater, for those persons were labeled as unreliable in an activity where finding last-minute replacements is next to impossible and the costs to others great. Indeed, it is the horror of being thought a quitter and ostracized from local theatre that keeps some participant amateurs from assuaging their stage fright on opening night by bolting the theater. After all, they conclude, this is leisure, why should I go through this torture? But, for the reason just given and others treated in the subsequent section on tensions, they stay.



## **PERSPECTIVE ON LEISURE LIFE-STYLE**

This section covers the rewards and thrills in amateur theater, on the one hand, and the disappointments, dislikes, and tensions in it, on the other. For the amateur player, even his leisure is no unalloyed pleasure. In fact, it appears that its tensions and disappointments help make it worthwhile, if for no other reason than that the rewards and thrills he gets there gain in significance through the contrast.

### **Rewards: The Lures of Acting**

The rewards of amateur acting fall into two classes: those that primarily benefit the player's personality and those that primarily benefit his social life. Analysis of the respondents' comments disclosed that acting enhances their personality through self-expression, self-actualization, self-conception, self-enrichment, and recreation.

It is possible that any interviewee would have selected these and others had he been requested to identify, from a larger list of possible rewards of theater, those that apply to him. This was one approach to the problem of discovering the rewards of amateur acting that was open to me. But it carried the risk that a reward important to amateurs might be omitted from the list, because I was unaware of it. So each player was asked to indicate those rewards that came to mind. This technique had the added advantage of eliciting only those that are salient.

Self-expression was the most frequently mentioned reward (sixteen respondents). One of amateur theater's most prominent benefits is the satisfaction gained from expressing one's abilities. The element of confidence was sometimes cited here; it is fulfilling to be able to express one's abilities with ease and with the conviction that that expression will come off as planned. One attraction of theater, quipped a middle-aged actress, is that "you can get applause for pitching a fit."

Eight respondents cited self-actualization as a major reward of acting. That is, theater offers them an opportunity to develop

their talents (in contrast to offering an opportunity to express talents already developed), to fulfill part of their potential as human beings. Many of those who mentioned this reward experience personal fulfillment in meeting the challenges inherent in the roles they play.

Orrin Klapp (1969: 185) and Ralph Glasser (1973: 60), among others, have observed that leisure pursuits often establish and sustain important social identities. Seven players seemed to value their status as actor or actress for this reason. Several have substantial local reputations, which include recognition by strangers in public and, in the case of two actors, invitations to teach theater, in a short series of seminars, at a local university. Being a good player brings respect, which is sometimes enhanced, even at the amateur level, by receipt of an award for outstanding acting in a particular show. A thirty-year-old actor of some five years' experience expressed it this way:

*Well, I'll tell you what, I get the same feeling for going onstage as I guess I got playing baseball in college. I get the same feeling going to the theater as if I was going to the ball park. It's an ego trip. . . . [It's] recognition, an inner feeling. It just really gives me a lift. . . . There are so few things really in life that you are really good at. I played baseball, but I was never outstanding. . . . As a matter of fact I had a tryout with the St. Louis Cardinals. I got cut in the first round, after a few days. You get the feeling of mediocrity; you're not quite good enough to make the big time. . . . It's a feeling of doing something that not everyone else can do. I don't have any friends who are involved in theater. I guess it gives a feeling of individuality that I can do something that not everyone else can do. It's a thrill. . . . Being successful in business is no great accomplishment. . . . Some people can really get their satisfaction in business. To me, it's nice. . . . But it's like baseball. It's sort of a come down though, when you get out. That's what, maybe that's what took me into theater. You feel like you want something more than — some recognition — a feeling of individuality. I've been out in the world working. I sort of feel like a vegetable after awhile. You're there, another face in the crowd. In theater, it's something extra. . . .*

Four players dwelt on the self-enriching qualities of acting. Each new role is a novel experience that leaves its mark for the life of the player. An actor who has been on the stage over fifty years explained: "I have internalized many different experiences vicariously through the roles I have played. Because I have acted I'm more of a person." Theater also opens its practitioners to extraordinary experiences, such as crying for men or living in another age. Finally, each part brings the player into contact with different personalities as these are filtered through the roles opposite his own.

Nine respondents pointed out the re-creation benefits of acting. It is a "change of pace," by means of which the individual is refreshed or renewed for his occupational and domestic endeavors.

*Social Benefits: Theater as Interaction.* The social side of the amateur player's life is intensified in three ways in theater: through successful communication to others, through a sense of accomplishment, and through sociable interaction.

The pleasure of successful communication to others was mentioned in some form by sixteen respondents. It refers to the process in which a performer delivers, through the role he is playing, a message of some sort to the audience who, having received it, responds in a way intended (it is hoped) by the player and the playwright. This response may be laughter, stark silence, weeping, or almost anything. It depends on the nature of the message. The reward for the player is this proof that he has made his point. Recognition of such proof is one of the great thrills in theater. In the words of an actress: "It's that sensation I don't get any other place. That excitement I do not feel doing other things. Once you've experienced it, it's like sex...the hairs on the back of your neck really do tingle."

Seven players perceived as rewarding the sense of accomplishment engendered in staging a successful production. Unlike some other arts theater is inherently social, one aspect of which is working with others toward a collective goal. Players in a

show are concerned not only with the personal benefits of it as set out in the preceding section, but also with the coordination of parts; the skill with which they are enacted; the appropriateness and attractiveness of the scenery, lighting, and costumes; the public's reaction to the show; and so on. A good show is the product of many hands; it is a pleasure being a member of the team that produces it.

*Sociable Interaction.* The theatre-related social life of the amateur player takes place at one or both of two locations: the theater and outside it. Nineteen respondents (including all but one of the devotees) said they participate socially in both places, though this is rarely the most rewarding aspect of their avocation. The other eight limit themselves largely to in-theater associations, straying from this level of informal involvement only to attend cast parties.

In-theater exchanges with other members of the cast, especially those one is playing opposite, are unavoidable to some extent. Through discussion of common problems in blocking and coordination of lines, a working relationship evolves. Several respondents suggested the necessity of becoming well enough acquainted with their coplayers to feel comfortable giving them advice and receiving advice from them. In theater, as elsewhere, some people are more open than others to suggested improvements by peers. Counseling the unreceptive might spawn brittle relations and a strain on the production. Sociable interaction in the rehearsal room and greenroom helps performers acquire a personal knowledge of each other and is rewarding for this reason alone.<sup>2</sup>

In fact, cast members, if their parts throw them into extensive contact with each other, appear to become, if not friends, then lasting acquaintances. Merely discussing the several problems they have in common in producing their play is probably sufficient to encourage this level and duration of relationship. These individuals have had a significant shared experience that invites reminiscences in their future encounters.

Moreover, rehearsal room and, especially, greenroom conver-

sation extends to nontechnical matters. Past thrills and disappointments in theater or such topics as hobbies, work, domestic happenings, current events, theater gossip, and professional shows are ordinarily discussed. It is from this sort of interchange that fellow cast members come to be known as personalities and not merely characters in a play. And, as this knowledge deepens, assuming a compatibility among the interactants, they are inclined to expand their associations beyond the theater walls.

But the growth of an interpersonal relationship has its own dynamic (e.g., McCall and Simmons, 1966: 166-201; Stebbins, 1969; Altman and Taylor, 1973). An interacting pair destined to become close friends gain more detailed and intimate knowledge of one another as the friendship evolves. Though occupational and familial demands may limit, and in some instances preclude it (see Chapter 3), after-hours socializing appears to be a common first step in extending sociable interaction outside the theater and in developing a deeper, less-segmented, bond with another player.<sup>3</sup> The typical after-hours activities are eating or drinking or both at a restaurant or bar near the theater following the end of a rehearsal or performance. Opening night receptions at Scott and cast parties are special after-hours gatherings that can serve the same purpose. But, establishing a friendship, as opposed to an acquaintanceship founded strictly on consideration of technical problems, requires more consistent extra-theater association than either of these two affairs allow. Within the span of twenty-five rehearsals and eight performances, ample opportunity exists for after-hours socializing for those who care to engage in it.<sup>4</sup>

A further step is taken toward building a theater friendship when one player invites another to his home for a private party. This is a practice among roughly half the respondents (fifteen) who said that at least 25 percent of their moderate to close friends are connected with acting. Of the remaining twelve, four had no theater friends (one had recently moved to the area) and the rest had only two or three. Eight respondents said that from

75 percent to 100 percent of their friends are actors or actresses.

That only fifteen respondents identified at least 25 percent of their moderate to close friends as connected with acting casts doubt on one of Burch's (1969: 142) suppositions. He concluded, after studying the social circles of campers, that close friends encourage a person to continue in a given style of leisure. Leaving that activity means leaving those friends. Yet, many of the interviewees with less than 25 percent of their friends in theater have acted for years and show no signs of quitting the stage. Obviously, there are other qualities, such as the rewards just mentioned, that draw these amateurs to their avocation.

Older players, many of whom established long ago a stable network of theater friends, are less inclined to participate in postrehearsal and postperformance gatherings than younger ones, especially those without marital ties. And smaller, less-developed theaters in the Dallas-Fort Worth area are held to be "friendlier" in this regard than Scott, possibly because their players come into extensive contact through the requirements of backstage work, costuming, publicity, and other nonacting chores. Nevertheless, a vast majority of the respondents, whether or not they confine their socializing with other players to the theater building, see theater people as desirable associates. Theater people were frequently described as "spontaneous," "interesting," and "tolerant." Only in this sphere of life can most of the sample find such stimulating company.

### **Thrills: The Essential Audience**

The rewards of a pursuit are those more or less routine values that attract and hold an amateur to it. The thrills of that pursuit are the sharply exciting events or occasions that stand out in his memory. Together these thrills constitute a potent stimulus to continue in it in hope of encountering them again.

The theater amateurs were never systematically questioned about the thrills of their avocation. That thrills, as just defined, exist for amateur players only became apparent to me toward the close of their interviews, which was too late for much to be

done in the field of theater. The thrills of amateur archaeology and baseball were covered consistently in those interviews and are presented subsequently.

Still, going back through my field notes and interviews with the theater amateurs, I found I could identify at least three types of thrills in acting: the thrill of getting cast in a coveted part, the thrill of the ideal audience reaction, and the thrill of receiving an award for acting excellence. Getting cast in a role is thrilling only if it is one on which the player has set his heart. This goal may emerge from reading the play with the knowledge that Scott or some other community theater is holding tryouts for it and, in the process, becoming strongly attracted to a particular role within it. Or it may be a longstanding desire to play, for example, Amanda Wingfield in Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* or Willy Loman in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, a desire accumulated from having read the play years ago, having seen it performed, or even having once performed the part in question, but wishing now for a chance to reinterpret it.

Audience reactions become thrilling when the player realizes he has communicated especially well through his acting a subtle, poignant, or otherwise significant message. The conditions that make this possible rarely obtain simultaneously, so that such a level of communication is itself rare and hence exceptionally stimulating. Players referred to this thrill in such terms as "being high," "sailing," and "indescribable." Such "peak experiences" (Maslow, 1959), or "flow experiences" as Csikszentmihalyi (1975: ch. 4) prefers to call them, are major sources of motivation. They are the Circes of acting, they lure the player into yet another production, sometimes against his better judgment.

The thrill of the award is self-evident. Scott gives an annual award for best actor and best actress, an honor that is valued highly by the amateurs I met. Some of the interviewees have collected two or three of these, which are prominently displayed in their homes. Other theaters in the Dallas-Fort Worth area

engage in the same practice. For the Scott awards modest newspaper coverage accompanies their announcement, thereby intensifying the thrill for the recipient.

### **Disappointments: Absence of Rewards**

The leading disappointments in amateur acting are the conspicuous absences of certain expected rewards. Many respondents, for example, have been disappointed over their inability to perfect a major part to their standards. Lack of time is occasionally blamed for this deficiency. As probable a cause is the player's distaste for the part or perhaps the entire play.<sup>5</sup> One actor recounted his disappointing experience with a show:

*There was one play that I never could get into. I was playing a middle-aged Irishman — I never got into that. It was a small part. The play itself was not that good, I think. The guy who had the lead, the day before opening night, his back went out. . . . The guy who was directing the play, he took the lead and. . . he had to play from the book the first couple of nights. It was a strange play. The guy, there were two leads actually, one carried his conscience or alter ego, or whatever you want to call it, around the stage at the same time. And I think most of the people in the audience never knew what the hell was going on. These two guys were jostling with each other. . . . It's a horrible play. . . . I never could get the character, I felt that all the way through.*

A somewhat less prominent disappointment in amateur theater is the failure to land a desired part after auditioning for it. "I can't remember where it was," sighed a middle-aged actress about one of her unsuccessful auditions, "but all that week I was low, low, low, low, ego deflated and all that sort of thing." Infrequently mentioned disappointments included: being prevented from trying out for an attractive role because of family or work pressures, failing to get a favorable review of a performance the player defined as well done, and failing to receive an award for superior acting.

Disappointments shade into disillusionments and discouragement.



ments, which approximately half the sample have encountered at one point or another in their careers. The low quality of some community theater has disillusioned a few of them. So has the hard work required in acting, which becomes apparent only after one leaves the audience to become part of the cast. For those players who occasionally act with theaters less fortunate than Scott (e.g., no permanent theater building, few permanent staff, little money), the extensive nonacting duties and occasional small houses can be disheartening. "I think maybe I ought to get out of theater," lamented one actress. "They [the audience] don't appreciate what I'm doing." Another told how a director (not Scott's) had promised her a principal role well before rehearsals were to commence. But just before the reading he changed his mind and gave the part to a relative of one of his theater patrons. The theater, he rationalized, could never afford to lose this benefactor, which might have happened had he not caved in on this issue. The actress responded to this turn of events by renouncing theater for at least a season.

Disillusionments and discouragements of this sort hit amateurs and neophyte professionals hard. Some of the latter adjust by retreating to the amateur level where, though present, such experiences are less common. The present study was not designed to discover how many disillusioned or discouraged amateurs leave theater never to return. Undoubtedly there are those who do.

### **The Dislikes: A Little List**

All but two of the sample, like Koko in Sir William Gilbert's, *The Mikado*, have "got a little list of society offenders. . . who never would be missed" in theater. Most likely to head this list are the *unserious players*; those whose conduct while at the theater suggests a lack of devotion to the art, an unprofessional orientation toward it, or both. Unserious players commit a variety of bothersome theatric sins. Some are poor performers; that is, they "mug" or overact, "clown" at inappropriate

times, fail to project their voices onstage, use inconsistent accents, and so on. Some are uncommitted, which is evidenced in being late to or even skipping rehearsals, drinking before them, learning lines only at the last moment, talking while the director is talking, and other offences.<sup>6</sup>

The second most disliked type on the list are the *incompetent directors*. The director at Scott was seldom mentioned here, that theater being too polished to have such leadership. Rather the respondents tend to find their incompetent directors elsewhere. Such people are inefficient; they waste players' time by failing to start rehearsals on schedule and failing to move them along at a brisk pace, and by not having costumes, props, and scenery completed or available before the last two rehearsals. Incompetent directors are occasionally censured for their tendency to overdirect or to miscast those who audition. Such directors may also permit extensive greenroom chatter or backstage clamor and hilarity, all of which, when out of control, obstruct the concentration of serious performers and possibly even distract the audience.

The *cognoscenti* are those disdained individuals who believe they are more informed about theater than the director and therefore exempt from his advice. Cognoscenti are seen as refusing to cooperate for the good of the production. Instead, they ride off in their own direction, usually forcing the rest of the cast and the director to follow them.

Several additional types populate the list of those who would not be missed. Mentioned only by one to three respondents, they are inventoried here because future research with a larger sample of amateurs may discover them to be held in significant degree. Briefly, there are the *pseudosophisticates*; some amateurs try to impress others with their knowledge of or experience in theater by dropping names of prominent local directors, players, theaters, and plays with whom or with which they claim to have been associated. The *gossips* are disliked because they traffic in the superficial of the theater world. There are also the *enviers* who are envious of other players' achievements and

public acclaim, and the *lovers* or actors who, in romantic scenes, get noticeably more intimate than required by the script or the director. The *oversentimental* dramatize the ordinary events of theatre life beyond the limits of good taste. The *children* are the offspring of cast members who race through the theater, shouting and laughing, and irritating thus the players who find these antics distracting.

Certain situations also turn out to be on at least some lists. One of these is the opening-night reception at Scott (see Chapter 2). Only four of the twenty-seven respondents are unqualifiedly in favor of this events. Two others enjoy it when they are principals in a show. The remainder, however, find it objectionable under all or most conditions. They grudgingly participate because they believe it furthers the cause of community theater. But they frequently find that the comments made to them are superficial (since they rarely meet a theater sophisticate here), find it difficult to accept compliments under these circumstances, and have to grope for appropriate items of conversation. The respondents conveyed their feelings about the reception in the following excerpts:

*I like them to a degree. . . . But there is a certain superficiality to receptions. I don't want to meet them [the audience] so much as you owe them the right to talk to you. . . . the audience loves it.*

*No! I hate it. And I know there are people who come to the theater on opening night especially for that. But, I don't know what to say. . . .*

*I'd rather be pecked to death by a duck. . . .*

*No, I don't particularly enjoy those, because I don't like to appear in my costume if I don't have to. . . .*

*I'd generally just as soon go home. . . .*

The respondents generally welcome the chance to discuss their performance with friends and informed strangers. If this

occurs at the reception, that is fine. More often, however, it occurs backstage in the greenroom or their dressing room.

There are also disliked situations that were mentioned by only a few respondents that should be listed in the interest of future research. One of these is *backstage* work (on sets, costumes, lighting, and so on). Another is *initial rehearsals*, where one's dramatic talents are least used.

One rather commonly cited and disliked situation is found in all the performing arts where the integration of several performers into an aesthetic whole is sought. That situation, which is often unavoidable, is *waiting*. In theater this means sitting around the rehearsal room or greenroom while a section of the play is rehearsed that excludes one's part. As one actor put it:

*I do get pretty restless at times. Someone else is doing a scene, and you're waiting for your scene but are not in that particular one, and they go through the entire thing and then say "O.K., let's go and do that one again." Oh God! That's happened several times. . . . I like to do things; do them and leave.*

Still, some respondents pointedly omitted waiting from their lists of dislikes. They see these idle periods as opportunities to learn their lines, think about character interpretation, or just relax. This research also suggests that rest periods enable players to become acquainted with one another and to discuss mutual acting problems. Waiting is probably most offensive during performances, especially opening night. For it is here that players must live with the mixture of anticipation and tension that affects all thespians. It is to the subject of tension that we now turn.

### **Tensions: They Are All Worth It**

As a group, but not necessarily as individuals, theater amateurs face four major tensions: tryouts, interpersonal hostilities, onstage predicaments, and stage fright. A vast majority of the sample have encountered all four at one point or another in their acting careers, though some of them, usually

the more seasoned, no longer experience significant tensions of any sort prior to or during a performance.

*Tryouts.* Only six interviewees, three of whom are devotees, unequivocally enjoy tryouts. Those with this attitude rarely, if ever, fail to get the role they seek. In addition they are selective in what they aim for, being certain they are well qualified to play the role. Auditions for this set become but another opportunity to read a play aloud from the stage to an attentive audience, which includes the director, the stage manager, and perhaps the other aspirants to the same or different parts of the play.<sup>7</sup> For these six, trying out is a mere extension of the practice of informal, leisurely group reading, where a handful of amateurs assemble at someone's home, choose a play of mutual interest and appropriate parts for themselves, and commence reading it for the intrinsic pleasure of presenting their parts well in the context of the other parts.<sup>8</sup> The emotional state of those who savor tryouts is *eager anticipation*. "I enjoy tryouts," commented a fifty-year-old actress. "I go as if it were a laboratory experiment."

The remaining twenty-one respondents, however, view tryouts less favorably. Five of this category see them as a "necessary evil." By this they mean they derive scant pleasure from participation in an audition, though their *apprehension* about their own performance in it is low. To be sure, they see this practice as an efficacious and fair method of casting.

The majority of the sample are, under some or all conditions, apprehensive about tryouts. Though competition of a sort occurs elsewhere in theater, the tryout is the only situation where it is formally promoted. Indeed, compared with many other leisure pursuits, amateur acting is relatively uncompetitive. But, in the tryout, ample reason exists for apprehension among those who participate, for there is often uncertainty as to its outcome.

That is, a number of factors bear on this outcome that are beyond the control of the player. One is the director's needs, which may or may not be known to the auditioning individuals: the bodily, vocal, and facial qualities preferred for the upcom-

ing show. These preferences depend partly on who is cast in the other roles. Another factor is the amount of competition for a part. Ingenues, as mentioned earlier, are abundant in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, so these parts are highly contested at tryouts. Middle-aged males, by contrast, are scarce and therefore have comparatively less trouble landing major roles. Four of the six respondents who enjoy tryouts are in this category. Still another side to the chanciness of auditions is the director's selection of the passage to be read. It is his decision, not the decision of those trying out, and they have no idea where he will strike. Additionally, the possibility exists that the director may have one or two of his principals more or less in mind, the audition being held as a last-minute check to see that no better talent is available for those parts and to fill minor roles.

Outside these factors that are beyond the player's control are those that, technically, are within his control, even though control may sometimes be difficult to exercise. A player may not read well, though once the part is learned, he may present it as skillfully as anyone. Furthermore, a player's stage fright at a tryout may destroy or weaken his performance. Finally, even if he does manage to read well and control his stage fright, the two to three minutes of auditioning may be insufficient time to demonstrate his talents.

The chief concern in tryouts for those players who characterize themselves as tense is the figure they cut before the director and others who are looking on. This sentiment squares with Lyman and Scott's (1970: 160) definition of stage fright as apprehension that a slip or flaw will invite challenges to a claimed identity. One actress had the following to say about tryouts after being asked if she dreaded them:

*Bah! Oh dread! Are you kidding me? Oh it's a terrible feeling to sit there. You're sure at that point that you're the very worst, absolutely worst, actress in the entire world. I hate tryouts. Hate them. I don't know anybody that likes them. And your very best friend in the entire world whom you would lay down your life*

*for comes in and, if she's reading for the same part, you could slit her throat at that moment. There is also the thing about a rejection. . . like you weren't good enough to do it. There are also a lot of other people at tryouts. . . and you sometimes run the risk of getting up there and just being, just making a fool of yourself. . . The more important it [the part] is to you, the more nervous you are. It helps a lot if you can sit with someone who is not reading. A friend. And you can make comments back and forth, a sort of tension-reliever thing. No comments on what's going on, not making fun of anybody else. But just comments [to] somebody there to take your mind off of what's going on. It helps me anyway.*

How apprehensive one is depends upon various conditions. Inexperienced amateurs are more likely to be tense than experienced ones.<sup>9</sup> Other things equal, the more important the part is to a player, the better the chances he will be disabled by stage fright. Some of the postprofessionals mentioned they were more tense at tryouts when they were professionals — and their livelihood depended on getting cast — than as amateurs. Further, the familiarity of the theater, the director, and other players who are trying out are factors. Several respondents indicated increased tension when auditioning with strangers.

Whatever one's emotional state during a tryout, the four- or five-day period between it and the announcement of results is one of intense interest in the outcome. Some are more uneasy here than at the audition itself; for them waiting is the tryout's worst feature.

There are three possible outcomes to an audition for the individual player: (1) he gets the part he sought; (2) he gets a part, but not the one he sought; (3) he gets no part at all. Once the director announces his casting decisions, a lively analysis of them starts up among those players who know each other and have an interest in these results. They begin phoning around to determine who has been cast in which roles and to postmortem the validity and ramifications of the director's choices. Direc-

tors surprise players by making selections that might never be predicted by those with no responsibility for organizing and producing the show. Any sociological study of directors of amateur theaters would do well to concentrate, among other places, on this reaction to their casting decisions, for it is here perhaps more than any other place that their image among amateur thespians is shaped.

*Interpersonal Hostilities.* For the present sample anyway, interpersonal hostilities are the least frequent and the least significant of the major tensions felt in amateur theater. Occasionally, nonetheless, a couple of members of the cast develop an antipathy for one another. Or the director and one of his players get into a dispute that sours their relationship. In other words, when they occur, hostile theatric relations can be unpleasant because the norms of commitment force the antagonists to associate until the show has closed. For most amateurs, however, these tensions are rare.

*Onstage Predicaments.* An onstage predicament is one of the intermittent horrors of the acting world. It is an unexpected incident that occurs during the performance of a play that, if ineptly handled, will alert the audience to a momentary loss of control over the show by the players. Onstage predicaments are abhorred because all hands are trying to produce a set of effects, the presentation and impact of which are managed by them. And this is what the audience is paying to see. Occurrences of the unexpected and uncontrolled suggest the acting company is incompetent, an impression they go to great lengths to avoid. As bad an effect is the tendency for these situations to destroy the effect of the scene by diverting audience attention to a different reality.

Almost anything can become an onstage predicament: a player who "goes up on his lines" (forgets them) or misses his entry, a structural failure in the set, a mechanical failure in some important apparatus such as a phonograph or tape recorder, a misplaced prop, a conspicuous deficiency in a costume, and the



like. Two examples of an onstage predicament will adequately convey why the very possibility that something can “go wrong” during a performance gives theater people, both amateurs and professionals, the jitters.

*Playwright Howard Teichmann tells of the time he went to see the opening-night performance of his play The Last Mile. It depicts prison life in which Spencer Tracy, who was just beginning his professional acting career, had a major part as an inmate. While Teichmann sat in the audience the following was supposed to happen: Tracy who is in a cell is to knock down a passing guard, grab his keys through the bars, unlock the door, and free the other prisoners who then proceed to riot. Tracy knocked down the guard as planned. But the all-important keys fell out of the guard's hand away from the cell door and beyond Tracy's reach. Without the keys he cannot plausibly escape from his cell, and if unable to do this, the action is stymied. At this point Teichmann left the theater in despair. Curious to know what happened he returned in the second act. By some means, to this day he does not know how, Tracy and the other prisoners had escaped and the riot was in process.*

An actress of some thirty-five-years' experience gave the following account of her “worst moment in theater”:

*Oh, the worst thing of all. My wig — I was wearing a wig and the thing got entangled in my necklace. This happened in Rick Oldfield's [a director] Barefoot in the Park. There I was with my wig half on. I simply had to do the scene in that state. That's my worst moment in theater.*

The possibility of onstage predicaments is significantly reduced if the players are experienced. Not that things always go smoothly during a performance given by seasoned players. It is only that they are more likely to handle emergencies in a way that prevents the audience from discovering their brief loss of control. Ironically, then, amateurs, as a group, are more susceptible to this sort of thing than professionals, but are generally less able to cope with it.

The practice of “clowning” is seen by some amateurs as in-

creasing the chances of an onstage predicament. Clowning is tinkering with the script of a play purely for the fun of it; a theatric version of the practical joke. The clown flirts with risk during this innovation, which is what makes it delightful to him. Though other motives may also be served, players clown when their parts are well learned and the show has grown tedious. In this manner they make their time onstage more interesting.

Like the predicament, almost anything can be clowned with. The impromptu modification of a line is possibly the most common form of clowning. But props can be manipulated for this purpose, too. People onstage can be the object of clowning from offstage, as in the case of an actor who was supposed to pick a letter off the floor only to have it jerked from his grasp. Someone backstage had tied a thread to it and was spicing his own offstage moments. The following occurred during my observations at Scott:

*In one scene of the play being performed, the male lead located up center stage and visible to a certain extent to the audience, calls to a youth offstage; "Come here you fat butterball. Let me see how you're growing." Since the youth never appears onstage, but speaks only a couple of lines backstage, that role was played by an adult male. Following the lead's comment (which was true to the script), the backstage actor decided to liven up that part of the act by dropping his pants so that his drawers were showing. The lead, and the only person to witness this spectacle, managed somehow to present his next line with aplomb while hiding from the audience the obscene gesture with which he also responded.*

Clowning amuses some amateurs and disturbs others. It is sure to be a lively topic of conversation during and following the performance in which it occurs and possibly far into the future. But, as it is unexpected (it would never serve its purpose otherwise), the concentration of onstage players may be thrown off. This might lead, in turn, to a memory lapse, failure to act in a certain way, or some other blemish. Little wonder that directors forbid it, though it will likely always be an element in the under-

side of theater.

*Stage Fright.* About half the sample said they experience stage fright or apprehension prior to a performance, especially opening night. This, despite the fact that by this juncture they are generally secure in their lines.<sup>10</sup> An assortment of conditions foster stage fright. As mentioned previously, players often have certain lines in their parts that are exceptionally difficult to remember. And, in extremely large parts, there may simply be too little time to learn all lines equally well. Moreover, remembering lines onstage is linked to concentration, which is stressed as a primary means of preventing memory lapses. The specter of going up on one's lines has been crystallized in theater culture as the "actor's dream": nightmarish thoughts about being onstage without the faintest idea of what to say next.

Other requirements of acting sometimes contribute to the development of stage fright. Quick changes are defined by a couple of players as tense. Awkward props, costumes, or aspects of the set may cause concern. One actress related how she worried each performance over the possible behavior of a dog she had to carry onstage. Stage fright is also abetted when a player must act opposite someone who is nervous or whom he dislikes. And thoughts about its consequences may increase the likelihood of stage fright, as in the case of the actress who worried that her coffee cup would rattle in its saucer because she would be too shaky to hold it steady.

The amateur who suffers chronic stage fright typically suffers it most acutely on opening night between the time he arrives at the theater and the time of his first entry onstage, or a later part of the performance where he worries about his ability to act as he would like. Some expand this period of tension in one or both directions, by fretting the entire day (and even more) or by remaining apprehensive throughout the run.

Responses to this state are manifold. Some pace in the back regions of the theater; some engage in excessive chitchat and nervous joking; some seek privacy and silence in order to concentrate on their lines, movements, costumes, and makeup;

some feel the need to go to the bathroom with ridiculous frequency; some people even pray. To counteract the jitters, one experienced actress insists that her colleagues treat her offstage as if she were the character she is enacting onstage, a request they consider eccentric.

The apprehensive performer is literally in a state of terror, a common reaction to a situation in which an important personal image could be shattered. The human solution to it is to flee, but that is out of the question for most thespians. The respondents had this to say about their stage fright:

*I ask myself every opening night: why do you do this to yourself? Why are you putting yourself through this hell?*

*I'm scared. it's all I can do to keep from throwing up. I put my body through a great deal of strain. . . .*

*I often ask: What am I doing here? Why am I doing this to myself?*

*I get opening night jitters one week in advance. . . .*

*There is this queasiness. But once you get into the play it's alright. it's only when you're in the wings...waiting to go on. . . .*

Yet a number of the respondents are able to distinguish an eager anticipation mixed with their stage fright. After all, opening night marks the start of a series of opportunities to express the very reason for being in theater: to perform creatively a part in a larger literary work before an audience who, it is hoped, will respond in expected ways to the representations of the players. Six weeks or more of arduous preparation are now coming to fruition. Despite the creeping fatigue that has grown as a result of truncated hours of sleep, rushed meals, and excessive obligations, these players experience an alertness — a heightened awareness and concentration — that sustains them over the run of performances. For a small number of amateurs,

including four of the devotees, this anticipation is the predominant, possibly the only, sentiment on opening night. In the words of an actor with nineteen plays to his credit in the space of four years:

*I am so high at that point [opening night] that there's not room in me for nervousness. All I need to do is get on that stage. All I want to do is get on that stage. . . . But with me, I've been at it for six weeks and I want to get that show out in front of that audience. That's the foremost thing in my mind. . . . Opening night is not a question of nervousness, but a question of "here it comes baby"; the time for recognition, the time when you're going to see whether or not all that six weeks. . . work was worth it. . . .*

It is feelings such as these that keep amateur actors and actresses coming back for more.

### Notes

1. This is due to stage fright, which is considered later in this chapter.
2. It is probably true in community theater everywhere that players who have been on the local scene for some time are personally known. Other players know how they react to proffered advice from them or the director, how they view themselves (i.e., modestly, proudly, conceitedly), how committed they are to theater, and the like.
3. One dimension of friendship development is the growing familiarity with different parts of the other person's life, parts that lie outside the sphere of activity in which the two became acquainted.
4. Directors are undoubtedly aware of this process and its contribution to the development of the show. One actress reported that a director under whom she had once worked formally encouraged extramural associations.
5. The treatment, earlier in this chapter, of continuance commitment contains some of the reasons why amateurs who are essentially volunteers wind up in roles or plays they dislike.
6. One respondent who was classed as a participant opined that theater amateurs are frequently *too* serious about their avocation.
7. Tryouts at Scott are held before the director. Other amateur theaters may use a "casting committee," one member of which is the director.
8. This is analogous to the pleasure derived by chamber musicians from sight-reading a piece.
9. Interestingly, some seasoned professionals find their stage fright to be more problematic late in their career than early in it (Lyman and Scott, 1970: 159).

10. Confidence has been identified, by at least one authority, as an important antidote to stage fright in the neighboring performing art of music (Brantigan, 1975).



## 5

### *The Routine of Amateur Archaeology*

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The pace of my interviewing of theater amateurs slowed and finally stopped altogether as the Christmas holidays approached. Consequently, I still had four or five players to see in early January when I made my initial telephone contact with amateur archaeology and the President of the Dallas Archaeological Society (DAS). As with theater, I arranged an appointment, so that I could explain the project to him, and if accepted, select a sample of amateurs to interview. I also hoped at that time to survey the history and routine activities of DAS.



Preliminary inquiry among professional archaeologists in north Texas indicated that DAS is one of the oldest and most sophisticated organizations of its kind in the state. It has been holding regular meetings since its official founding in 1940, with a history of sporadic, informal gatherings stretching back ten years or so before date. Its official publication, *The Record*, has been issued several times annually since the Society's informal beginning.

At the time of this study, DAS had slightly over one hundred members whose annual dues were \$3.50 for individuals or \$5.00 for husbands and wives. Though predominantly amateur, it does contain a few professionals, most of whom are associated with local universities, and some of their graduate students. As we shall see, the professionals play an important role in many aspects of the amateurs' avocational lives. And their membership in the Society is more than simply honorary; they may hold, and actually have held, offices in it.

Membership in DAS is by no means automatically obtained. Prospective members, who most often seem to hear about the organization from friends, must attend three meetings after which they fill out an application form. This is followed by a personal interview with an established member, normally the vice-president. Here, a history is taken of the applicant's past experience in archaeology including that in fieldwork, courses, and reading. The interviewer also discusses the State of Texas antiquities legislation with him (a copy of which he received at one of the meetings) to ensure that he knows what the legislation says and what it means.<sup>1</sup> Such acts, common throughout North America, regulate the treatment of archaeological resources so they may be preserved for the citizens of a particular province or state (see McGimsey, 1972: 46-49). Generally, these laws prohibit the destruction or private collection of archaeological resources or the disturbance of potentially fruitful sites. The interviewer must be satisfied that the applicant accepts these regulations, for there is constant risk in amateur archaeological societies that "pothunters" who are essentially

private collectors may be inadvertently admitted. As we shall see in Chapter 7, one of the main differences between the amateur and the hobbyist in this area is the latter's acquisitive orientation. If the interview is favorable and DAS members vote their approval, the applicant is formally admitted at one of the meetings with a round of applause and a membership card that authenticates his status as an archaeologist.

Despite the care taken in these procedures, the occasional pothunter slips in. The strong sentiment in DAS against their interests either changes those interests or forces the person from the Society. One of the most notorious failures of the membership process was the unwitting admission of a commercial artifact dealer whose aim — completely contrary to the aims of the Society — was to acquire relics, especially arrowheads, which he could sell to the public. Once his true identity became known, he was quietly asked to leave.

In one major area DAS is like many other local archaeology groups found throughout the United States and Canada. Its main purpose is to promote the science of archaeology, chiefly at the fieldwork level (e.g., locating sites, excavating them, recording what is found there), by organizing and training amateurs to assist professionals in their fieldwork; or even to engage in their own fieldwork, which may or may not be taken over someday by the professionals. There are often several local societies in a state or province, and they are likely to be associated with a state or provincial body which is also a mixture of amateurs and professionals. In Texas this organization is the Texas Archaeological Society (TAS).

The members of DAS are a heterogeneous lot. The Society's assortment of preprofessional students, pure amateurs, and professionals range in age from the teens to well beyond the commonly accepted retirement age of sixty-five. Equal diversity exists in occupational status. Among the respondents are several engineers (the most prevalent), secretaries, salesmen, and business people as well as a physician, librarian, technician, construction worker, manager, draftsman, accountant, com-

puter programmer, schoolteacher, nurse, and government service worker. Three archaeologist-housewives were also interviewed. A similar variety has been noted in at least one other local society (Tivy, 1976).

## **PARTICIPATING IN AMATEUR ARCHAEOLOGY**

There is a set of four core activities, so named because nearly all DAS members have participated or currently participate in them. They include: meetings of the society, fieldwork, reading, and courses. Additionally, smaller numbers of members engage in certain peripheral activities, such as putting up public displays and presenting talks. We turn first to the core activities.

### **Meetings**

My afternoon with the President of DAS concluded with an invitation to observe the next meeting of the Society, which was only three days off. At that time he would introduce me, give me the floor for a few minutes to explain my project, and urge anyone interested in being interviewed to see me sometime that evening.<sup>2</sup> Approximately eight people came to my attention through this arrangement, enough to give me a start. Through these respondents I learned of others in the Society who might also be interested in participating in my study in this manner. Altogether fourteen men and fourteen women or a total of twenty-eight archaeology amateurs were interviewed for roughly the same length of time and on the same themes as the theater amateurs. As in theater I balanced the sample with young and old and experienced and inexperienced practitioners. In amateur archaeology, however, there appear to be many more married couples than in amateur theater; hence eight couples were interviewed, as compared with the three in theater.

As before I sought only adult pure amateurs (see Chapters 1 and 2), which means I excluded a small proportion of the Society composed of teen-agers, preprofessionals, and professionals.

An estimated 40 percent to 50 percent of the pure amateurs in DAS were interviewed. Moreover, based on my association over a four-month period with the Society and many of its members, I am confident that the pure amateurs who were never interviewed differ, as a group, in no significant way from those who were. Thus, it is defensible to generalize the observations presented in this and the succeeding two chapters to the population of DAS pure amateurs.

DAS meetings are held monthly, except during June, July, and August, for approximately two hours in the evening in a room supplied by the Department of Archaeology of Southern Methodist University. The summer is kept free to enable fieldwork with the professionals who are nearly always employees of a university and whose research is largely restricted to this period.<sup>3</sup> Meetings were once used to compare notes from the members' surveys and excavations and to inspect and identify what they found. This is still done occasionally, but the central activity of each gathering is now a scheduled talk by an amateur, a professional, or one of the latter's students. A typical meeting opens with announcements and items of Society business. Next comes the talk, which is followed by a period of questions and general discussion. Everyone is then invited to mingle informally over coffee and cookies before heading home.

The entire affair is casual. Coats are piled on one table, while another is used to display books, periodicals, and artifacts of interest to the members. Elsewhere in the room the hosts or hostesses — those responsible for refreshments that evening — are preparing them for later.

Since nearly 80 percent of DAS members belong to TAS (as estimated from the sample), many of them attend the state annual meeting when it is held in Dallas. An estimated 40 percent of DAS members also belong to at least one other archaeological society, often in a neighboring state, the meetings of which they occasionally attend as well. And a few hold memberships in the predominantly professional Society for

American Archaeology or in state societies quite distant from Texas, or both.

### **Fieldwork**

James Deetz (1967: 8-9) notes that archaeology proceeds through the same general sequence of activities as the physical sciences, first by engaging in observation, then description, and finally explanation. Most amateurs in archaeology work only in the observation phase of their science though, as we shall see, a few contribute to its description, and an even smaller number to its explanation. Observation in archaeology is done through fieldwork. Among these amateurs fieldwork is likely to take one or more of three forms: surveys, surface collections, and excavations.<sup>4</sup> During the four months spent on this part of the study, I had the opportunity to participate as a neophyte (under close supervision) in some aspects of each of these.

Eleven of the twenty-eight respondents (an estimated 39 percent of DAS pure amateurs) have never engaged in an organized archaeological survey. Some of them entered archaeology only recently and so have had no chance to partake of this side of their avocation. Others, for reasons of health or old age, find the extensive walking required in surveys prohibitive. Surveys are carried out on potential sites where little or no previous archaeological work has been done. Deetz (1967: 12) describes this process:

*This involves going over the area on foot, by auto, or horseback, inspecting aerial photographs if available, and recording all sites discovered through this process. Frequently test excavations are made in conjunction with the survey to determine site depth or number of components. . . . The sites are given numbers and a form is made out, which provides essential information regarding location, size, possible age, state of preservation, and other key facts.*

For most, if not all, of the respondents surveying means tramping about on foot, possibly over freshly plowed ground or just

after a rain, accompanied by some "test pitting."

This is a description of a formal or organized survey. Many respondents also survey informally through casual inspection of a piece of ground for its archaeological significance while doing something else. The typical archaeologist, amateur or professional, has a strong attraction to outdoor pursuits which, among the sample, include hiking, canoeing, camping, hunting, and rock collecting. Here, too, their omnipresent archaeologic interests direct their attention to the land for signs of potential sites.

My observations of an organized survey, in which I also looked for these signs, suggest that the experienced amateur develops a sharp eye for detecting them that the beginner lacks. For example, a woman of fifteen-years' background in archaeology was walking purposely in search of a place to establish a test excavation. Her concern was with the terrain and its use by former inhabitants, not the immediate ground beneath her feet. This orientation, however, in no way prevented her from spotting a small flint chip in the gravel. Another respondent gave the following account:

*I was coming back from Tyler, two weeks ago I guess, and pulled over by the side of the road to change drivers. I just happened to walk along the edge of the tar, looked down, and right there, half in the tar and half out, was a scraper. Now, that's among all that other stuff. But the minute you see it, you know it. It's a really strange experience.*

Amateurs may go out alone in their spare time specifically to prospect for sites. Highway construction zones, where earth is already being moved around, are sometimes productive. The Texas Department of Highways is said to be receptive to bona fide amateurs who want to survey in their work areas. Once a potential site is located the amateur alerts the Society. Several members may then organize a formal weekend survey of it.

Some amateurs argue (and some professionals, too; e.g., Hole and Heizer, 1969: 53-54) that they serve archaeology in this manner by discovering sites the professionals would otherwise

miss, because the demands upon the latter preclude this sort of low-yield exploration. Indeed, seasoned amateurs who have lived in north Texas for many years know the land better than the professionals. They know the history of every site and how those sites have been exploited by pothunters. They may even have been aware of the sites from their own youth when they collected arrowheads. Such knowledge is useful for the professionals who may be unaware, for instance, that the absence of a certain type of artifact means only that local "trophy seekers" have made away with every one they could find and not that the culture of the early inhabitants was deficient in this regard.

Surface collections are carried out in conjunction with surveys. Potentially significant materials discovered in the survey that are portable are gathered and stored on the chance they will prove beneficial to future work in the area. Care is taken to record all contextual facts, such as date and geographic location, associated with any item found.

The variety of materials the archaeologist encounters in the field fall into three broad categories: artifacts, features, and nonartifactual materials (Deetz, 1967: 19). Artifacts or man-made objects, such as pots or arrowheads, can be transported. Features are nonmovable cultural items; for example, fire pits, houses, and burials. Nonartifactual materials include bone, seeds, charcoal, shell, and the like.

*The Excavation.* It is in the excavation or "dig" that these traces of a past life are systematically sought. Most amateurs dig at an ongoing site on weekends throughout the good-weather parts of the year. A week or more of steady work on a site is usually only possible once a year, which is commonly done at the annual TAS field school held each June at different locations in the state.

Amateur archaeology in north Texas centers on Indian cultures that have left no permanent architecture. Therefore, the sites of these amateurs excavate are likely to be laid out in conventional archaeological fashion, employing a grid of 5-foot

squares across the piece of land being investigated. Each square is systematically dug using the accepted field techniques and controls of the science.

Permission to excavate must be obtained from the owner of the land, even if that happens to be the state. Amateurs who take the initiative to find new sites for themselves and DAS must develop an ability to sell the owner on the aims of archaeology and their own qualifications to execute them. An owner may suspect ulterior motives or worry that, once permission is granted, a swarm of bearded vandals will turn up one day and do damage to his property or leave it littered with lunch bags and beer bottles.

Assuming permission is received, the site still belongs to the owner and is ordinarily named after him (e.g., the Smith Site, the Brown Site). Excavation of the site is likely to be sponsored by a local or state society, by a local college or university, or by a combination of these. Though, it should be mentioned, individual amateurs sometimes find sites they prefer to dig alone.

Activity at a site on a particular weekend is typically directed by the person who organizes the excavating crew, that person is often the president of the sponsoring society. Sometimes, however, a professional or respected amateur directs, even though he holds no responsibility for organizing that stint of digging.

Up to three or four people work a square with shovels, trowels, small brushes, and other implements. If there are several squares and large differences in experience among the participants, the most experienced in each directs its activities. The title of "crew chief" is given to these leaders at the more formal TAS field school.

It is in and around the 5-foot-square pits that the social nature of archaeological field procedure is evident. Soil is carefully cleared, placed in buckets, and hauled to a spot adjacent to the site to be sifted for any small artifacts and other significant materials that may be there. An informal division of labor tends to emerge among each crew, with some digging and



filling pails and others carrying the dirt and sifting it. The sifters or screens, always homemade contrivances, vary in their construction and may require two people to operate them efficiently.<sup>5</sup> Accompanying this cooperation is a moderate flow of conversation among the participants. As might be expected, the chief theme is archaeology, though talk may not always be on the problems of the current site.

When an amateur who holds no official position in DAS organizes a weekend survey or dig, he is apt to invite only those whose company he enjoys. Selection is often necessary anyway, for a site is seldom large enough to accommodate the efforts of the entire Society. This practicality aside, there appears to be a preference for individuals who are personally compatible. Though I observed too few excavations to reach any definitive conclusions, I suspect that these weekend jaunts into the countryside occur among people whose age and educational statuses are substantially more homogeneous than found in the organization as a whole. The use of cameras to record the people and their activities as well as the pits and excavated items indicates the friendship value of such gatherings.

By way of comparison it should be noted that a similar pattern of interaction exists in amateur music (Stebbins, 1976b). Two seemingly contradictory propositions on the relationship of leisure, friendship, and social structure receive support from amateurs both in music and in archaeology. One of these, advanced by Suttles (1970: 132) and Srinivas and Beteille (1964), is that friendships and social networks often cut across major social boundaries in a society. The wide mixture of social statuses among DAS members illustrates this point. The other proposition, advanced by Homans (1974: 307-308), states that coparticipants in leisure have similar occupational and social-class backgrounds. It holds when digs are organized unofficially.

Excavation is arduous. Digging, hauling, and sifting dirt for hours on end in an environment of insects, sandburs, heat, and humidity requires stamina and devotion to archaeology that in-

evitably eliminates some would-be amateurs. More than once I heard comments about how the speaker would rebel against such labor if required of him as part of a chore he disliked. By digging around their end of the state, amateur archaeologists become well acquainted with the nature of the soil. Remarks can be heard comparing the ease of digging at one site with that of another. Sod, which is only encountered when a square is being started, is scorned because it cannot be sifted. Rather, it must be shredded by hand, a laborious and slow process. Rocky soil is unpopular for the same reason. A man who had been in archaeology for four years, described his wife's reaction to their initial field experience:

*When we went to our first [field] school, I guess, it was hot and sweaty and we were digging in hard clay. And we weren't finding anything except hard clay. Suddenly she said, "Are you sure this is what you want to do?"*

A find is the immediate goal at an excavation: the uncovering of an artifact, feature, or nonartifactual item. At least for DAS members finds are roughly stratified on the basis of their scientific import and rarity. Lithic debris (flint chips or flakes) is at the lowest level. It is a sign of human activity since nature seldom, if ever, applies pressure to pieces of flint the way humans do in manufacturing stone tools. The chips are waste, like the silvers of wood that fall as the wood-carver completes his product, but are collected by the archaeologist for analysis.

Depending on the circumstances, finding a flint chip or a piece of charcoal creates minor excitement. But it is nothing like the excitement created when the end product of the flaking is found. Discovery of a projectile point (arrowhead or spearhead), knife, or scraper may even evoke a whoop from the finder and certainly brings the others running to examine it. A "perfect" or unblemished point is especially honored and is likely to receive such compliments as "isn't it pretty" or "it's beautiful." And, for the finder, it is a moment of glory that makes the hard work of archaeology all the more worth it (see

Chapter 7). In other words, a find of this sort is both an intellectual and social reward. It is also a powerful stimulus to encourage the others on the site to keep working.

As significant, if not more so, is the unearthing of such things as pottery or bones. Isolated sherds and bone chips create less excitement than finding enough pieces to restore all or more of an item, thereby making classification possible. Uncovering a burial is regarded by many respondents as the find of a lifetime.

Routine digging in archaeology brings many false alarms that raise expectations briefly only to have them deflated upon accurate identification of the item. If a crew is working in sandy or loamy soil, for instance, the scrape of a shovel causes everyone within earshot to pause and wait to see what their colleague has hit. The object could be a sherd (broken piece of pottery) or flint tool, or merely a rock.

Novices meet with more false alarms than old hands. For example, since ironstone is common in north Texas, it is frequently being dug up at excavations. Beginners mistake it for fragments of pottery. Their hopes go up momentarily only to drop when a seasoned fieldworker correctly identifies the object. Certain varieties of dried leaves may fool even the veterans because their silvery hue, when viewed from a distance, resembles that of flint. Some lumps of dirt can look significant at first, especially late in the day when one's attentiveness has diminished.

Another aspect of excavation, undertaken only by the more experienced amateurs present, is recording. Bags filled with artifacts and nonartifactual material must be carefully labeled so that those who analyze their contents will know precisely from where in which pit of what site they came. The site itself must also be mapped, if this has not already been done.

The following selection from my field notes summarizes the various aspects of the core activity of fieldwork discussed so far. The scene described is a test excavation that was being conducted as part of a survey:

*Digging continues atop a knoll in a field that is theorized to be a lookout for the Indians who inhabited the area hundreds of years ago. Suddenly the scrape of a shovel is heard. The people working at the sifting screens stop and look toward the pit. Further digging reveals only a rock. Soon somebody expresses the wish to "find something," which would be more likely to happen if they dug at another site in the vicinity where several points and chips have already been found. But the decision is made by the survey organizer to stay put for the day.*

*As the excavation proceeds a number of rocks begin to emerge, which immediately become the center of attention. It is odd there should be so many rocks in otherwise sandy soil. A whisk broom is now being used to clear away the dirt (its use in lieu of a shovel prevents damage to the rocks). The soil is wet so that brooming is difficult.*

*A small 1½-inch hole becomes evident as the excavating continues. Three people are now on their knees scraping carefully with trowels to expose more of the rocks. Others persevere at the sifters on the periphery of the site. A dried leaf is found, which gives the diggers a start. Then, someone comments, "We're still in the plow zone," in response to the knowledge that this field was recently plowed. The remark is intended to suggest that these emerging rocks were deposited here by a plow.*

*As one worker pushes dirt into the hand spade of another, red earth begins to appear. There are some thoughts on this. I venture the question of whether this might not merely be a rock layer in the soil. "Don't even suggest such a thing," the organizer replies with a chuckle. "That's the last resort."*

*Soon more of the party arrive. They are briefed on what has happened to this point and what is planned from here on. This discussion leads into one concerning the merits of expanding the excavation by adding another 5-foot square. Such a move would enable a further look at some of the rocks that continue to appear.*

*One of the men hands his camera to a bystander so that the latter may take a picture of him at work in the pit. This accomplished, another test square is laid out and the digging of it begun. While this is going on one of the women has fetched her camera and is now asking everyone to move closer together and*

"freeze" for her picture.

*Shortly, a decision is made to start yet a third square. Thirteen people are soon at work in three squares located adjacent to one another. Then one of the men steps off to the side to record the location of each pit. Despite the enervating nature of the work, a conversation begins about certain mutual acquaintances in amateur archaeology and about some of its more colorful figures.*

*Awhile later one of the women digging in the first square triumphantly displays several pieces of charcoal in her dirt-covered hands. This discovery fuels speculation that they may be unearthing a hearth of some kind.*

## **Reading and Courses**

The other two core activities for DAS amateurs are reading and taking university archaeology courses. The sample, whose reading habits may be taken as typical of the pure amateur portion of the Society, read a median of six books over the twelve months prior to their interviews, books that were related in some way to their avocation. The range stretched from two respondents who read no books during this period to three respondents who read twenty-four, thirty, and fifty books, respectively. One married couple had read so much during that year that they were truly unable to recall accurately the number of books and periodicals with which they had come in contact. In addition to books, twenty respondents (71 percent of DAS pure amateurs) regularly read the Society's organ, *The Record*. Sixteen (57 percent of DAS pure amateurs) regularly read the *Bulletin of the Texas Archaeological Society*. Smaller numbers read systematically or sporadically in the bulletins of other amateurs societies and in such periodicals as *American Antiquity* (a primary outlet for professionals), *Smithsonian*, *American Anthropologist*, *Natural History*, and others.

Reading, the respondents quickly pointed out, is the main way they have of educating themselves. Since virtually none of

them has a university degree in archaeology, books, periodicals, fieldwork, and meetings constitute major sources of knowledge.

Twenty-three respondents (82 percent of DAS pure amateurs) extend this knowledge base through one or more credit or non-credit university archaeology courses. Among the sample the median number of completed courses is between three and four. One respondent has accumulated nineteen during his amateur career, while three others have been through twelve or thirteen courses. Incidentally, we have here support for Parker's (1976: 98) observation that in itself nonvocational adult education constitutes a significant leisure activity.

Field schools, as special instances of fieldwork, are another channel of learning in archaeology. In fact, attendance at a specified number of these is sufficient in some state societies to earn their amateurs a license that formally authenticates them as archaeologists.

### **Peripheral Activities**

Beyond the core involvements in amateur archaeology are the peripheral ones, so named because a significantly smaller proportion of respondents engage in them. These are classification, organizational duties, presenting talks, writing and editing, preparing displays, and miscellaneous pursuits.

Slightly under half the sample have gone beyond the observation phase of their science to its descriptive phase where collected data are integrated.<sup>6</sup> For most of these people their contribution to archaeological description is limited to classification, which takes place on certain nights or on Saturday mornings at Southern Methodist University under the supervision of one of its professors of archaeology. A few respondents feel confident enough to carry out this activity on their own. Generally, however, the amateurs work only at the more menial tasks of washing and marking artifactual and nonartifactual materials and assembling pieces of pottery.

Organizational duties come in a variety of forms. Sixteen respondents have held one or more major offices (e.g., presi-

der t, secretary) in local archaeological societies, usually DAS. A few individuals, with long experience, have served or currently serve at posts in TAS, and one is a member of a committee in the national society. These are elected or invitational positions. Others in the sample have volunteered their services to various DAS committees.

Twelve of the respondents (43 percent of DAS pure amateurs) have presented talks on archaeology, usually by request, before such groups as service clubs, school classes, and scout troops. These presentations, often supplemented with film or slide demonstrations, are designed to educate the audience about the aims and procedures of archaeology. Less frequently, an amateur is invited by his local society to deliver a scholarly paper at one of its meetings. Still rarer are the respondents who have made such presentations before a state society. One devotee is as active as many professionals; he presents an average of three scholarly papers annually before local, state, and national bodies.

The writing of scholarly papers by archaeology amateurs is even more uncommon.<sup>7</sup> Most respondents simply lack the necessary skills for this, although one person with wide experience in Texas amateur archaeology holds that DAS members are more likely to write than members of other societies with which he has come in contact. The usual outlet for articles produced by this part of the sample is *The Record*, though some members occasionally publish in the TAS organ as well. Six respondents have written no less than a half-dozen articles, among them two internationally known figures (husband and wife) who have published, jointly and individually, over seventy-five papers. Another aspect of writing for these amateurs is editing the Society's publication, a job that three respondents have had. One experienced writer also reviews books from time to time.

Developing a display of archaeological findings has attracted nine respondents (32 percent of DAS pure amateurs) at one time or another, often as a response to a request made to the Society.

They have placed displays in local museums, schools, and libraries.

There are archaeological activities that are seldom done by the present sample. Only two of them have done any consultation, for example, although certain others are probably capable of doing such work. One respondent is on the board of directors of a state museum. Uncommon among amateur archaeologists everywhere is the flintknapper. Among the twenty-eight respondents, there is one such person whose reputation is nationwide. Indeed, for him, working flint has largely replaced conventional fieldwork. His aim is now to learn about ancient cultures through a firsthand understanding of the experience and process of making lithic tools. It is also a rare amateur who is respected enough to be invited to teach in some capacity at a college or university (as we saw among theater amateurs). One of the sample has had this honor (one of the pair who had produced the seventy-five articles), which has also included invitations to sit on certain Ph.D. examining committees.

In sum, the routine of amateur archaeology is manifested in organizational meetings, fieldwork, reading, and courses. Around this core some DAS members spin a more complex involvement that adds variety and depth to their avocational lives. In the end a valuable complementarity is struck with the professional side of the discipline. Of the three main phases of science — observation, description, and explanation — amateurs in archaeology, if our sample is any indication, contribute heavily to the first. This they do in their fieldwork. But, as we have also seen, they do get involved in a limited way in the descriptive phase, mainly via supervised classification. Archaeological amateurs contribute least to the explanatory or theoretical side of their field, though it is possible that some of the active writers interviewed in the present study could be said to be working at this level. Generally this phase of the science is left to the professionals.

However, it appears that the professionals' dependence on amateurs is considerable. The latter are a trained and committed



source of help in the field and in the laboratory. As noted above, those who have lived in a locale for years know its sites better than the professionals. Additionally, the amateurs support the aims and needs of archaeology. They are one segment of the population that can be counted on to speak for it and to refrain from obstructing its practice. Through their local and state societies, they join the professionals in bringing pressure to bear on state and provincial legislatures for better antiquities laws, more government-supported archaeologists, further government-sponsored surveys of land about to be flooded or disturbed for construction, and the like (McGimsey, 1972: 18-19).

It is ironical that a group of people at work, in this case professional archaeologists, should be so dependent on the goodwill and service of another group of people at leisure, in this case amateur archaeologists. Sociologists have yet to study this curious symbiotic link, which undoubtedly exists in other spheres, as a special instance of the functional interrelationship of parts of the society in which we live.

### Notes

1. In fact, some established DAS members seem to be unaware of their state's antiquities legislation.
2. There are more effective ways than this of sampling for sociological research. But the president was understandably reluctant to commit his colleagues, through his official position, to a telephone call from a stranger without their prior consent.
3. Summer vacations and strictly amateur field projects would also compete with summer meetings.
4. It was the amateur General Augustus Henry Lane-Fox Pitt-Rivers who showed the world how the actual dig should be conducted, recorded, and reported (Wilson, 1974: 15-16).
5. A sifter occasionally becomes a mark of distinction for the person who constructs it. In one instance a man made such an efficient sifter that it received a prize at a TAS field school and attracted others to inspect its unique features so that they could make one for themselves.
6. Since these are peripheral activities in which amateurs get involved for special reasons, it is unwise to generalize from the sample to the Society's pure amateurs as we have been doing to this point.
7. The preparation of reports is excluded from this discussion.

## 6

# *Amateur Archaeology in Everyday Life*

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I left my first DAS meeting with interview appointments for the next two to three weeks. According to the president there had been a good attendance that evening, even though most of the students in the Society were still away on Christmas holidays. But, since my focus was on pure and postprofessional amateurs, their absence was no problem.

### **TYPES OF AMATEUR ARCHAEOLOGISTS**

My interests being what they were, the entire sample turned out to be pure

amateurs. Unlike the theater part of the study, there were no postprofessionals among them, which may be traced to the fact that there are very few, if any, postprofessional amateurs anywhere in archaeology. Retired professionals who retain an interest in their work can still pursue it on a professional basis. There were two archaeology students in the sample who are being treated here as pure amateurs. One is an undergraduate in the field; the other hoped to enter a university graduate program later in the year. The decision to treat them as pure amateurs is defensible. Since the professional degree in archaeology is the Ph.D., the preprofessional amateur must be a Ph.D. student.

Only one member of the sample had ever made any money in archaeology, which was through consultation. Another was reimbursed once for transportation expenses to a distant community where he went to talk on archaeology. While a sizeable majority of respondents simply replied that they have never made any money in their avocation, a few strongly believe that amateurs should refuse any money offered them. A middle-aged man of fifteen-years' experience expressed his views on being paid to speak about archaeology:

*I have a strong feeling on that. I think that anyone that commercializes off of, like selling artifacts or even taking money to help on their expenses for going to talk. . . I don't know. I have views on this. When I first got started into it, there was so much that I wanted to learn. There was so much that I was ignorant of. I would ask them and would get this old standard answer:*

*"Ah, this is just something you got to learn."*

*"Is there anything I can read?"*

"Oh, it's better just learning."

"How do you learn?"

*And I made myself promise that, if I ever got to the point where I — I won't say knowledgeable — but if I ever got to the point where someone asked me a question I had to answer, I was darn sure going to give it to them. I always considered it a compliment when asked to talk. I remember Once I went to Dalton State [college] one night to speak. After I got down there, they wanted to pay my gas expenses down there and back. I didn't accept. Had they insisted they'd of probably hurt my feelings. But, I feel it's as much a compliment to me to be asked because of those who turn out and sit there and listen to me. I'm more indebted to them than they are to me, the way I see it. I've never sold anything. I don't believe in that. I've never had an opportunity to commercialize off it other than people have asked me if I would sell any of this. It wouldn't pay what it cost me.*

A younger man put the matter this way:

*No. Any consulting work we do is offered free just to get whatever site it is preserved and accurately surveyed. It's strictly a feeling that we've done some good in an area that we're interested in. It's the only pay that I've ever received and the only pay that I ever expect to receive, I suppose. Certainly I've never considered archaeology for a profit. Although that's the first thing everybody asks is how much is that arrowhead that you found worth. Well, it's worth an awfully lot to me, but for a completely different reason.*

The identification of devotees and participants had to be conducted with less precision here than in theater. Unlike the latter there are many more activities in archaeology through which an amateur can express his commitment: length and number of excavations and surface collections, amount of writing, number of university courses, number and prestige of major offices in archaeological societies, extent of local and national reputation, depth of reading, number of talks presented at DAS and TAS

meetings, and so on. Furthermore, some of the most experienced interviewees had difficulty remembering the number of excavations (especially the short ones) they have participated in. With certain exceptions excavations are less distinct experiences than plays and so fade from memory quickly.

Accordingly, I examined the records of each respondent for a pattern of exceptional participation in all or most of these activities. Eight (two women, six men) stood out from the rest. Statistically, then, they are the devotees; the remainder the participants. That this is the same number as found in theater is purely coincidental. There is no theoretical reason why they should be the same. In fact, the proportion of devotees in the total sample is slightly lower since the archaeology sample contains an additional respondent. The one to three ratio of women to men, however, may be more than happenstance. For in amateur archeology, too, the obligations of child rearing seem to limit the involvement of some women.<sup>1</sup>

## **AMATEURS AND PROFESSIONALS**

Let us turn to the first of the seven functional relationships (see Chapter 1) that have been theorized to exist between amateurs and professionals; to wit, amateurs serve publics. For amateur archaeologists that public is a combination of fellow amateurs, professionals interested in the geographic and ethnic area in which they work, and perhaps a handful of laymen. These three groups read reports written by the amateurs or by professionals who draw on amateur assistance, see amateur displays, hear amateur talks, or engage in casual discussion with them about their activities.

Next is the monetary and organizational relationship between professional and amateur in archaeology. Roughly three-quarters of the latter have had at least one contact with the former in each of four ways: as students, as coworkers at excavations or surveys, in conversations at meetings, and as

friends. Though this same percentage of one-shot contacts was also found in amateur theater, amateur archaeologists, as a group, appear to have more regular associations with professionals, chiefly through meetings and annual field schools. Neophytes in archaeology had contact through only two or three of the four routes just mentioned. And some of them expressed reservations about interacting with the professionals. "I always get intimidated," said a young woman, "I don't know what to say." "I'm just not sure what to say," another remarked. The sample's contacts with professionals, with a few exceptions, are confined to a couple of university professors whose interests in Texas and southwestern American archaeology match their own.

Certain indirect monetary ties archaeology amateurs have with their professional colleagues were reported when we discussed the amount of reading done and the number of courses taken by the former (see Chapter 5). Otherwise these amateurs save professionals money and further their occupational interests by lending a hand in surveys, excavations, and laboratory analyses and by serving as a political pressure group in the ways listed at the end of the preceding chapter. Archaeology amateurs seem to complement professional aims much better than theater amateurs who have no doubt been accused (though the accusation may be inaccurate) of stealing audiences from their professional counterparts. As already indicated, the amateur-professional relationship in archaeology is a truly symbiotic one.

The extensive reading and schooling amateurs do in archaeology is one aspect of their intellectual relationship with the professionals in their avocation. Another aspect of that relationship is the informal conversations with professionals at meetings, in the laboratory, and in the field. Whether the respondents read more widely than the professionals, thereby maintaining a broader view of the discipline, is unknown since the reading habits of the latter are unknown. The amateurs do read extensively in the archaeology of other ages in distant parts

of the world.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, if the assertion of one respondent is true, many professionals ignore the literature dealing with local sites that is older than ten years, thereby missing important information stemming from earlier work.

Sixteen respondents (57% of DAS pure amateurs) have no other fieldwork preferences in archaeology than what they are currently doing; namely, the archaeology of Texas, particularly north Texas, and, for some in this group, New Mexico. Among these sixteen are seven devotees. For all sixteen respondents there is a fascination with the history and prehistory of their part of the state in which they have lived for many years. It gives them roots and a special understanding of their past. The remainder of the interviewees have other strong fieldwork interests that augment their local predilection, interests they may share with a few others. Pre-Columbian archaeology is an additional major preference for eight of the sample. A couple of them would also like to participate in underwater salvage (the interest of a local professional) or classical archaeology.

In the fourth and fifth functional relationships, amateurs restrain professionals from overemphasizing technique and from stressing superficialities in lieu of meaningful or profound work and insist on the retention of excellence. As in theater we have no data on how professionals respond to the criticisms that amateurs make of their work, though the criticisms are markedly fewer in archaeology.

Fifteen respondents (54% of DAS pure amateurs) see no recurrent scientific weaknesses in the work of professional archaeologists. In part, this may be due to their limited exposure to a wide variety of professionals. The ones they associate with may have few, if any, weaknesses to note, since they are part of a prestigious university department of archaeology. This finding may also be due to the reverence with which a number of these respondents hold their professional superiors. The local professionals are often referred to as "Doctor" rather than by their first name, indicative of the professor-student relationship in which many of the sample, in fact, are or have been involved.

And, as already mentioned, some recent converts to amateur archaeology find it difficult to speak casually with professionals partly because they are awe-struck. Added to these sentiments is the belief, held by many amateurs, in their own inferiority when they compare their knowledge of the discipline with that of a professional. A couple of young amateurs responded to the probe about professional weaknesses in the following manner:

*I feel so inadequate right now, nobody knows how I'm trying to learn. . . . Most of them [professionals] are my professors or my advisor. You think of how much they've done and how long it's going to take to get there.*

*I don't have enough contact with the professionals other than the few digs I've been on. . . . I don't know of anyone's methodology; their opinions and attitudes, I don't know that much about them.*

The remaining thirteen respondents, among them six devotees, did cite flaws they believe to be more or less common to the discipline. There was less agreement on these than in theater; rather nearly as many flaws were listed as there were respondents to list them. The three main ones can be labeled *sloppy technique*, *inadequate proof*, and *poor writing*. Sloppy technique was mentioned by six respondents and refers to such practices as careless mapping and unsatisfactory exploration of a site and faulty recording of the activity and findings there. These result in questionable observations on which future description and explanation may then be built. One amateur gave a detailed description of this flaw and some of its antecedents:

*When you are working with a professional, I have found you can learn a whole lot. And you have to respect them. But, on the other hand, they are somewhat more slipshod and are not as thorough as we are as amateurs. . . . Well, it could be that I am just too much of a perfectionist, but I have an exploring mind. And I just like to dig, dig, dig on until I get to the bottom of the thing. And maybe the professional has to just hit at the high*



*points to keep going, to keep moving. . . . Due to a lack of funds is why he's probably content lots of times with making the holy 5-foot square of salvage. We use that term where they don't thoroughly investigate a site, because they don't have the money. . . . They'll try to analyze the site on a couple of 5-foot pits. . . because if we dig ten of those squares we might find out something different. You see the amateur has plenty of time and he can go back and work and work. Like this site report I showed you here on the Pemberton Site, I'd been working that for fifteen years. . . . No [I don't face pressure to publish] I didn't publish that until I got enough material. I had the complete story before it went to press. . . . whereas the professional has deadlines, you know, when the funds they give him have to be spent by a certain date. . . .*

Three of these thirteen respondents commented on the flaw of inadequate proof. All three, physical scientists of one kind or another, see a tendency among professional archaeologists to speculate on an insufficient foundation of data and to allow preconceived ideas to discipline their observations instead of the reverse. Perhaps it should be mentioned, too, that these charges are also leveled from time to time by physical scientists in general against all social science. One of these respondents put the matter this way:

*I myself am in more of a scientific field that refuses to accept speculation; mathematics, engineering, and so forth are based entirely upon the powers of substantiated fact. Fact that is supported. Archaeology, many times, is inclined to accept speculation, and after a period of time the speculation or assumption or hypothesis is accepted as proved. Perhaps it is done more so by the amateurs; they don't recognize the fact that the scientific process has never been met. . . . There's no data through which he [archaeologists in general] would test facts, so to speak, in archaeology. For example, the use of different tools — they'll pick up various tools and one of them will say this is a scraper or this is a knife or this is an arrowpoint or this is a drill or whatever it may be. And the truth of the matter is that there is really no hard facts with which to assign a use for that particular tool. What*

*they're really saying is that if I had this, I think that I'd use it as a knife. On the other hand, it could have been used for something else, it could have been a wedge or a — who knows. Now an arrowpoint would be an exception, an arrowpoint is self-explanatory by its shape. . . . But whether a particular flake would be used as a knife or a scraper. . . these are presumed uses. I think, scientifically, it's an error to assign a use to these tools.*

The three respondents who cited poor writing as a weakness of some professional publications pointed specifically to what they define as an unnecessary use of jargon and a presence of weak writing style. Here, too, the other social sciences, including sociology, have been criticized from various quarters.

The sixth and seventh functional relationships between professionals and amateurs are treated here as they were in Chapter 3. The sixth is unanswerable by means of the present study. The seventh was considered in the discussion of preprofessionals.

## **FAMILY MESH: SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE**

As was done in this section on amateur theater, the mesh of family life and amateur archaeology is examined from three perspectives: the effect of archaeology on family activities, the effect of family activities on archaeology, and the reaction of the family to this form of leisure by one or more of its adult members.

First, the effects of archaeology on the family. Amateurs in archaeology are more likely to fit their leisure around their family obligations than those in theater who tend to use the opposite strategy. And the difficulties met in achieving this mesh in amateur archaeology are considerably fewer than in amateur theater with the latter's steady pace of rehearsals and performances. But problems do arise sometimes for the devoted archaeologist:

*When I married [off] my second daughter, we had a reception scheduled so that I could leave in order to attend a state meeting of the Texas Archaeological Society. We had to empty the guests out before time for me to go to the meeting. It was my birthday, it was her wedding day, and it was the annual meeting of the Texas Archaeological Society. So we stirred the wedding, the reception, and the annual meeting all into the same day. That was a day. I also had a part on the program at the annual TAS. That was something. But somehow all three happened.*

In contrast to amateur theater hiring a baby-sitter is often a feasible solution for these amateurs. One may be needed for the night of the monthly DAS meeting, for a Saturday morning while assisting with classification at the university laboratory, or even weekly for an evening course. But paying such help for an entire weekend is usually beyond their means.

And at home there is much less preoccupation among amateurs in archaeology than among those in theater, probably because archaeology is rarely concentrated in a short period of time and begets no stage fright (except for the few who present papers at meetings, see Chapter 7). The large majority of archaeological respondents said they have little trouble controlling their thoughts on their leisure while associating with family members. When both husband and wife are amateurs, any problem of preoccupation is eliminated, for they can converse about a mutual passion. Moreover, archaeology, because it is a logical and empirical pursuit, is more easily shared than the more recondite artistic pursuit of theater.

Nevertheless, amateurs in archaeology are about as likely to procrastinate over their home duties as those in acting. Twenty-two respondents (79% of DAS pure amateurs) said they sometimes or often postpone these chores to engage in their avocation. Their comments convey a clear sense of priority:

*The house could fall down if I'm reading.*

*I'd much rather dig.*

*I've got to admit that I've devoted time to it [archaeology] when I should have been painting or mowing or hoeing in the garden or something like that.*

*Look, I've got a leak in that roof; I've had a hole there for two years. But there's not a chance in the world, if it's a good day Saturday, that I'll worry about that rather than go out and walk around the woods [to look for potential sites].*

Here, as in theater, it is evident that amateurs acquire additional leisure time by dipping into free time (see Chapter 3).

Amateur archaeology is inexpensive when compared with many other leisure activities and only moderately time-consuming. Hence, a large percentage of respondents have few regrets, if any, about spending the money and time they do on it. Archaeology, for them, does not deprive their families of these values. Time might be a problem were it not for the practice, soon to be discussed, of making family affairs of excavations and surveys.

### **The Priority of Family**

Generally, the effects of family on the avocational pursuit of archaeology are mixed. The first question here is what sort of activity conflicts develop as a result of a family member engaging in archaeology? Half the sample stated that home obligations affect their archaeological activities (e.g., digging, attending meetings or classes, reading) little or none at all. Many of these respondents are single or married and childless. The rest entered archaeology after their children were old enough to look after themselves. For this latter group archaeology is a pastime that fills, or helps fill, a void left when the demands of child rearing have slackened considerably.

Of the remaining fourteen respondents only three said that their leisure plans are restricted in a major way by family demands, demands that, in all three instances, are made on them by a heavily dependent relative. Otherwise, these amateurs are generally free to pursue archaeology, though each could

vividly recall occasions when family crises or obligations conflicted with it, pushing them into some unpleasant decisions. Since children's activities are commonly scheduled during the day on weekends, they clash at times with a prearranged weekend excavation or a Saturday morning of classification. One male devotee recounted how he was forced to leave a TAS annual convention early to attend his son's soccer game. "I felt just awful," he reminisced. "What a sacrifice." I interviewed an enthusiastic woman archaeologist two days before she faced the incompatible requirement of being in east Texas for a weekend survey, and watching her son play soccer. At the time we talked she had no idea how she was going to solve this predicament.<sup>3</sup>

As happens to theater amateurs, those in archaeology are forced to skip the occasional leisure event, such as a meeting or a class, because of a sick child. Further, a couple of respondents lamented that the demands of child rearing have prevented them from enrolling in archaeology courses at the university. Finally, the TAS summer field school, which lasts a week, collides with the activities of some of the amateurs' older children. The scorecard in this contest indicates a tie. There are times when the parents' interests win out; there are times when the childrens' do.

Beyond these considerations the effects of family on archaeology are generally slight. Seven respondents (25% of DAS pure amateurs) reported that family demands occasionally draw them from their books and journals. Only one could remember having been so preoccupied with a family matter that it thrust itself on her archaeology. This pattern is to be expected since amateurs in archaeology, unlike those in theater, are replaceable. If there are family problems or major responsibilities, the archaeology amateur simply stays home and deals with them, though certainly with some regret that he is unable to pursue his leisure as intended. The leisure, however, is not usually threatened in any significant measure by his absence.

## Amateur Archaeology: A Family Affair

Amateur archaeology is far more a family affair than amateur theater. This conclusion is based on the experiences of the twenty-one married respondents (many of whom had children) and the experiences of the three who pursued archaeology before they divorced. There are only two respondents whose children reject their leisure passion. Even here the rejections are more ones of disinterest than opposition. Where an amateur's marital partner shuns participation in his avocation, the partner, with one exception, still appears to accept cheerfully his participation in it. The exceptional case is the only one that contains the degree of opposition found in roughly half the sample of married theater amateurs. Tension arises between this particular pair from the amateur's constant participation in archaeological meetings and fieldwork (he is a devotee) on top of a demanding occupational routine. A young child further complicates the domestic situation for him.

One of the principal reasons for such widespread acceptance of the leisure habits of amateur archaeologists among their families is that other family members often take part in the activities. Most commonly, if they are children, they go to the field with one or both parents. And several respondents mentioned taking nieces, nephews, or neighbors, possibly in addition to their own children or spouse, to weekend excavations and even the TAS field school. Some youngsters get so interested in the science that they even develop a taste for DAS meetings. Some wives of amateurs who might otherwise find archaeology attractive dislike camping, which is required on weekend digs, or the other aspects of outdoor living that accompany field archaeology. Where this attitude is missing, whole families will turn up at one- and two-day excavations, though only one adult member may actually dig. The rest simply watch the proceedings and hike around the area, treating the outing as a welcome change from the routine of city life.

As in theater one family stood out above the rest as a model of integration of parental amateur interests with the need to

associate with their children:

*The Sherwoods' children are now grown up, married, and living in distant parts of the country. As children they participated regularly in the leisure passion of their parents: amateur archaeology. Fieldwork for the two elder Sherwoods (both devotees) became but another occasion for a family outing. All members were experienced campers and well acquainted with and interested in the outdoors. When Jack Sherwood took his annual vacation, the whole family would go on an extended dig, which in later years was usually the TAS summer field school. And the assistance of the children was significant enough to merit acknowledgment in several of their parents' publications.*

*The interest in archaeology that this broad exposure generated has stayed with the Sherwood children through their teen-age years to the present. One daughter has embarked on a career in art, while the other has entered the field of archaeological illustration. Their son whose occupation is quite outside the discipline of archaeology retains his interest in fieldwork, though it is much more moderate than that of his parents. Today, the Sherwood family still goes on the occasional excavation together, which may even include the grandchildren.*

Other families with one or two adult members in amateur archaeology make it a family affair, as the Sherwoods did, until their children reach approximately middle teen-age. At this point competing interests dilute the childrens' zeal for their parents' avocation, with the result that serious family activity conflicts begin to emerge, sometimes for the first time for the adults. Where once the TAS field school posed no problem — the whole family went to it with great enthusiasm — such plans now raise objections from a fifteen- or sixteen-year-old who, for instance, would prefer to stay home and take a summer job or participate in an organized sport there. Indeed, this sort of growing apart from the family pattern of recreation appears to be more common than the close integration exhibited by the Sherwood children that lasted through teenage to adulthood.

Similar to theater, children and teen-agers at excavations are a mixed blessing. Youngsters at the excavations I observed

would occasionally exhibit a greater inclination for doing the wrong thing (e.g., digging too fast, digging in the improper place, breaking down the sides of the square) than could be condoned. Other members of the crew showed a remarkable tolerance for these actions, perhaps because they sense the importance among their fellows of making archaeology a family event. When children and teen-agers are not in the pits working with their parents, aunts or uncles, they are amusing themselves somewhere in the vicinity. The unknown nature of this amusement worries those responsible for their safety. At one weekend survey the organizer fretted over the automobile driving of her son who had recently received his license and was trying his motoring skills on the local gravel roads. Others at the same gathering were apprehensive about their children who were wading in a nearby stream. In Texas poisonous water snakes are an omnipresent threat. Digs also take place in hazardous terrain. Given these dangers a DAS member can sometimes be persuaded to take the smaller children on a hike or nature-study tour.

Despite these minor strains while in the field, amateur archaeologists, as a group, appear to have integrated leisure and family life with noticeably more success than amateur actors and actresses. It is the archaeologists' good fortune to have selected an activity that has wide appeal and readily lends itself to family involvement.

Some may be tempted to account for this difference by invoking Willmott and Young's (1960: 20) study of a London suburb. They learned that managers and professionals there who work long hours poorly integrate their leisure and family activities when compared with those with less taxing job routines. The work schedules of our amateurs were never directly assessed. Yet, the theater and archaeology respondents are overwhelmingly middle class, while both groups appear to have a similar occupational involvement and commitment. Hence the more likely explanation of the difference in family-leisure integration in amateur archaeology and theater appears to be the nature of



the leisure itself rather than the effect of some external activity, such as the participant's occupation.

### **OCCUPATIONAL MESH: ROLE HARMONY**

There are two approaches to the occupational mesh: the effects of work on archaeology and the effects of archaeology on work. Let us turn to the first of these.

Here, too, amateur archaeology is like amateur theater; the job must come first, though allegiance to the two is sometimes nearly equal. As one devotee asserted: "I would damn near quit [my job] before I would miss the TAS summer dig." Twenty-four respondents currently hold or recently held a job, nineteen of whom are in upper-level white-collar positions, two of whom are secretaries, and three of whom do blue-collar work. Fourteen of the twenty-four (58% of employed DAS pure amateurs) have jobs that employ them from nine to five, five days a week. They experience no schedule problems with their leisure. The remaining ten have frequent or occasional work demands that may interfere with a meeting, course, or dig. Overtime, either at night or on weekends, accounts for most of these conflicts. And a few have regular albeit unconventional work schedules that keep them on the job when there is an opportunity to do archaeology. One physician, for example, gets an emergency call every so often while at DAS meetings. The occupational and educational (nonarchaeological) obligations of one woman respondent have kept her out of the field since her avocational career began three years ago. She does manage to attend most meetings of the Society and reads extensively in archaeological books and journals.

Many DAS amateurs, because they wish to attend the TAS field school, must confront the problem of arranging summer vacations. Since many employers commonly set vacation schedules early in the new year, TAS must fix on the week in June they intend to hold their field school and then com-

municate this decision by January, if not sooner. Whatever the reasons some respondents complained that they have not always known of this date in time and that this has led to problems at work. These problems may be exacerbated by the limited flexibility some employers have in granting vacations during the summer. Small businesses, for example, find it impossible to permit two employees to be away simultaneously. Seniority, as a basis of vacation choice, may destroy the avocational plans of junior employees. Five of the twenty-four employed respondents have had difficulty getting free to attend the TAS field school. Similarly, some find it a problem trying to arrange for time off from work to go to the TAS annual convention, even though it is held on a weekend.

All this illustrates rather well how "agendas" (McCall and Simmons, 1966: ch. 9) or personal schedules of activities are actually socially negotiated. We decide what we would like to do and when we would like to do it. Inevitably, it seems, someone comes along with their own agenda, which involves us, but which conflicts with our own. A process of negotiation often starts up at this point in an attempt to iron out the incompatible intentions and obligations.

As if the burdens of work and, sometimes, family were not enough, the weather can be a factor in organizing an excavation or survey. It rains a great deal in north Texas during the spring, which can force the cancellation or postponement of a dig. So amateur archaeologists must find a time when enough of them are free of family and occupational demands to constitute a crew and when the weather is at least minimally conducive to working in the dirt.

For some amateurs work functions to facilitate their archaeology. For one, it may have schedule flexibilities that permit attendance at daytime functions, such as the annual TAS convention or a meeting of the Society for American Archaeology (likely to be in another part of the country). The self-employed have the greatest work flexibility, which facilitates all facets of their leisure. But other occupations indirectly promote

amateur archaeology, too. For instance, one respondent who was a railroad engineer before he retired used his job in two ways to promote his avocational goals. He had the option of refusing to make a run, in which case a substitute was found and he would go to the field for a day or two. This, of course, cost him in wages. Otherwise he would make the trip, explore the used bookstores along the route for old site reports, and conduct his own surveys and digs during his time off. Others work at jobs the hours of which can be manipulated to fit leisure needs, either at the overtime end or even during the regular work period.

Another way one's job can facilitate one's archaeology is when the latter is "coordinated leisure" (Kelly 1974a), or leisure that is related to work in form or content, but unrequired by the job. Eleven of the employed portion of the sample (46% of employed DAS pure amateurs) participate in coordinated leisure, while the remaining thirteen may be said to participate in "unconditional leisure," an activity that is independent of work and freely chosen.

There are several engineers among the interviewees whose specialties more or less coordinate with their archaeology. We have already considered the knowledge of scientific method one gets from engineering. Others work in museums, thereby gaining familiarity with artifacts and nonartifactual materials. It is no accident that the librarian in the sample reads more archaeology than most other respondents. A nurse who works with Indians has found a natural job-leisure link in the amateur archaeology of north Texas, which is oriented to Indian history and prehistory. The flintknapper, mentioned earlier, is a construction worker who is at home with tools and so has developed the strength and sense of touch for the use of modern as well as primitive implements. The accountant draws on his statistical skills to quantify his findings as he attempts to prove his hypotheses mathematically. The sample also includes a social studies teacher who uses her archaeological knowledge in the schoolroom, and a physician whose interests also run to

paleopathology. There is no association, however, between the opportunity to engage in coordinated leisure and one's status as devotee or participant.

Archaeology amateurs run into little or none of the role strain between work and leisure that bedevils some amateur players. The archaeologists' employers, for example, were never mentioned in the interviews as being hostile toward their avocation; the employers apparently see no threat in it for the work performance of the amateur. Nor did I encounter any of the conflict that counselor Karen Pedersen (see Chapter 3) occasionally confronted in theater. But only two archaeologists cited their leisure as helpful to the conduct of their job, in contrast to six theater people.

Only nine of the twenty-four employed respondents said that work fatigue affects their leisure with any regularity. This is a somewhat higher proportion (38%) than found in amateur theater (less than 25%). Some in this group specified that fatigue resulting from work affects only the intellectual side of their leisure; namely, their reading and school work. Others felt as the aforementioned flintknapper occasionally does:

*Yeh, this happens every so often. My mind is stronger than my muscles. I've got this thing I want to do, this experiment I want to make. And I'll go out there to my flint tools. And when I do finally get everything gathered up, by then I realize I'm too damn tired to do it and I come back into the house without doing anything. This happens every so often.*

Respondents who seldom, if ever, find that their work fatigues them for their leisure, are similar to the majority of theater amateurs; they often arrive home tired, but the thought of reading in archaeology, assisting with classification, or going to a DAS meeting stirs a desire that dispels the weariness:

*The love of it drives you on. Work doesn't tire me.*

*You usually perk up; you run on adrenalin, nervous energy, or something.*

*I don't fatigue easily.*

*No, I don't get tired.*

*Actually, you'll go further for an extracurricular activity than you'll go for a job.*

For the same reason home duties, though also tiring at times, fail to stop the enthusiastic amateur's pursuit of archaeology.

There is a pride in stamina among the amateurs in archaeology, as there is among those in theater. But this sentiment appears stronger among the latter, perhaps because their concentrated involvement sets a greater challenge to their capacity to endure. Similarly, amateur archaeologists sometimes mentioned their skill at organizing and integrating their work and leisure activities, but with lower frequency and less conviction than the amateur players.

Only three of the twenty-four employed respondents indicated that thoughts of work ever wander into their archaeology. Two of these people have rather demanding, highly meaningful jobs that occasionally invade their leisure awareness. The third sometimes finds it hard to attend specifically to her reading in archaeology owing to issues at work that keep popping into her head. But the rest feel as one veteran amateur does: "Oh no! No way! When I walk out the door that's the end of that, that's it. I learned the hard way on that. A number of years ago I learned to leave my work at work."

What about the influence of archaeology on work? the answer is that it is less likely than amateur theater to intrude there. Only seven interviewees indicated that thoughts of archaeology creep into their mind while working, compared with thirteen out of twenty in theater. This finding also squares with the much lower degree of intrusion of archaeology on family life, again in contrast to theater. Theater is kept salient for its practitioners through nightly rehearsals and an imminent deadline, conditions that rarely, if ever, pertain in amateur archaeology.

Theater and archaeology amateurs are alike, however, in that both types often have occupations that are too demanding or exhilarating to admit any major degree of external preoccupation. And it follows for the archaeologists, too, that avocational pursuits never dilute their performance on the job. One gets the impression that, generally, both lines of activity are highly valued and that neither is allowed to unfavorably affect the other.

By way of conclusion, the overall picture of work and leisure among amateur archaeologists is that they are in mesh to an extent not normally found among theater amateurs.

### Notes

1. One of the female devotees is single. The other, though married and a mother, could devote herself fully to archaeology only before and after her child-rearing years. She has been in the science forty-two years.
2. By contrast, one respondent pointed out the need for amateurs to specialize, and to specialize in a marginal area of archaeology if they want professional recognition of their contributions. Only those who wish no such visibility can afford to be generalists.
3. The predicament was resolved nonetheless. She got sick, another aspect of everyday life that occasionally interferes with amateur activities.



# 7

## *The Amateur Perspective in Archaeology*

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Archaeology has an allure that should make members of other vocations and avocations downright envious. When I discussed this project with my friends and acquaintances and the other amateurs (in theater and baseball) connected with it, I frequently received comments about how interesting archaeology must be. Twenty of the archaeology respondents indicated that at least some of their friends, relatives, and work associates find their avocation attractive. One man described his friends's responses to his leisure calling: "Almost all say 'that sounds real interesting. How do you get into that?' "



Recently the appeal of amateur archaeology — more accurately, amateur paleontology — went commercial. In their “Christmas Book for 1975” Nieman-Marcus, the elegant and expensive department store with its home base in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, offered the following on page 15: “The 1976 His or her Gift: A Saurian Safari.” For the modest sum of \$29,995 one could join an excavation in Utah to hunt for his own allosaurus skeleton. With the attraction of prehistory being what it is, the management of Nieman-Marcus apparently thought they had a salable commodity. That they did. On Friday, January 16, 1976, it was reported (*Dallas Times Herald*, 1976: 8-D) that a North Carolina mortgage and loan company had, indeed, bought the trip. It has been donated to the North Carolina Museum of Natural History as a Bicentennial gift to the people of the state. As for the allosaurus skeleton, assuming one is found, parts of it will be loaned by the University of Utah to the museum in North Carolina.

Amateur archaeology of everyday life is neither so expensive nor so romantic. But it has, nonetheless, a special allure for the people who devote their free time to it.

This chapter follows the same outline as Chapter 4: the amateur archaeologist’s perspective on self is treated first through the framework of the five attitudes that differentiate him from his professional counterpart. Then his perspective on his leisure life-style is taken up by examining its rewards and costs.

### **PERSPECTIVE ON SELF**

The five attitudes are self-concept, preparedness, confidence, perseverance, and continuance commitment. As was done in the theater interviews each archaeology respondent was asked if he regarded himself as professional or amateur in his avocation. The answers to this query indicate a much more unequivocal self-identification on this theme among the archaeologists than

among the actors and actresses. Twenty-six of the archaeology respondents (93% of DAS pure amateurs) defined themselves as amateurs and, in so doing, qualified their responses less often than the theater respondents.<sup>1</sup> The following excerpts are typical of the archaeologists' feelings about their leisure identity:

*I am very definitely amateur. I have great respect for the professionals.*

*I am definitely an amateur. In no way do I consider that I have the fully-rounded abilities of a professional.*

*I am amateur. I don't have the inclination, motivation, or time to become professional in that field.*

*I would say I am amateur. My level of knowledge on it is probably not up to a BA, so I would have to consider myself amateur.*

Only seven archaeology respondents, compared with eighteen in theater, added such modifications to their answers as they differ most significantly from professionals in their choice of livelihood; they have professional standards of fieldwork, even though they are amateur; they have a professional orientation; they are serious.

These amateurs' identification of themselves is consistent with their views of their own performance in the areas of archaeology in which they commonly work; namely, excavation, surveying, recording, and, for some, classification. Seventeen of those who labeled themselves as amateurs said the professionals are unqualifiedly better at these activities than they are. The remaining nine opined that they can at least hold their own here with their professional colleagues, although five of them restricted this claim to routine excavation where they believe that their practiced eye and meticulous procedure have grown mainly from being so frequently delegated this work by the professionals. The other four expanded their perceived expertise to include classification or a specialized aspect of archaeology.

Among these nine were five devotees.

The archeology amateurs' comparative view of their abilities is in line with the attitude of reverence, considered earlier, that they hold for the professionals in their science. But it should never be construed that, because of this comparison, the former see those abilities as inferior. Nothing could be further from the truth. These amateurs are proud of what they know and do. Rather, owing to the obvious difference in knowledge and experience, which are acquired traits, the majority believe they must, if they are to be honest, separate themselves in a way that theater amateurs avoid. The latter make much less of a distinction here, for every player, professional or amateur, is expressing an inborn artistry through a personal interpretation of a role. Both take place in an activity where intellectual (and sometimes even physical) skills are much less important.

That the amateurs interviewed in this part of the study see themselves clearly as amateurs and not as inferior practitioners is further substantiated through their scorn for the pothunter. The pothunter — and at times he is a “treasure hunter” — is, in the theoretical language of this book, a dabbler or, at best, a hobbyist. He is fundamentally an insensitive collector of artifacts (including old bottles) who disturbs actual or potential sites for his personal aggrandizement. A recent addition to the pothunter set is the collector who operates with a metal detector though, obviously, stone and clay artifacts escape his attention. One interviewee stated the matter for himself and his wife: “We’re not collectors. We have no real interest in the artifacts for themselves. We’re interested in them only in the sense that these artifacts can communicate to us some aspect of the life-style of the people that used them.”

In fact, amateur and professional archaeologists also collect; it always has been and always will be part of the discipline. But they know what to collect and when to do so. Their scientific interest in puzzle-solving (e.g., how did these ancient people hunt?), is what distinguishes them from pothunters. Archaeologists collect primarily during informal surveys when

they know that to leave an artifact fully exposed is to invite its retrieval by passersby or that imminent construction will obliterate the landscape.<sup>2</sup> They know what to do should there be any actual or potential scientific value in an isolated arrowhead or pottery sherd found in the countryside. It is from this informal surveying that the small collections found in some amateurs' homes are built.<sup>3</sup>

It is noteworthy that several interviewees were once pothunters themselves. Their present interest in archaeology roots in an earlier childhood hobby of collecting arrowheads along the streams and bluffs in the vicinity of their home. As they grew up their curiosity about these artifacts led them to museums and libraries (possibly as part of a classroom or scouting project) where they began to learn about the scientific significance of the artifacts. Subsequently, contact was made with organizations like DAS. As a couple of respondents urged, pothunters should be treated with less disdain since they are potentially future archaeologists, amateur or professional. Rigid enforcement of the antiquities laws could eliminate this career line into the discipline.

The husband-and-wife team with a publication record of over seventy-five scholarly articles were the two respondents to identify themselves as other than amateur (cf. Chapter 5). Since they are proud of their amateur status, they hesitate to classify themselves as professional. Yet their wide reputation and respect and many written contributions, along with other indicators, suggest professional status in their own eyes and the eyes of others.<sup>4</sup> As the man put it: "I kind of consider myself a cross-between, one amateur leg, one professional leg."

### **Preparedness and Confidence: Feeling Inadequate**

In amateur archaeology, as in amateur theater, preparedness breeds confidence. Being prepared in archaeology is built from a substantial background in courses, reading, talks, and field experiences. An amateur is prepared when he has learned enough to be able to do those things that seasoned DAS

members generally do; to wit, survey, excavate, and record. Equipped thus he has the confidence to serve as an archaeologist in his area of interest at the observation stage of his science.

Still, some respondents are inclined to try their hand at description; to attempt to identify the materials they excavate or observe. Here, their remarks indicate, they feel less prepared and therefore less confident:

*It depends on what he's [the professional] doing. . . . There's a lot of identification that I'm not good at.*

*I might someday dig a site by myself. . . . I would at least be dependent on them [professionals] to give suggestions and directions the research should take.*

*In classification and identification I prefer to work with somebody. Although I am informed and adequately knowledgeable in the subject, I don't feel that way.*

*We're not qualified to work on or handle a dig alone.*

*My level of knowledge on it isn't probably — is probably not up to a BA or whatever.*

In other words, for some DAS pure amateurs, learning to survey, excavate, and record constitutes the extent of their development in archaeology. And there are those who lack confidence even at this level. Others, having mastered this part of archaeology, want to advance to where they can classify and write journal articles (and present scholarly talks) on their observations. Probably only the half-dozen respondents who have written six or more articles feel adequately prepared and confident to engage in this form of scientific activity. The rest are more or less struggling to reach this level of competence and must cope with feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt as they progress.

In sum, amateurs in archaeology, like those in theater, are

confident when they are prepared and when they restrict their activities to the familiar parts of their leisure field. But, unlike theater, there are amateurs in archaeology whose basic preparation is still insufficient and who lack confidence for this reason. Those who have this preparation and who venture into the unfamiliar to try new activities discover their erstwhile confidence ebbing. How much pressure there is in theater or archaeology for this sort of expansion of one's involvement is unknown at present, but a question well worth investigating.

### **Perseverance and Commitment: Group Pressure**

Amateurs in archaeology wish, even more than those in theater, for time and opportunity to pursue their avocation; only four respondents (13% of DAS pure amateurs) said they get satiated with archaeology at their current rate of participation. And two of these crave less today than earlier in their lives. Generally, the amateur wants to do more archaeology for the excitement of it. Occasionally, special reasons are also mentioned, such as the desire to see certain hypotheses tested, potentially rich sites explored, or areas surveyed; to get outside when the weather is inviting; to unwind from the pressures of work. A young male devotee feels this way:

*Certainly, certainly. I have a good example. In fact, I worry about myself when I get in the state of mind I was in Sunday. I would have given almost anything to be in Wichita Falls that time and just take a walk in a dry creek bed and look for artifacts, even if I didn't find anything. Partly it's an interest to go, partly a desire to be re-created. It's about the only time I ever let down is when I get in that proper frame of mind to go out to do a survey or something like that. It's the only time I really let down. If I could get out more it would be better for me in all aspects of life.*

An older devotee of fifteen-years' experience stressed a different reason underlying his craving for archaeology:

*Well, let me put it this way. I get up some morning and it's raining cats and dogs. And I say, "Well, heck!" And I stay home. Well, in an hour it's stopped raining, and I'm walking the floor. I keep thinking that I will cool in my feelings toward this as I mellow in my old age and get to where I can take it or leave it alone. But, so far, I haven't reached that stage. I'm still gung-ho. I still crave knowledge and the physical contacts too. I think the fascinating thing of this is that it changes from day to day. What was the absolute... what was the theory the day before yesterday and proven fact yesterday, then today it's blown to heck.*

Perhaps archaeology amateurs miss their leisure more than those in theater because the former have less need to persist than do the latter. Archaeology amateurs experience none of the pressures found in theater to stick with incurred leisure obligation through a full six weeks, night in and night out. Furthermore, they can partake of archaeology in small amounts in various places — an evening here, a weekend there, at home, in the field, in the laboratory, or at a meeting.

Nonetheless, there are reasons why an archaeologist might want to throw up his hands in disgust, frustration, or physical exhaustion and go home for the day. Situations exist where he must persevere. For instance, excavation, as already noted, is hard work and the rewards are scarce. The goals of DAS, TAS, and individual organizers would never be reached if the amateurs involved called it quits at every hint of fatigue or disinterest. Indeed, a certain group pressure seems to hang over a site that helps keep participants and devotees alike at their tasks. A manifestation of this spirit occurred at a dig I observed, when one of the amateurs peered from his square and remarked dryly: "Hum, I see we're down to the DAS members now." By this he meant that several visitors at the site who were considered potential recruits to the Society had, for whatever reasons, drifted off. It is expected that a fieldworker will take a break from time to time, but, other factors considered, suspicions about his motivation are aroused when he walks off the

site or reclines under a tree for an hour or two.

The need to persist also confronts those who take courses for credit or who commit themselves to presenting a talk on archaeology or writing a paper for the Society's journal. But, on the whole, both perseverance and commitment appear to be at a lower level in amateur archaeology than in amateur theater. And they are certainly lower than in professional archaeology, where the practitioner must keep trying in the face of a failure to get funded to do research, to get adequate amateur help with research already funded, or to get findings published. These and other factors examined in Chapter 1 foster a degree of perseverance and commitment that distinguish, attitudinally, the professionals from the amateurs in archaeology.

## **PERSPECTIVE ON LEISURE LIFE-STYLE**

In archaeology, as elsewhere, life has its ups and downs. We examine these in this section first by looking at the rewards and thrills of this avocation and then by looking at its disappointments, dislikes, and tensions.

### **Rewards: The Pure Joy of Knowledge**

The rewards of amateur archaeology are covered in the same order as the ones in theater, first by considering those that primarily benefit the individual's personality and then by considering those that primarily benefit his social life. The rewards that enhance personality are self-actualization, self-gratification, and self-conception. The others in this category — self-expression, self-enrichment, recreation — so prominent in theater, were mentioned too infrequently by the archaeologists to warrant discussion here. The only reward in amateur archaeology that contributes to social life is sociable interaction, the theater rewards of a sense of accomplishment and communication of a message being nearly nonexistent.



Virtually every respondent cited the self-actualization reward of archaeology, which has two aspects. The first is the acquisition of *knowledge* about the life-style and culture of a society that has long since ceased to exist. For many, though not all, of the sample this prehistoric knowledge parallels their knowledge of the modern history of Texas or a part of it, usually that section of the state in which they currently live. One respondent sees the self-actualizing benefits of archaeology this way:

*It's just a real source of interest, interest in local history. It's just, to me, a fascination to be able to grub around in the dirt and from that discover some real feel about these people who lived here. . . . And you do get a sense of history, particularly from standing on a piece of ground. You're standing right precisely in the footsteps of someone. . . . you know inhabited it thousands of years ago. You just can't help it whether you're an archaeologist or whatever.*

The growth of an interest in prehistoric knowledge is an important development in the career of the amateur archaeologist as he outgrows his pothunter orientation. At this point the processes of digging and collecting become means to an end — the end of scientific knowledge — rather than ends in themselves.

The second aspect of self-actualization is the *shared reality*, as one interviewee put it, between archaeologist and those in the past whom he is investigating. There is a kind of role-taking or empathy at work here, which many respondents mentioned. As we shall see later it is thrilling to hold an artifact, for example, that was made by another human being hundreds of years ago. But this sentimentalism aside the archaeologist also tries to place himself in the sociocultural position of the manufacturer to understand better why and how he made the artifact and how it relates to other items found at that and related sites. So it is through this shared reality that this scientist also gains knowledge. In the process he seems to develop a strong identification with his ancient predecessors as well. A male devotee had this to say on the subject:

*You're working a square and you unearth a projectile point. You look at it and know, roughly, it's possibly 4,000 years old. And you think, "gee whiz", 4,000 years it's laying there and I'm going to be the first one to reach over and pick it up since he threw it away. . . ." Strangely, a lot of people ask me how do I know where to hunt? And I, really and truly, place myself, when I'm out, I place myself in the Indian's shoes. Here I am. I've got my family to look after. I've got to provide for them. Now what do I look for first? Water. I go to water to get the water. Then what do I want? I want protection from the elements. Water's first, then protection from the elements, then protection from the enemy. With those three things in mind it's not hard to find campsites. Yes, I relate to the Indian very strongly.*

Fifteen respondents mentioned some form of self-gratification as a reward of their avocation. Ten of them defined the *puzzle-solving* process in science as enjoyable. Amateurs who have advanced to the stage in their avocational development where their principal interest is in testing hypotheses and constructing theory about how past societies functioned have come as far from the pothunting stage of their career as they can go. They now conceive of themselves as part of the "new" or scientific archaeology. They have moved beyond the search for descriptive knowledge of the past to a search for explanatory knowledge of it. It should be clear, however, that this reward stems from the process of gaining that knowledge; from the excitement of piecing together, much as a detective might, bits of evidence into a meaningful picture.

At this point, in fact, excavating and surveying may grow stale. Which suggests that as amateurs continue in archaeology some of them grow disenchanted with their "helper" role — the role the professionals see them fitting best — and desire something more sophisticated and challenging. In other words, they strive to become even more like the professionals than they have been.

The self-gratification found in archaeology for the remaining five respondents is the opportunity it gives them to be *out-of-doors*. Many amateur, and perhaps many professional, ar-

chaeologists love the countryside.

The third benefit to one's personality is the self-conception available to the archaeology amateur, though it was mentioned by only four respondents. The most important sources of self-validation for these amateurs are other amateurs of the same feather and, of course, professionals, rather than, as in amateur theater, the general public.<sup>5</sup> One's reputation in the discipline as a good archaeologist locally or, even better, nationally or internationally, is the essence of this reward. Still, the leisure interests of several respondents are also known among their non-archaeological associates at work, in the home, and around the neighborhood. Consequently, they occasionally wind up in the position of informal consultant. So their self-images are further enhanced when others seek their opinion on an arrowpoint found in the woods, ask to borrow some artifacts to show at school, request that they survey a piece of property, and the like.

Some minor and transient boost to self-conception are also possible through the routine of amateur archaeology. For instance, as explained in Chapter 5, some finds bring a moment of glory to the discoverer. Or the veteran amateur can spin a myriad of tales about his experiences at various sites, with different professionals, while at conventions, and as an author. In so doing he becomes the center of attention and reaps the benefits associated with being an entertainer of those who envy his accumulated wisdom and background.

*Sociable Interaction: Let's Talk Shop.* Three-quarters of the respondents listed as a reward the attractiveness of the social life connected with amateur archaeology, though many of them also stressed that this is not their main reason for participation. Nineteen people (68% of DAS pure amateurs) indicated that at least a third of their moderate-to-close friends are in archaeology. The range here runs from one couple with no archaeology friends of this degree of closeness to a woman who estimated about 80 percent of her friends to be of the same per-

suasion. All the devotees were among the twelve interviewees who said 40 percent or more of their friends are archaeologists. Some amateurs develop a network of friends and acquaintances in archaeology, through attendance at various TAS field schools and society meetings, that stretches across the state and even beyond its borders.

So consistent a finding across the three fields (see Chapters 4 and 9) urges reconsideration of Burch's (1969: 142) proposition that friends necessarily encourage continued participation in a particular style of leisure (see Chapter 4). As in theater various rewards and thrills likely play the most significant role in beckoning the amateur to and retaining him in his avocation, however many of his friends are connected with it.

For many in the sample the inviting aspect of the social life of amateur archaeology is its shoptalk. It is enlivening to discuss hypotheses, new ideas, alternative classifications of artifacts, different field methods, and the like during and after a day of excavation. The conviviality of TAS field schools is built on shoptalk in addition to singing, storytelling by the old timers in Texas archeology, and short lectures, much of which is supplemented with an ample diet of beer. DAS gatherings, whether in the field or at meetings, are just as friendly. Indeed, according to one respondent with experience elsewhere in Texas and in New Mexico, they are the warmest of any society in the the area.

For some respondents the ultimate reward of the sociable interaction within their avocation comes in the family associations made possibly by it. A mother of several children whose husband is also an amateur explained how this works for them:

*I think one of our primary things is that up until this point it's been a family kind of thing. And it's been satisfying because it creates an interest in which we can converse with the children about a subject that we all participated in. And I think this common ground is one place where our anticipation has been equal. We are not in a stronger position, because we were learning too. And the kids realize that we're learning. And because they are*

*also in the same learning milieu, we were equalized somehow. It makes a good environment for a child to realize that a parent is not omniscient. We are as vulnerable to ignorance as they are. This gives us a commonality that doesn't exist in other parent-children relationships.*<sup>6</sup>

Comparing amateur archaeology with amateur theater, it is clear that they have different capacities to charm entire families. Another difference, yet to be mentioned, is the lack of reference among the archaeologists to their colleagues as interesting, spontaneous, tolerant, and so forth. They make enjoyable company for other reasons, but apparently not for these.

### **Thrills: Discovery**

For many amateurs in archaeology a major find is their chief thrill. A major find for the experienced amateur is something extraordinary; for instance, a large and unblemished point, a burial (the more skeletons the better), an extremely old artifact or nonartifactual feature (e.g., 7,000 years), or an intact piece of pottery. Much of routine fieldwork is conducted around the prospect of such discovery and, like the fisherman who is certain there are fish below but uncertain about when they will bite, the amateur continues to search. "There's an awful lot of drudgery without a find," groaned one respondent, "so the thrill is an anticipated one." Though the professionals and some amateurs find other aspects of their work or leisure equally electrifying, an uncommon find, the significance of which is immediately apparent, is a heady experience, as the following passages suggest:

*I had heard about Indian burials for years, but I'd never even seen one. They're extremely rare. I understand there was a time when they were plentiful but, like all good things, they're slowly depleting. In recent years they have been rare in Texas. But I was on a site in New Mexico one time and hardly started excavating a single room, when a bone that was hooked onto another bone came into view. The farther I went the more bones there were. That one small room had seven human skeletons in it. It took*

*most of a week just to expose them and to try to do a professional job. . . . That was the end of my skeleton fever.*

*One thrill was the finding of a 6-inch spearhead. I found it in the panhandle near Amarillo in 1969. And it was with this biology teacher that I was inducting into his archaeological skills there. He had found his first arrowhead about 50 yards from there. Anyway, one Saturday I was teaching him how to hunt with the sun. And I could see from maybe 50 yards away, the glint of the sun on the flint. I said: "Dick, there's a worked piece of flint over there. I think it's a bird point." And only a quarter of an inch of it was sticking out of this mixed gravel and sand in a creek bed. And I pulled on it, and it started coming. I knew it was bigger than I thought it was. And I could not believe it was a 6-inch spearhead made out of alabaster flint, which is about the best in America. It was traded from the panhandle to New York, to Mexico, and to Western Canada. That was a thrill. . . . I can still remember putting it out and the sound of that gravel tinkling down that long blade.*

Other respondents mentioned the thrill of simply seeing and holding freshly discovered artifacts made thousands of years ago, even if someone else uncovered them. Three people cited the exceptional enjoyment they receive from successfully solving a puzzle in their science. In one man's words: "This is my thrill; to develop testable hypotheses and following them through." Four others noted the thrill of publication and the professional recognition that sometimes results from it.

There are some striking differences here between theater and archaeology. Thrills among amateurs and professionals in the former root in the same kinds of experiences, which they have early in their acting careers. In the latter, amateurs thrill to the same experiences as their professional colleagues only after their avocational career has progressed to the level of puzzle-solving, writing, and professional recognition.

So, where thrills are concerned, there is more deferment of gratification in archaeology than in theater. The player normally finds thrills in at least some of his performances in the run, even if he is only acting in his first production. The amateur ar-

chaeologist may have to wait years to have the equivalent experience. He lives with the dream that someday, if he is lucky, he will find the remains of, or artifacts connected with, an ancient man. In the interim he is buoyed up by the pleasures of shoptalk, out-of-doors activity, acquisition of knowledge, and more or less routine collection and observation, a list of sufficient appeal to entice him to return.

### **Disappointments: No High Hopes**

Disappointments anywhere in life are born of high hopes. But, since the amateur archaeologist seldom approaches a survey or excavation with high hopes, he seldom experiences disappointment. Three-quarters of the respondents said they have never been disappointed in their avocation. In fact, many of them, at this point in the interview, mentioned only their frustration at being unable to get into the field to do still more archaeology. Infrequent disappointment stems from the expectation that major finds are rare, though such items as flint and bone chips, broken projectile points, sherds, and charcoal are routinely found at many surveys and excavations. "You work and work and work and don't find anything," observed a seasoned woman archaeologist, "but a lot of times you know that's what it's going to be."

The remainder of the sample could remember disappointments, which were based on a failure to meet high hopes. For example, several members of DAS still recall with extreme disappointment the flooding of a potentially rich site that had inflated everyone's expectations. They had been excavating along a stream that had recently been dammed and was scheduled to fill to its capacity as a reservoir in eight years. Hopes arose when evidence was discovered that suggested they were dealing with the remains of a campsite or habitation that was thousands of years old. Indeed, one so old that certain professionals in the area doubted the amateurs' claims. With some professionals unconvinced and others taking a wait-and-see stance, more evidence was clearly needed. Then the rains came. The flowage

area predicted to fill in eight years filled in a week, putting the potential proof of the amateurs' hypotheses 20 feet under water forever.

The disenchantments in amateur archaeology, assuming there are some, remained hidden throughout the study. Perhaps these amateurs gain a more realistic view of their leisure than theater amateurs do. The latter must contend with the idealistic images of theater that abound in our society, a problem that archaeology amateurs face in only limited form. As in theater it would be valuable for our understanding of amateurism to know how many amateurs leave archaeology because it has grown humdrum or fails to meet their expectations.

### **The Dislikes: On Disparagement**

The only conspicuous dislike, in the sense that it is shared by several respondents (eleven, or 39% of DAS pure amateurs) is the *disparagement* of amateurs by some professional archaeologists. A number of others are aware of this tendency, but said that "dislike" is too strong a label for their feelings.

Disparagement by those professionals who engage in it takes different forms. Some amateurs feel they are treated as mere factotums at surveys and excavations; they see themselves as hewers of wood and drawers of water who are excluded from significant participation in the more interesting recording, analysis, and interpretation of their observations. Disparagement also appears in the failure of some professionals to acknowledge in print the contributions made by particular amateurs to their research:

*One of my peeves is when a professional uses your material and doesn't give you a reference or a mention. It sure is a disappointment. Or like a certain one did who wanted to work on sites on the Trinity River. He said: "I don't know anything about those sites up on the Trinity...how about whipping me up something?" OK, I did. I whipped him up a series of sites. Well, when that thing showed up in print, he hardly mentioned my name. That's what peeves you some.*



Other respondents emphasized the tendency of some professionals to ignore pure amateurs (not preprofessionals), by refusing to use them even as skilled labor. "The professionals aren't utilizing the amateurs as much as they could," lamented one devotee, "and Texas is using them better than any other state that I know of. . . . They tend to kind of put you off at times, I think." Some interviewees still recall, with bitterness, the remark made publicly at a TAS convention by a well-known professional to the effect that it would be better to bulldoze a site than to have amateurs work on it.

Another irksome form of belittlement is the amateurs' perception of arrogance in some fledgling Ph.D.s and graduate students who are nearing this title. It is seen in the demeanor of young professionals who have yet to learn how to carry their newly acquired status with grace, and in the use of what some amateurs regard as pretentious and often unnecessary jargon. The implication is that amateurs, instead of being junior colleagues, are merely pothunters. A woman who has been a DAS member for four years felt that "some professionals talk down to you. They act like they really wish there weren't such things as amateurs."

The perception amateurs have of their disparagement by professionals has, if anything, been sharpened by a movement within the Society for American Archaeology (SAA) to develop a registry of professional archaeologists. Since archaeologists have no legal basis for practice, as do lawyers or physicians, such a registry would identify authentic professionals in this field. In fact, the committee within SAA assigned to this project intends the list to be a service to those who seek to employ archaeologists through contracts. As we have seen, few DAS amateurs have engaged or are interested in engaging in this kind of archaeology. Nevertheless, rumor of this movement has been circulating among the respondents who, being unaware of its real aim, have defined it as an effort to cripple amateur involvement in the discipline.

It should be interjected here that the rancor that exists among

amateurs as a result of professional disparagement is directed only toward specific individuals, never toward professional archaeologists as a group. Indeed, it is because of the amateurs' generally high respect for the professional that the latter's depreciation of them cuts so deeply. And amateur-professional relations are said, by the amateurs, to be as good in Texas as anywhere in the country.

Warm relations could have a valuable payoff. Two professors of archaeology kept emerging again and again in my interviews and field notes as splendid individuals who do first-rate research and treat amateurs with the respect the latter feel they deserve. The influence of this pair on the amateurs as models to be emulated appears to be considerable. How better to ensure high quality amateur performance than by the process of emulation?

Unlike amateur theater, archaeology is not peppered with dislikes. Five respondents said they had none at all. When specifically asked about dislikes, only a handful mentioned pothunters, despite the general scorn for these people. Apparently they are too unobtrusive to surface as a leading annoyance, even though some have had unpleasant experiences with them. One man, for example, watched in disgust as a rock hound acquaintance of his chisled petroglyphs from a rock face in Arizona. Others have had their sites damaged or looted by pothunters in search of collectible artifacts.

The pothunter's threat may actually be less, at least in Texas, than some archaeologists believe. For one, there are so many sites in the state that amateurs and professionals together are unlikely to get around to exploring them all. As previously noted, pothunters have also been a source of adherents for the discipline, although this is probably less true today than formerly. Moreover, they usually surface collect, while significant finds are commonly excavated.

Two to four respondents mentioned other dislikes, which are listed here as an aid to the future study of amateur science in general and amateur archaeology in particular. One of these is the arrogance and, occasionally, the ignorance of some crew

chiefs at the annual TAS field school. These functionaries are themselves amateurs. Incompetent or unprofessional procedure on the part of certain professionals was cited by four of the sample. Two complained that professionals are reluctant to work on weekends, the only time many amateurs are available. Others registered their dislike for the practice at TAS field schools of distributing family members in different squares. As shown in Chapter 6 the opportunity to interact as a family is an important benefit of archaeology for some amateurs, which this policy tends to thwart. Finally, some of the older female amateurs still sense an antifeminist orientation among certain professionals that persists despite the contemporary women's movement.

### **The Tensions: Mental Tranquility**

When compared with amateur theater, amateur archaeology stirs little tension. Twelve respondents (43% of DAS pure amateurs) reported no tension whatsoever while at their leisure. A few mentioned sporadic friction with a fellow amateur, a TAS crew chief, or an archaeology graduate student, but these are regarded as isolated incidents rather than regular occurrences. Only one respondent has what could be termed a hostile relationship, in the field of archaeology, which is with another amateur.

Four interviewees said they become or used to become apprehensive over the prospect of giving a talk before a TAS or DAS meeting. Since this is a peripheral activity, in which most of the sample have yet to engage, it hints at the possible tension that amateur archaeology holds for those who care to venture beyond the observation phase of the science. Few respondents are employed in occupations that prepare them for this sort of public speaking.

There is even little tension connected with the friendly competition that is promoted at TAS field schools. Crews compete with one another for the most significant and voluminous finds of the day. But winning this competition is a matter of luck — digging in a fertile square — rather than skill. One has no con-

trol over the outcome, and the outcome (winning or losing) itself has scant bearing on one's leisure career. The failure to find something is a matter of disappointment, perhaps, but never tension. Nor is a tense competitive spirit fostered by the tradition of selecting the most original sifter and name tag, even though there is an expression of talent here. The heart of archaeology, and hence the source of the practitioner's avocational self-concept, lies elsewhere.

Several more or less personal tensions were picked up in the interviews that warrant listing on the chance that they may have some import for future research. Editing the Society's publication may have its tense moments, as when the editor runs into opposition over the way he has handled a manuscript or the kind of item he has printed. Some neophytes in amateur archaeology worry that, while excavating, they may unintentionally destroy or damage something valuable. Others are anxious over the sort of reputation they are developing in the field, which they know to hinge on the quality of their fieldwork and laboratory assistance. A couple of respondents feel a pressure to know much more than they do, but face demands with a higher priority from other areas of their lives that prevent the commitment of more time to correcting this deficiency. And presiding at the monthly meetings of the Society may be tense for those who have had little earlier experience at parliamentary proceedings. However, only a total of nine respondents mentioned these tensions.

There is a tension in amateur archaeology that resembles the tension of stage fright in amateur theater, in the sense that an approach-avoidance conflict torments the individual. This tension, which springs from the *don't-touch* precept, refers to the urge to pick up and examine immediately an item of archaeological value that is uncovered while digging. As discussed earlier it is exhilarating to handle an artifact made by someone who lived thousands of years ago and to ponder how and why he made it. Still, the very position of the item may be critical for determining its contextual, functional, structural, and

behavioral relevance. Hence, the rule among these amateurs is don't touch, at least until the item is mapped and recorded.

Fifteen respondents (54% of DAS pure amateurs) find it difficult to keep hands off some or all of the items they discover at a dig. Eleven of these are participants, the other four devotees. They see the matter this way:

*Everybody has the tendency to want to rub it, feel it, turn it over, and see what it looks like. . . .*

*Good Heavens, yes! Oh yes! Sometimes I look at something in awe and think how did they do it? It's beautiful. Like some of the points that were made, are absolutely beautiful; they're very artistic.*

*Probably. Yeh. I think that's probably the impulse with everybody. The first thing you want to do is touch something. I'm probably more scared of doing something wrong, which is keeping me in line. You go through all those years of "don't touch, don't touch."*

*Yes. It really is hard. . . .*

A large proportion of the experienced amateurs, especially the devotees, say they are no longer bothered by this tension. The urge to touch seems to fade as the amateur grows accustomed to finding artifacts and acquires an interest in puzzle-solving, writing, and presenting scholarly papers. As the next passage demonstrates the urge is there for at least some experienced amateurs, but it is now controlled by more scientific motives:

*No, really I don't. To give you a good example of that. At the Williams Site I started in '66. It was in '71 or '72 before I uncovered my first burial. Unfortunately, that particular day I didn't have my camera. As soon as I found out it was a burial, I set about finding boards, logs, rocks, anything that I could find to build up over that to keep the cows and cattle off of it in preparation for next weekend's trip when I could have my camera to record as I excavated. . . . I won't say I didn't think a thousand times about what I was going to find or of what all was*

*there and so forth. But I was able to restrain myself. I didn't pick anything up. Quite often on unusual artifacts in the lithic field, an extra large projectile point or large biface or whatever, that I want to photograph, when I find it I immediately start excavating around it so that I can expose it and leave it in situ, so I can get a picture of it. No, I have no trouble with that. No, in fact, even if I am out surveying, walking, if I stumble onto an artifact laying on the surface. Oftentimes, if there are several people or other people with me, I'll call them over before I even bend over to touch it. Of course, the thrill is there when I do pick it up. But I can restrain myself.*

In the end it is such values as the find, the communion with a past society and its individual members, the awesome beauty of the projectile point, the scientific puzzles and their creative solution, the publications, the shoptalk and speculation, and the acquisition of experience and knowledge that beckon to the amateur archaeologist, calling him to the meetings, sites, conferences, and pages of the journals. There is a way of leisure life here that most people have never even dreamed about. But for its votaries who have assimilated it into their very souls, it is an irreplaceable reality.

*I cannot get it out of me. It would be easier to cut off both my legs and arms than to stop being interested in it. . . . I think about archaeology so much and feel it so deeply that I could never be removed from it, totally, mentally. Because I don't ever look at a countryside or flat grassy plain or a cliff in normal terms. I think of it always in a sort of spiritual archaeological sense of how could primitive man be this, what might there be there still of his occupation, what was the land like before the crummy barbed wire ran all through it as it does now? This is the great thing about finding these artifacts, especially when you're just . . . by yourself. Then there is nothing separating you and time. I still just gasp when I find artifacts. . . . It's an experience you can't describe. . . .*

## Notes

1. One of the two undergraduate students identified herself as preprofessional.
2. There is also the question of how much value there is in a surface artifact since it is likely to be isolated from any context that would enable valid inference about its cultural meaning.
3. Collections from existing sites are also stored at times in amateurs' homes in lieu of a better place to house them. And analyses may be carried out here, in which case the house takes on the appearance of a laboratory with chips, points, scrapers, and other objects on every available flat surface.
4. Other indicators include long-distance telephone calls to them about their research and writings, mail addressed to them by the title "Doctor," and permits issued to them to excavate in national parks.
5. The theater amateurs undoubtedly enjoy the approbation of their peers and savor any reknown they have among them. But this aspect of self-concept was never mentioned as a reward of theater, while community reputation was.
6. This respondent's beliefs are corroborated by West and Merriam (1970). In a study of outdoor recreation, the authors report that it promoted family cohesiveness.

## *The Routine of Amateur Baseball*

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Work with the archaeologists, except for a couple of interviews and a weekend excavation, was completed by the end of March, which was none too soon; for already there was action in the city ballparks. The university teams were well into their schedules, while the professional season was just around the corner. Everywhere softballs were in the air. Pairs of men could be playing catch with each other near the college dormitories, on the residential streets, and in the open spaces of the city parks. Radio and television stations carried news of the forthcoming professional season, the players' strike, the big contracts, and



the pennant chances of the local big league team, the Texas Rangers. In the sports pages of the newspapers, the concern was still chiefly with basketball and hockey, but the national sport was gaining in coverage. It was clear: the annual epidemic of baseball fever had broken out.

I telephoned the city recreation department to inquire about the nature of adult amateur baseball in the community. From them I learned that it is organized and administered through the Senior Men's Open League, or the "Open League" as the players abbreviate it, which has no formal connection with the city government. I was directed to one of the senior officials of the League who helped found it and who currently serves on its Board of Directors.

The Open League, which operates in the city of Arlington in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, had been in existence eight years when I contacted it. In the League's early days the community also boasted an outstanding semiprofessional team: the Arlington Cardinals. But, as the need for more amateur playing opportunities grew as a result of increasing population, as the Texas Rangers baseball team took root in the area, and as the popularity of softball rose, support for the Cardinals faded, contributing to the team's demise.

In its initial years the League was bothered by a good deal of uncertainty as to the number and stability of teams, the sources of financing, the optimum schedule, and so on. For instance, only one team exists today that competed in the League's first season. Until recently the players had to pay for everything they did. They also had to do their own officiating. They still find themselves in stiff competition with city-sponsored functions, especially softball, for the limited playing and practicing space in the community. Even attracting and holding players has been a problem at times.

While some difficulties still threaten the League, many of them have been eliminated. Uniforms are now required of all teams. These are commonly purchased by a local firm in return for the advertising privilege of having its name emblazoned on

the back of each jersey. This "sponsor" may even pay the team's entry fee to the League (\$230 in 1976), which covers the costs of such necessities as lights, umpires, balls, and base pads. If no sponsor can be found, then these costs are born by the players at approximately \$14 each for the average size team of 16 players. Today, the city recreation department reserves diamonds for the League's games, though, as we shall see, problems remain with this arrangement.

The 1976 season was the first for the League under the aegis of the American Amateur Baseball Congress (AABC). As a member of the Congress' Stan Musial Division, each team must operate by certain rules. For example, its players, to be eligible for participation, must reside or work in the community. They are prohibited from receiving directly or indirectly any remuneration for playing baseball while members of an AABC team. To be discovered doing otherwise is to risk classification as a professional and ouster from AABC competition. All players are contracted to the team they join, which commits them to still other conditions. The size limit for League play for each team is eighteen members.

Accompanying membership in AABC is the possibility of tournament play, which was previously lacking, except as a League play-off. Now the league champions will compete in an AABC state Association-sponsored tournament, the winner of which moves into regional competition. Winners in the seven regions play for the championship of an "amateur world series." In participation beyond the state tournament, travel, housing, and eating expenses are subsidized through allowances from the Congress.

"Now we're playing for some marbles," observed one player in response to the belief, common among the interviewees, that the 1976 season was going to be different owing to these postseason possibilities. Since some marbles are now involved, many players and coaches predict better caliber baseball from here on.

While the Open League offers the main and probably the

highest quality adult amateur baseball in Arlington, there are teams that operate outside this conference. Since no colloquial term exists for them, they are referred to throughout these chapters as *informal teams*. Composed largely of former high school cronies these teams play on Sundays from approximately April through October, and beyond if possible, when decent weather, good field conditions, free diamonds, and opposing teams can all be found. Representatives of two teams may try to prearrange a game by telephone during the week prior to the Sunday on which they hope to play. Failing in this, one team will drive around the community on Sunday seeking another for an impromptu match, past experience being their guide as to where in town competition is most likely to be located.

Some of these teams have functioned for several seasons with only slight turnover in membership. One, for instance, has been active for five years. Others more resemble pickup groups, recruiting several new members each season, perhaps each game, to fill out a small core of steady players. A few of the more enduring teams are trying to enter the Open League, a matter over which some friction currently exists (see Chapter 10).<sup>1</sup>

## BASEBALL AS AN AVOCATION

Following my meeting with the League official I paid a visit to the manager of one of the teams, the purpose of which was to explain the project so that I might gain his permission to observe his practices and games and to arrange interviews with his players. I learned that the typical team starts working out in May twice weekly, devoting two to three hours to each practice. By this time the college season has ended leaving those players eligible for AABC competition. Also the weather is more predictable. This allows a team roughly a month of preparation before the first of the eighteen scheduled games in early June. Two games are played each week (one on a weekday evening,

the other on Sunday afternoon) over the next nine weeks. Since there are eight teams in the League, they meet each other at least twice. Altogether, the typical Open League player practices and plays games for nearly four months if his team is fortunate enough to reach the double elimination play-offs held at the end of the eighteen-game schedule.

Some managers and coaches believe that more than a month's practice is desirable prior to the opening game and so begin to work out before the first of May. The manager I visited is of this persuasion. He had instructed his coaches to begin practicing as regularly as possible in early April.<sup>2</sup> Thus his team's first workout was only a few days off, and I was invited to attend. It was decided that the easiest solution to the problem of arranging interviews with his players was to talk to them as a group during a break in the practice, explain the project, and subsequently call each man to establish his willingness to participate.

This plan produced twenty-eight interviews with a majority of the members of two League teams and five members of two informal teams.<sup>3</sup> All interviewees were white males. All had graduated from high school and, except for one eighteen-year-old, were between nineteen and twenty-six years of age.

### Core Activities

The core activities of amateur baseball are so named because every player is likely to engage in them and because they are held to be at the heart of the sport. They are treated in this section in the following order: practices, conditioning, and games.

The routine at a typical amateur baseball workout is warming up, batting practice, and infield practice. *Warming up* is generally done in pairs of men who throw to each other from a moderate distance at a moderate speed with the aim of loosening limbs and body. It starts as soon as the players arrive at the field and consumes roughly twenty minutes of the overall practice. Some also warm up with a brief session of calisthenics.

*Batting practice* is the longest part of the typical workout. Here the team's pitchers throw to its catchers while the remain-

ing players take turns swinging at the ball until they have produced twelve good hits (no fouls) and a couple of good bunts. When not pitching, catching, or batting, a player goes to the outfield to field hits from the plate. The object of batting practice is to improve batting, catching, throwing, and pitching skills.<sup>4</sup> Pitchers and catchers are rotated in and out of their positions and so get an opportunity to hit and field the ball as well. The next batter limbers up by swinging a fistfull of bats to one side of home plate. The coach directs the pitchers, catchers, batters, and fielders to their positions and watches the time to ensure that some is left for infield work.

Though I never saw it done at the workouts I observed, I am told that it is more efficient to have a man hitting balls to those parts of the infield and outfield to which a batter has not recently hit. Otherwise, fielders can languish for some time without an opportunity to catch a hit ball. They react to this inactivity by gathering in twos and threes to talk, with one of them occasionally breaking from his teammates to field a ball hit in their general direction. As the afternoon or evening wears on fielders who are still out of condition tend to squat, lean against the fence, or even sit in response to fatigue and boredom.

*Infield practice* is a livelier, more energetic activity. Here someone, usually the coach, hits fungoes to one of the infield players with prearranged instructions as to which base or bases in a doubleplay situation the player should throw to once the ball is fielded. Speed of body movement and speed, accuracy, and timing of catching and throwing are improved in this way. Infield practice is conducted with a good deal of pep and celerity, probably to simulate the pace of events in an actual game and the kind of spirit the defensive player ought to have during it.

Practices ordinarily end with a few announcements and some observations by the coach. The time and location of the next practice is set. There may also be discussion of missing players, game schedules, uniforms, and other matters.

There is a spirit in an amateur baseball practice that has both a

physical and a verbal representation. In other words, like the rehearsal room in theater, the athletic practice is a distinct social situation with its own special characteristics and associated definitions. The physical side is associated with the fatigue that accumulates from running, batting, and throwing in the heat of the day. A group of enthusiastic, talkative, sprightly players at one o'clock is a group of relatively unconcerned, quiet, lethargic players at four. Playing ball is the main cause of this fatigue, but not the only one. Except at game times the city recreation department locks the gates to its baseball fields, which means that, though they have permission to practice there, League players must climb five-foot-high chain-link fences to gain access to them. This is perhaps not so bad in itself were it not for the fact that many fouls and long flies land outside the fence. Players must retrieve these since they bear the expense of practice balls. Worst of all the water fountain is also on the other side of the fence. Moreover, climbing chain-link fences is hazardous. Several individuals carry lengthy scars from wounds incurred while scrambling over one of these barriers.

The verbal representation of the spirit of an amateur baseball practice gets underway during the warm-up in talk about such matters as sore throwing-arms, teammates still missing from the practice, gossip about who is playing for the various teams in the League, and recent performances of the Texas Rangers team, all of which is accompanied by an obbligation of ribbing, joking, and wisecracking. Once batting practice commences one can hear, in addition to the utilitarian instructions and questions, four types of colorful remarks: compliments, gibes, spurs, and exclamations.

*Compliments* acknowledge merit in ball playing. Among them are "good shot," "good job," "good peg," "good play," "good stick," "good arm," and the like; or: "way to hustle," "way to work," "way to peg it," and "way to go"; and: "atta boy," "alright," "beautiful," "wow," "hot dog," and "sign him up." Sometimes a man's play is likened to that of a renowned professional: "they got Phil Rizzuto to play short-

stop” (said after a good catch); “come on Nolan [Ryan]” (said to fast-throwing pitcher); “Burroughs up to bat.”

*Gibes* come in the form of good-nature raillery: “will you slow down, Jim Kaat,” “he’s throwing smoke” (said to pitchers throwing *too* fast), “no glove at short” (said to a shortstop who missed an easy ground ball), “get it over pro Smith” (said to a pitcher who kept missing the plate), “a lot of hustle, Billy” (said to a player who allowed a ground ball to go by while he talked with a teammate). *Gibes* seem to communicate a serious message by humorous means about the momentary inadequacy of a particular player, but in a way that obviates the bitterness that could result from a direct insult. Take the following example:

*The coach hit a fast grounder past Rudy Timmins on third.*

*Timmins made a valiant attempt to catch it, but failed.*

*“Come on, Rudy, get that ball,” the coach urged.*

*“I ain’t no third baseman,” Rudy retorted.*

*“I’ll say,” returned the coach.*

*Rudy’s regular position is shortstop.*

*Spurs* are encouragements, which appear to be used either to stimulate the player to do his best or to keep his spirits from sagging after a less than satisfactory performance. The first takes such forms as “let’s go, Frankie,” “come on big Pete, get a hit,” “get it Tommy,” and “come on Jackie baby.” Efforts to keep up a player’s spirits include: “nice try” and “way to Hustle, Stevie.”

*Exclamations* are the sudden, sharp utterances blurted out in response to major efforts to hit, throw, or catch well, even though the efforts end in failure: “aagh!” “ooph!” “oh shit!” and the like are common throughout practices and games.

Infield practice is further punctuated with distinctive instructions from the coach as he sets up mock plays. For example, “turn two, now, turn two,” “let’s get one,” “bring it home,” or “bring it in” direct his infielders to make plays, after fielding the ball, at second, first, and home, respectively. “Turn it again” means to make the same play on the next hit or “another pair” to repeat the same doubleplay. “Bring it back” denotes

cancellation of the play and the start of another one. Compliments, gibes, spurs, and exclamations are emitted on top of these directions, so that the auditory and visual impression of an infield practice is an activity of quick movements by enthusiastic players.

Another aspect of the verbal spirit of amateur baseball practices is the general usage of bad grammar. Though several players have spent two or more years in college and spoke acceptable English in the interviews, they spewed out double negatives at practices with the same frequency as their less-educated teammates. The reason for mentioning this pattern, however, is not to chide the players for their mishandling of their native tongue. Rather it is to indicate that for some of them, the grammar of their leisure appears to contrast with the grammar of the rest of their life, thereby imparting still another special verbal quality to baseball workouts and games.

Another aspect of practices is the practice game. Teams in the Open League may seek a couple of these prior to the opening of the official schedule. At these contests the players do their own umpiring, usually through the catcher and base coaches of the team on defense. At the practice game I observed, between a League team and an informal team, most of the calls were accepted as more or less accurate. Nonetheless there were occasional disagreements. Some of these were voiced only among the members of the team that objected to the call; for example, "I hate to be like this, but they called those two low balls strikes." Others were directed at the offending judge himself in such audible tones as: "Watch the knees, ump. Don't you know what a knee is?"

But the dominant concern at practice games is with team and individual performance rather than the casual officiating. Since they are fundamentally learning experiences, instructions and advice are shouted from the sidelines by the coaches and sometimes others. Such statements as the following blend with the patter of compliments, spurs, exclamations, and gibes: "What the fuck's the matter with you guys?" (said to two



fielders who were dropping fly balls) or “Goddamn, Sandy, hold the ball when you go on your ass!” (said to a second baseman who threw wildly to first just as he lost his footing).

In the end — at least for this game — an amicable spirit prevailed. The two teams learned about their strengths and weaknesses. Following a quick round of handshaking, everyone gingerly climbed the fence once again and departed for home or the beer parlor.

*Conditioning.* Only five of the twenty-eight respondents engage in no personal training whatsoever during the baseball season. Four of these men consider themselves in continuously good condition because they play such sports as basketball, football, swimming, and tennis throughout the year. When the baseball season arrives they maintain their fitness through practices and games. The fifth person in this group, due to the demands of his university program, finds no time left for conditioning or other athletics.

The remainder of the sample average slightly over six hours a week at some form or combination of forms of training. These include: weight-lifting, running, throwing, throwing and catching, calisthenics, batting at a machine, swinging a bat with a weight on it, and playing softball. Pitchers tend to avoid weight-lifting but they, along with nearly all the rest, throw. Finding someone with whom one can throw may be a problem, especially for pitchers. Few people have the specialized catching equipment needed to serve them. So pitchers must often be content to throw against a fence or throw at the normal speed in the street or nearby park to a friend, neighbor, or brother. Whatever the opportunities to throw, throwing regularly is undeniably important. With an improperly conditioned or limbered arm, one runs the risk of “popping” or straining it, which could result in a painful (mentally and physically) two or three weeks on the bench.

Running is also one of the most common ways of staying in shape. Five respondents play in a softball league the schedule of

which overlaps the Open League season. Though some argue that softball can unfavorably affect one's throwing and batting, it is apparently a good conditioner in other ways.

Getting into condition, many older players contend, takes slightly longer with each passing season. Aware of the influence of age in athletics, some of them, as we shall see in Chapter 10, grow apprehensive about the superior fitness of younger players and hence their chances of making the team.

*The Game.* The scheduled League game is the *raison d'être* of all this preliminary activity. Either directly or indirectly, winning games and winning enough of them to get into the playoffs are the goals behind the practices, the practice games, and the habits of personal conditioning.

Playing games in the Open League still has its problems. The city recreation department reserves two diamonds for official league games, but it is up to the contestants to put them in playable condition. This often means picking up the trash that has accumulated, conditioning the pitcher's mound, removing the water that has collected from the last rain, smoothing uneven ground, and so on. And, even though the 1976 season brought the first paid umpires, there were some tense moments over whether they would be there for a game. In at least two instances I observed they never did show up, so that substitutes had to be recruited from among the spectators and bystanders (among whom, fortunately, are other League players).<sup>5</sup> One evening a game was cancelled because the field was being watered. Finally, there have been times (usually when official umpires were unavailable) that balls of good quality were scarce. As it is players have to retrieve those hit over the fence during their games as a precaution against running out of them.

Congress rules state that games in the Stan Musial Division are to last no longer than nine innings. In the Open League they must not exceed an hour and fifty minutes. If nine innings have not been played by this time, the inning in progress is finished

and the game won by the team that is ahead. Each team provides its own scorekeeper.

The preliminaries to a game include the familiar activities of warming-up. Players arrive individually and in groups of two and three, get into their "cleats" (baseball shoes fitted with cleats), and commence throwing to a teammate. Further limbering-up is accomplished by swinging a handful of bats and doing certain calisthenics. Each team also gets a short turn at batting and infield practice on the diamond. An excited stream of talk accompanies this activity.

But preliminary activities take place at a game that are never seen at a practice. They may include a session of "peppér" along the foul line beyond first or third base. The signals for bunting, stealing, squeezing, and the like, given from the dugout, are established in a huddle just before the game begins. The first- and third-base coaches are selected and the starting lineup is announced at this time as well. The weak and strong points of the opposing team are discussed, especially those of their starting pitcher (e.g., "he's got a good wing," "that pitcher over there, he ain't worth a damn," "he's throwing a faster ball than we've seen," "he's got a pretty good curve ball"). Some of these preliminaries become unnecessary later in the season when the lineup is fixed, base-coaching duties are settled, and the signals are known by all.

The following passage, taken from my field notes, is typical in many ways of the several Open League games I observed early in the season. At every game I was allowed to listen in on the pregame huddle and sit in the dugout while the game progressed:

*Freddies Texaco (the team's name and that of its sponsor) are just ending their huddle in which the starting lineup, the base coaches, and the signals were set. Since it is early in the season and some players still owe their share of the team's entry fee, that matter was taken up after the brief strategy discussion. This done, Freddies is ready for play. As we walk to the dugout one of the players anxiously surveys the diamond and the surroun-*

ding park and then scowls: "Where the damned umps at?" Sure enough, it is now 6:30, the two teams are ready to play, but the umpires are nowhere in sight. Ten minutes pass as everyone waits, lazily throwing the ball around. "This is a pisser," the coach moans. "We've sent someone to call them."

At 6:43 two umpires arrive, one of whom lacks a face mask, and after borrowing this equipment from the other team, the game gets underway. As soon as Freddie's pitcher throws his first pitch — a strike — excitement erupts among the infield players and the rest of the team in the dugout. Compliments and spurs, similar to those heard at the practices, issue from both teams. Spurs appear to be more common here, however, being aimed at men who have made a sincere effort to play good baseball but somehow fail, such as by striking out, getting thrown out at first, or trying to catch a line drive. Handshakes are reserved for those who do truly well.

Freddie's pitcher works his way through three batters to end the first half of the inning. The players trot off the field in a bouyant state, showering compliments on the pitcher for his performance. The clack of metal cleats echoes through the concrete dugout as everyone gathers at the edge to watch their lead-off batter. The second half of the inning ends as the first did; namely, scoreless. As Freddie takes to the field again, the coach's boy, who has been in the stands with his mother, wanders into the dugout to watch the game from this location.

Four innings later, with the score still tied at zero, the players' exuberance begins to fade and the conversation shifts to the other team. They are good. The athletic histories of its players are soberly reviewed with particular attention given its pitchers, especially those whom they "can hit off of." But, as one of Freddie's team notes: "We got to hit off this guy [current pitcher] first." There is mounting concern about the inability to score. Two players trade observations on the types of pitches they have managed to hit. Then, suddenly, a flurry of excitement: the coach steals second and races on to third on an over-throw. But the inning ends without a run.

Another inning goes by, with some of the players beginning to notice the inadequacy of their conditioning. The heat of the evening and that stored in the concrete dugout from the day hasten their fatigue. And now that they have batted a couple of

*times some have become uncomfortably aware of hitting problems: "I can't hit on his fast ball, I can only hit on that breaking shit"; "Oh shit! What a night"; "It can't get any worse." Others simply mutter to themselves, slam the bat into the ground, or stamp their feet when they fail at the plate.*

*Interspersed among the spurs and compliments are instructions on how to play the game given by one player to another. Sometimes this advice is communicated face-to-face in the dugout; at other times it is shouted from there to the plate or elsewhere: "If he doesn't bunt you, Jack, hit it down the right side" (said to a player as he heads for the plate); "Bat ahead of the plate" (shouted to the batter from the dugout); "Get the ball down, Pat" (shouted to the pitcher).*

*The game goes into its sixth inning still tied at zero. The dugout floor is now speckled with tobacco juice through which the youngster mentioned earlier kicks a pop can. Then one of Freddie's team hits a triple into left field, driving in his teammate who had been walked to first. Cheers and plaudits reverberate around the dugout for this accomplishment. Soon a conversation is going about a college game in which some of the players participated that resembles the present circumstances. More runs follow. Now the men who have been on the bench all this time are put in. During the rally a member of a team to play later this evening drops into the dugout to chat with acquaintances.*

*The game progresses little beyond this point as Freddie's team quickly builds an eight-run lead against the opposition's steadily deteriorating pitcher, while allowing only one run against themselves. The contest is stopped at an hour and fifty minutes and, commending one another as they go, the players walk to the diamond to shake hands with their defeated opponents. As they leave the field two more teams pour onto it for their preliminaries. For several minutes the members of the four groups mingle as they discuss the game just finished (the final innings of which the other two teams observed) and the one about to start. For many this is the first contact since last season with friends made through the years in the Open League, college baseball, or softball.*

The game described here is probably atypical in the sense that

there was scant antagonism toward the umpires (once they arrived). In other games that I observed occasional invectives were hurled at the officials from the dugouts, and even from the fans, though they never resulted in the kind of rhubarb seen from time-to-time in professional baseball. One may also find a bat-boy in the dugout who may be the son of one of the players or a volunteer who hangs around the city parks in search of such work. Occasionally, too, a team gets angry with its opponent for some breach of procedure, such as having a suspected ineligible player or playing "tight" ball (stealing, bunting, and so on) when they hold a secure lead.<sup>6</sup>

And extraordinary things happen that stimulate a great deal of on-the-spot discussion and eventually become part of the collective memory of the team. For example:

*The opposing pitcher threw a wild curve into the dirt that his catcher was unable to control. As the latter lunged to the backstop to retrieve it, Bennie started toward home from third. The catcher, however, got the ball sooner than Bennie anticipated and was out in front of home by nearly 5 feet when Bennie was still only halfway to the plate. With little chance to turn back and the catcher crouched in the base line, his mit and the ball low to the ground ready to make the tag, Bennie decided on a desperate move. He continued toward the catcher at full speed and, at the last moment, leaped high into the air, cleared both catcher and ball, and scampered to the plate to score the first run of the game. Wild cheering and guffawing broke out among Bennie's teammates. Their opponents contested the call, but the umpire had made up his mind.*

Games between informal teams are less organized than those in the Open League. As they do their own umpiring, there appear to be more disputes over calls. There also appears to be less emphasis on winning, which gives weaker players more playing opportunities than they would have in the Open League. Accordingly, pitching is also somewhat more relaxed, so that every batter hits occasionally and this keeps the fielders busier.

## Peripheral Activities

There are five peripheral activities that attract some or all of the respondents: after-hours socializing, umpiring, coaching, reading, and viewing live and televised professional games. One could, of course, be an amateur ballplayer without doing any of these.

*After-hours* socializing takes place at a tavern or restaurant following practices and games. Ten of the sample currently eschew all or most of this sort of interaction. A number of the remaining eighteen “go out” only after games or after practices or only after a proportion of both. Indeed, only five interviewees may be said to be regulars at after-hours socializing following both practices and games. The reasons for this level of participation in this activity, which is universally regarded as attractive, are examined in Chapter 10 in connection with the social benefits of amateur baseball.

The appeal of the after-hours gathering lies partly in the fact that it is an occasion to talk shop. Possibly no other setting facilitates so well the discussion of one’s strong and weak points, of the team’s present and future performance, of the League and other teams within it, of professional baseball, and of other topics. Conversations along these lines are interrupted in practices and games by the requirements of those activities, whereas they continue undisturbed at a beer hall. Moreover, such an interchange with a wife, girlfriend, or work associate is unlikely because these people usually have little or no technical interest in the sport.

But only part of the conversation at an after-hours session is shoptalk. If only men are present then the focus of attention is likely to turn eventually to sexual exploits and off-color jokes. All-male gatherings are the rule after practices; wives or girlfriends may accompany their partners following a game that they have watched.

Whatever the subject of conversation the after-hours gatherings in baseball and theater and the shoptalk at archaeological

digs and meetings illustrate well the appeal of “sociability” (Simmel, 1949). Sociable conversation guarantees its participants the maximization of such values as joy, relief, and vivacity. It is democratic activity in the sense that the pleasure of one person is dependent upon that of others. And since it is a noninstrumental exchange between people, sociability can be destroyed by introducing wholly personal interests. In the meantime, it is maintained through amiability, proper breeding, cordiality, and attractiveness. Though hardly the essence of amateurism, sociability, whether before, during, or after participation, is for many an avocational fringe benefit.

Eighteen of the twenty-eight respondents have *umpired* three or more games during their baseball careers. Before the 1976 season it was a League regulation that each team provide an umpire, who was never paid, to officiate at the plate or the bases in a game between two other League teams. Many respondents have gained their umpiring experience this way. Some have also officiated at Little League, YMCA, Junior League (Optimist), and AABC games (for young boys), sometimes for pay, sometimes for free. Payment, of course, is a touchy issue, as the following passage from the 1976 AABC “Official Handbook” indicates:

Rule 2 (a). A player, eligible for PLAYING competition in the Congress, shall not receive monetary remuneration, directly or indirectly, for services to ANY baseball team, except as provided hereafter in these rules [p. 14].

Consequently, receiving payment for umpiring is a clandestine practice and is sometimes disguised as remuneration for groundskeeping, which is ostensibly service to a park rather than to a team.

*Coaching* is as common a peripheral activity as umpiring. Sixteen respondents have coached or currently coach boys or adult teams or share this responsibility with a friend or relative. Some players also coach teen-age boys’ or girls’ softball teams.

All but two respondents *read* the sports page of a daily newspaper, though some of them read nothing beyond this.



Twelve players read one or more books during the year preceding the interview, usually biographies. Jim Bouton's *Ball Four* is probably the most popular volume of these. Eighteen respondents read *Sports Illustrated* regularly or sporadically during the baseball season often through their own subscription to it. Eight players, however, have little or no contact with any magazine that carries information about baseball.

In contrast to theater, where the amateurs interviewed viewed an average of five professional and six amateur plays in the past year, amateur baseball players watched so many professional games that this activity must be considered part of the avocation of amateur baseball. Only two respondents saw no professional games during the 1975 season, one of whom was stationed outside the country on military duty. The remaining twenty-six attended an average of sixteen games. Over that same period twenty-one respondents also watched a mean of ten adult amateur games, usually those just before or after their own. They were apt to see only parts of these games, however. Every player augmented his attendance at the ball parks with so large a diet of televised games that he found it impossible to recall with any accuracy the number seen.

To summarize, the participation of the present sample of amateur baseball players in their avocation is markedly more concentrated than that of the amateur archaeologists and possibly the same or greater than that of the theater amateurs. The typical amateur in baseball, for the sample under consideration, spends between ten and twenty hours a week at core and peripheral activities over a period of three to four months during the summer. As we have seen with theater, leisure concentrated in this degree causes problems in the amateur's family and work life; the same is true in baseball, as the next chapter demonstrates.

Finally, it may now be noted that amateurs in the three fields treated in this book all experience what might be called *involvement careers*. In such careers they gain a sense of their own movement through a sequence of events toward some socially

recognized culmination. In theater this was discussed under the heading of "The Career of a Dramatic Production." In archaeology it is the exploitation of a site as it progresses from initial survey to that point in its excavation where any further work will produce little or nothing of scientific value. The involvement career of baseball players is coterminous with the advance of the league's playing schedule and personal and team performance within it. It is by means of involvement careers, as subjectively constructed and objectively grounded, that amateurs organize the temporal side of their leisure as it moves along from week to week, month to month and, for some, year to year.

### Notes

1. This is a major goal. Being in the League would give them regular games, better officiating (since they must do their own otherwise), and a certain degree of recognition.
2. Some teams in the League have managers and coaches, others have coaches only. The manager looks after such administrative details as finding a sponsor, collecting money from players for those fees and items of equipment that the sponsor is unable to support, and attending League meetings. If there is no manager the coach, or a player whom he designates, must attend to these. Coaches are likely to play as well.
3. An effort was made to interview as many members as possible of the two teams. But, since rosters may remain flexible until July, some of the interviewees, for various reasons, left the teams after my contact with them.
4. Some argue that this is no place for pitchers to demonstrate or try to improve their "stuff" since some batters may find it difficult to hit. The emphasis is on batting, not pitching, though the latter should be realistic enough to challenge the batter and thus improve his ability.
5. The umpire problem will probably be solved as the League gains experience with hired officials.
6. Once in a while a League team becomes notorious for its obnoxious behavior. One year a team developed an unsavory reputation from its penchant for shouting and quarrelling with the umpires and their opponents.



## 9

# *Amateur Baseball in Everyday Life*

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The practice I observed in early April was an unusually casual affair, inasmuch as it was the first of the season. Play was hampered by wet spots left in the field from recent heavy rains. Additionally, some players were far from peak condition for running, throwing, batting, and catching. And they were no doubt apprehensive over the possibility that they might have stiff, perhaps even strained, muscles the next day. Mostly it was an opportunity to mark the opening of the season and to provide the team's leaders with a view of prospective players.

But there were many aspects of that practice that are characteristic of every workout I observed thereafter. Batting practice was held, though there was no infield work. The warm-up period was typical. The verbal and physical spirit was there, too, including the usual assortment of compliments, gibes, spurs, and exclamations. On the whole that practice provided a useful introduction to baseball routine and an adequate foundation on which to conduct the interviews. I began these two days later.

### **TYPES OF AMATEUR BASEBALL PLAYERS**

There are twenty-five pure amateurs among the respondents and three preprofessionals, one of whom may also be classified as postprofessional. The latter had had brief professional experience, for various reasons returned to amateur ball, and is now preparing to resume his professional career.<sup>1</sup> One of the other two plans to use college baseball as a stepping-stone to professional status. The third was making arrangements at the time of the interview to go to a baseball camp in Florida where he will be scouted by professional agents.

Several interviewees, though now pure amateurs, indicated that they were once semiprofessional. Semiprofessional is a distinction used in baseball that relates in the following way to our sociological categories of professional and amateur. Semiprofessional players may play for a team sponsored by a firm, with which they have a job that is expressly designed to facilitate their athletic interests. They play baseball full-time during the summer. Their occupational goals are connected with the sport rather than with the make-work they do that sustains these goals. If the firm also pays their travel, room, and board while playing ball, this further supports their true calling.

For other semiprofessional players, playing baseball brings in too little money to constitute a livelihood. They may play for a firm who pays their travel to games away from home and room

and board while there, but nothing else. They must therefore augment their income somehow. They may receive undercover payment while playing in an ostensibly amateur league, such as \$50 for every homerun they hit, \$25 for every base hit made, or \$100 for every game won as a pitcher. These covert arrangements hardly constitute an occupation either.

Sociologically speaking, these various types of semiprofessionals may be seeking a professional career, in which case they are actually preprofessionals. By playing in a league where the quality of baseball is high they increase their chances of recognition by major-league scouts. Or they could be skilled pure or postprofessional amateurs who make their living by other means, but value the extra money they acquire through their leisure or any per diem support they can garner to facilitate its pursuit. None of the erstwhile semiprofessionals in the present sample were of the first type with steady employment in a firm.

Among the twenty-five pure amateurs are six players who once seriously considered entering professional baseball. Several of them identified one or more contingencies in their leisure career that blocked or severely hindered movement in this direction. The contingencies are discussed in Chapter 10 in the section on disappointments. These men have now passed the age of twenty-four, which is held to be the age beyond which professional teams regard a player as too large an investment for the small return they are likely to get.<sup>2</sup>

Another nine pure amateurs are more accurately classified as *conditional preprofessionals*, for they leave open the possibility that they would consider professional baseball if certain events take place. Four of these are playing amateur ball for its enjoyment, but would entertain an offer made to them by a professional scout. They feel there is a reasonable chance of this happening since the Open League is routinely scouted. Some of the others are studying their progress in college baseball which, if favorable, would encourage them to attempt to become signed with a professional team. A couple of respondents mentioned their intention to try out for the Texas Rangers team, which

conducts an annual tryout in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Success here could change their pure-amateur status.

The conditional preprofessional undoubtedly exists in theater and archaeology, too. Occupational career decisions are made in these fields during the individual's late teens and early twenties. Since this study was concerned chiefly with pure amateurs, people in this age range received little attention, except in baseball where the physical requirements of the game tend to confine participation to the young.

Whatever the field the conditional preprofessional is an unsettled individual who is waiting and watching for his main vocational chance. In baseball he looks like this:

*Well, that's always been a dream of mine. I was thinking one of these years of even trying out for the Rangers or any team really, just to get in the three A's or any good team, you know. I guess you have to go to Florida to do those things, money to get there, and plan to stay there. One of these days somebody will talk me into it, say they'll go too, and I'd end up going. Once I got there I don't know what I'd rather do, pitch or play shortstop or do what. Pitchers down there, they're tough, they're damn good. And I'd say I ain't that good a pitcher. . . . I ain't very fast. But I think I could play shortstop real good. I played shortstop for five years and first base, either one. Being tall I've played third and, when I wasn't pitching, I mostly played short. But I played all of them really; I've played every position in ball.*

As for the remaining ten pure amateurs they have never seriously thought of a professional baseball career.

Unlike some of the archaeology amateurs, those in baseball appear to have no scruples about making money in their avocation. They do, of course, worry about the affect this might have on their amateur standing in AABC; but this is a practical consideration, not an ethical one as in archaeology. In fact, only the postprofessional has made any money playing baseball, though the respondents who were once semiprofessional had their room, board, and travel subsidized when playing games out of town. Six respondents have also made small amounts of money

as umpires. In a sense many of the interviewees have been paid for playing baseball: as youngsters they received a dollar, for instance, from a relative or coach for every homerun, hit, or strikeout they made.

Perhaps this is the best point at which to interject that, generally, amateurs in all three fields show little interest in supplementary income. Only one of those who serves as the family breadwinner works a second job. This avoidance suggests a willingness to renounce additional money in order to pursue their avocation. This may be modest support for Samuelson's (1973: 577-578) claim that once workers achieve a comfortable margin over what they consider a necessary level of wealth they eschew further employment. Still, there is evidence that somewhere between 25% (see de Riva Poor, 1970; Dumazedier, 1974: 23-25) and 50% (see Moore and Hedges, 1971; Shimmin, 1962: 126) of sampled workers, for various reasons, work overtime, moonlight, work two jobs, or work better than forty hours a week. Are these the consumers of popular leisure who have yet to learn how to master free time (de Grazia, 1964: 377-380); Friedmann, 1961: 113; Gunther, 1964)? The matter is still to be settled through research. In the meantime it appears as though a number of amateurs have found significant rewards in their leisure that overcome any desires for more money (Zweig, 1961: 73-74).

Participants are distinguished from devotees by the degree of effort they put into the three core activities. Regularity of attendance at practices and games and amount of time spent at conditioning are the most theoretically valid measures of these two types. Since the average amount of time spent in conditioning is slightly over six hours weekly, seven hours or more becomes one index of devotion to baseball. When combined with degree of regularity of attendance at practices and games, five players stand out as devotees, leaving twenty-three as participants. Four of these five have also invested extra time and money in a baseball clinic or summer camp, which is additional evidence of commitment to their avocation. Only nine of the sample have



received this sort of concentrated instruction and training. One of the devotees is currently a successful college ballplayer, while two others are preprofessionals.

### **AMATEURS AND PROFESSIONALS**

The first of the seven functional relationships between amateurs and professionals — that the former serve publics just as the latter do and often the same ones — was not always as obvious to the baseball amateurs of this study as it might seem. For, according to several respondents, the 1976 season was the first in which there have been enough fans during a game to make their presence noticed. Babies crying, people cheering, children screaming and running about are new occurrences for the players in the League. Before this year these men played largely for each other and a few friends and relatives. The bleachers are still filled predominantly with friends and relatives, but their number has swelled to approximately thirty-five a game. And perhaps there will be more as the season progresses.

Contact with professionals appears to be lighter in amateur baseball than in amateur theater or archaeology. Congress rules bar professionals from amateur play, though it is unlikely they could compete here anyway since they are fully obligated to their own teams. Consequently, outside the ten respondents who have friends who are active professionals, most associations are with ex-professionals who are now coaching high school or college teams or playing in the League. Those who have attended clinics and summer camps have received instruction from professionals. And a couple of former college players recall working out with the Texas Rangers team during their spring training. Eleven players have buttonholed one or more professionals at the stadium, at a local tavern that they are known to patronize, and even at their homes in order to discuss the technical points of the sport or inquire about its life-style. Final-

ly, many players have played high school, college, and Open League ball with teammates who eventually became professionals, an experience that, as we shall see, has an important bearing on their self-concept. Six respondents, all participants, have had no contact of any kind with professionals.

There is a rare organizational tie between a handful of amateur players and the professionals that should be mentioned here, even though none of the sample has ever participated in it. According to an official of one of the American league teams, perhaps twenty amateurs, normally postprofessionals, have the job of pitching pregame batting practice to the teams of that league.<sup>3</sup> These people are paid a modest fee for this service, an arrangement that helps ensure their reliability. The teams are wary of preprofessional amateurs who would like to display their pitching skills, for payment would threaten their eligibility to play at the amateur level. Nonetheless, an occasional pure or preprofessional amateur finds his way into this sort of a relationship with the professionals, often from a position within the club, such as member of the ground crew. Of course, many aspiring amateurs would do this job without pay, but every front office knows that its appeal would eventually wear off when the pitcher realized that he had little chance of getting signed. With this motive eliminated he would likely become undependable.

We have already examined the ways the ballplayers of this study financially support their professional counterparts by attending games, clinics, and summer camps. This support, like that of the amateur actors and actresses, falls short of the degree of direct and indirect monetary support given by the archaeology amateurs to their professional colleagues.

In connection with the respondents' intellectual relationship with baseball professionals, they are more like the amateurs in theater than those in archaeology. Most of them read only about the current professional baseball scene or they read biographies. They read little in the history or philosophy of the game and they generally avoid technical treatments of it.

Casual observation of professional baseball suggests that its players are more likely to specialize at playing one position than the amateurs in the present study. Ten of the latter identified themselves as "utility" players or those who can play any position (usually excluding that of pitcher) at an acceptable level of performance. Another eight said they routinely play three or four positions. These generalists do have their preferences, but they also appear to be proud of their flexibility and broad practical knowledge of the sport. The remaining ten respondents specialize in one or two positions. Though pitching is the most specialized job in baseball, pitchers are not overrepresented among the specialists in the present sample. Nor are the devotees.

### **Greed and Sloth**

To repeat the fourth and fifth functional relationships, amateurs restrain professionals from overemphasizing technique and from stressing superficialities in lieu of meaningful or profound performances and insist on the retention of excellence. As in the other two fields no data were collected on how professional players respond to critiques of their efforts by amateurs. But, like those in theater, most of the amateurs in baseball can identify definite weaknesses, though fewer of them. And, as in theater, they are more likely to mention weaknesses in attitude toward the conduct of the activity rather than, as in archaeology, to mention weaknesses in the conduct itself, in technique.

The outstanding weaknesses noted by the baseball respondents are *greediness* and *lack of hustle*. Seventeen of the sample cited the first and did so with a sort of spontaneity and conviction that left no doubt as to their feelings about this disposition:

*They're not out there to play and enjoy the game, but to get everything out of them [the owners].*

*They don't play for the sport itself, but play for the money. They seem to lose the pride in the sport.*

*I can't see anybody making three million dollars for a three-year contract.*

*They shouldn't look at it that way, I don't think. I'd rather play it for the money, but I don't think that I'd lose my enthusiasm for it.*

*There's too much money. I don't think they play the game for fun anymore. . . . It's just a day's work for them.*

*The game is not a sport anymore; it's get rich quick.*

*That's my biggest peeve about the pros is that they want too much money. Guys like Fergie Jenkins sell out for two hundred thousand and then they come back and they don't pitch that well. I don't know. If a man loves the game, he's going to play no matter what the price. . . . This Andy Messersmith thing, the Catfish Hunter deal, it's all a bunch of bull to me. Too much money. . . . Their attorneys are telling them what to shoot for because their attorneys are getting a cut of it. They want to get all they can.*

*To me. . . he's looking at the dollar sign, he's not looking at playing ball. If he wanted to play ball, he'd be out there. That right there, that does gripe me, just like that strike, players' strike. All the guys playing wanting to be free agents and all that, they kept holding out and mooching and finally they had to say "Well, let's play ball and call it quits." I don't know. If I had been in their shoes, I'd have said it long time ago.*

There is no gainsaying that many of the sample see a greediness among the top level and hence most visible professionals in baseball, a greediness that has displaced their love of the sport. People who play the game for its intrinsic value find this avariciousness unacceptable. There is no difference in the opinions of participants and devotees here.

Lack of hustle, a flaw also identified by seventeen respondents, refers to the unwillingness of some professionals to try to do their best to win the game. This weakness is sometimes manifested as laziness, such as slow base running or slow ball retrieval in the outfield, and sometimes as lack of concentration, such as forgetting what the "situation" is (e.g., a man on first with one away, three balls and two strikes on the batter). Several players gave their views on the lack of hustle, the first comment is from a pitcher:

*When I watch baseball games I concentrate on the pitching because I have faint hopes someday of trying out for professional ball. And I see with the weaker teams, especially, that the pitchers don't seem to keep up their conditioning at all. And a lot of pitchers, even in the pro leagues, they pitch sloppily. . . . To me, if you're in a profession, you should do the best you can.*

*Overall, I think there's lots of pros who stay cool, they still enjoy the game. There's lots of them that are out there, they ain't going nowhere, they know they ain't going to get pulled, because they're good. But, then, you see them slacking off all the time, and if they don't watch out they'll be traded. There's always somebody to take their place.*

*I think there is some complacency, you know, they figure they've got the big leagues made. They put on the big push during spring training to make sure they've got the position cinched. Then they kind of coast along a little bit. Jeff Burroughs for one. I still think he ought to be traded. I think they give a certain amount of hustle, most of them do. But there's a few. There's also a few people playing out their options who don't have the incentive there anymore. They just want to get the season over so they can try to hook up with someone else.*

*I just hate to see a pro play out there unless he is giving 100%. But there again I try to put myself in their place; they're human beings like me and, you know, they've got problems like me. But I like for a player to do his best at all times.*

Frequently the respondents went on to compare such professionals as Jeff Burroughs, Willie Davis, or Alex Johnson who lack hustle, with others, such as Pete Rose or Juan Beniquez, who are known for their spirited play.

A few respondents also panned individual players for their arrogance or for their penchant for trying to knock the ball out of the park when a less dramatic hit is more appropriate. Four of the sample said they can identify no flaws common to a number of professionals and some of these can see none even in selected players. Except for isolated errors they believe that the big-leaguers are above reproach technically and attitudinally. The theater sample contained three such people in comparison with fifteen among the archaeology amateurs.

The sixth and seventh functional relationships between amateurs and professionals are omitted from the present discussion for reasons set out in Chapters 3 and 6.

### **FAMILY MESH: PLAY BALL**

We move through the same sequence in this section as in the earlier ones on the family mesh: the effect of baseball on family activities is examined first, followed by the effect of family activities on baseball, and concluding with the reaction of the family to the amateur's leisure interest. Steady girlfriends are included in this discussion since several respondents have them and since many girlfriends have the same outlook on baseball that the wives have.

Occasional or frequent activity conflicts with family members or girlfriends harass roughly three-quarters of the twenty-three respondents involved in such relationships. Because baseball is concentrated on weekends other activities normally done at this time get pushed aside, for the players generally feel as this one does: "I usually schedule everything around baseball. I love baseball and everything becomes second when I am playing." One married respondent put it this way:

*Not hardly anything gets in the way of my baseball. I work my things around baseball. . . . Well, there have been a couple of times when she wanted to do things, and baseball got in the way and we did the baseball. But most of the time we got two cars, and if she doesn't want to go to my baseball game, I go where I'm going and she goes where she wants. But normally she ends up at the ball game sooner or later.*

So, outings in the country are cancelled or at least abbreviated when a game is scheduled (which is every Sunday in June and July). The amateur's other leisure interests are also molded around his baseball activities rather than the reverse. The twelve married players probably experience more of this sort of strain than the eleven who are tied only to a steady girlfriend, but both sets encounter some difficulty here.

Three-quarters of the married players, a proportion similar to that in archaeology and theater, procrastinate at least part of the time over their home duties when faced with more enticing baseball commitments. "If I can go practice," observed one player, "if I can go play a game, the lawn doesn't get moved." Another recalled:

*We bought this house last summer. And I had a couple of guys over here, her father and her uncle, helping me put in the wiring for the air conditioning. When it came time for me to go play ball, I dropped everything and left. They didn't like that very well, but I had to go play ball. . . . If you're a coach, manager, or player, you've got to be there. There's just no way around it.*

Nevertheless, as in theater and archaeology, there are some organized individuals who manage to carry out their free time obligations and pursue their leisure interests with efficiency and effectiveness.

Baseball falls between archaeology and theater in the amount of preoccupation it stirs in its amateur practitioners. It is generally a more conversational topic than either of the other

two. So, even though wives and girlfriends never participate directly in it, many of them know and like the game well enough to discuss it intelligently with their partners. Eighteen of the respondents are able to share their thoughts on baseball with these intimates and so avoid the trouble caused by silent preoccupation. Admittedly, wives and girlfriends rarely have the enthusiasm for the game the players do. Indeed, some are reluctant participants in such exchanges:

*I talk to her all the time about it [baseball], but she don't seem very interested, but she listens. She's no baseball fan. She don't know what I'm talking about lot of times. But I talk to her anyway.*

For the player baseball talk with a wife or girlfriend serves the same purpose that is served by an interlude of reverie or silent thought. Both situations give him an opportunity to reflect about an impending game, a relationship with the coach or another player, a performance turned in at a recent game or practice, and the like. One devotee sees a great deal of value in reviewing his games with his girlfriend:

*I do that, I get very involved. If I have a good game, I'll talk about it a little bit and I'll feel good, and we'll get off on something else. But, if I have a bad game, I have to redo everything I did wrong. I've got to correct this next time; if only this hadn't happened. I don't mean to be like that, but that's just the way it is. I strive for perfection. I guess everybody shoots for that.*

Six respondents find themselves preoccupied at times with baseball whether or not their wives or girlfriends are interested in it. Pregame apprehension may be at the root of this. At other times a bad game leads to private contemplation on one's performance rather than the public analysis seen in the preceding illustration. "If you make a boo-boo you're going to remember it," a young player noted, "but you don't talk about it." One married respondent says he does much of this thinking about baseball in bed at night before falling asleep.



The possibility exists for amateur baseball that, since it is somewhat more expensive than amateur theater or archaeology, it might spawn a degree of opposition from wives on these grounds alone, for they could prefer that the money be spent in other ways. Nine of the twelve married interviewees, however, said that neither they nor their wives have any misgivings about the purchases they make for their leisure. In the words of a participant: "If I need it and it helps me in baseball, I get it. . . . I'm not throwing it out the window."

It is possible that, for most married players, baseball is simply cheap enough to go unnoticed as a cost. At the time of the study a player could outfit himself with a serviceable glove, a pair of cleats, a wooden bat, a few baseballs, a cap, and a contribution to his team's AABC entry fee for around \$70 to \$75. If he had to buy a uniform and preferred an aluminium bat, he could increase his outlay to approximately \$100. Expensive tastes in equipment could raise the price still further. Yet some of these items last for several seasons. Moreover, a player seldom buys everything at once; rather he spreads his purchases over a number of years, buying as the need arises, a glove one year, cleats the next, and parts of uniforms every season. It is probably the acquisition of one expensive item when the family money supply is low that provokes the opposition cited by the three remaining players. "Yes, there was the \$50 I spent on the new glove she didn't think I ought to spend," an older player winced.

The effects of family on baseball are the slightest of the three areas under study. The absence of women in the sample eliminates many of the problems for leisure associated with child rearing. And only six of the married respondents have children and only one of these has a child old enough to be involved in activities outside the home. Consequently, the sample is generally spared the sort of strain that can arise when parents feel compelled to attend an athletic or other event of their son or daughter that is scheduled at the same time as a baseball game. Even baby-sitting seems to be no problem as yet. But this is

related to the respondents' place in the family life cycle, which will change for those who have children. Someday they will meet the dilemmas that one respondent now faces of how to split his loyalties between his son's baseball games and his own practices and games.

### **Family Reactions:**

#### **If You Can't Beat Them, Join Them**

Following the pattern and roughly the same proportions as found in amateur theater, the reactions of wives and girlfriends to the respondents' baseball passion fall into the three categories of genuine acceptance, tolerance, and rejection. Eleven of the twenty-three respondents who are married or linked with a steady girlfriend indicated a genuine acceptance of their avocation. Among them were four of the five devotees. For all eleven this means at the very least no opposition to the steps that must be taken to make oneself into and maintain oneself as a good athlete; to wit, resolutely attending practices, staying in condition, and playing games. In fact their partners tend to encourage them in their baseball while deriving a significant measure of enjoyment from the game itself:

*Oh, she accepts it. She comes to pretty near all my games. She goes on the trips sometimes. . . . She realizes that before them [the game] that I got to go to bed early, I can't stay out late, I can't get real tired. If I go out and drink beer, she'll let me know about it.*

*She's a good girl, she goes right along with it. We get along real good and talk. She knew me in high school. . . . She always saw me playing football and baseball and stuff and just took up from there. Before I knew her she knew me just as an athlete.*

*My wife, she does encourage me to play ball because she knows I enjoy it. She knows it's a good outlet for me. She likes to watch it.*

Another eight respondents have wives or girlfriends who may

be said to merely tolerate their pursuit of baseball; they neither encourage nor discourage its core activities. These partners also have little interest in the game.

Many of these players keep alive a spark of goodwill toward their avocation by avoiding some or all of the after-hours socializing that tempts them. Their wives and girlfriends seem to draw a fine distinction between the seriousness of core baseball activities and the more frivolous (by their definition) beer drinking. The same tension may also exist here that Ashton (1970: 48) observed: when young husbands and boyfriends spend their leisure time with friends from their single days, their partners often chafe from the resulting exclusion.

Another strategy, used by some of the sample, is to yield to the pressure to take one or more of the children to a practice or game thereby giving their wives a break and enabling them to pursue their own leisure interests. This is definitely a compromise for the players. For example, one father arrived at a late Sunday afternoon practice with his two young boys: "My wife had to be away this afternoon," he commented. "She said you watch them or stay home." He had to leave the field several times during the workout to break up a fight between them or soothe a minor injury incurred while scampering around the bleachers or surrounding area.

In contrast to theater and, especially, archaeology, comparatively little opportunity exists for involvement by wives, girlfriends, or children in amateur baseball. There is room for one bat-boy on a team, a job that is likely to go to the coach's boy if he has one. His wife is also likely to be assigned the tasks of keeping score and recording the team's statistics. Otherwise, family and friends are confined to the role of spectator at games and occasional practices.<sup>4</sup>

Several respondents described their partners' tolerance of their baseball:

*She accepts it, but she don't want me to play as much as I do.*

*To me there are none, but to my wife there are [schedule con-*

*flicts]. She'd prefer that I stay home or do something else. But she's got used to it though. She comes to the games sometimes. Now she usually plans something else.*

*She accepts it grudgingly, yes. If I went right to see her, without beer on my breath, everything would probably be smoothed over. I know there have been many times she'll say: "Let's go to the show this weekend." I'll say: "I can't, I got a softball tournament." She'll say "Well, I'll be Goddamned, it's all you ever do." Well, you know, I love to do it. I'll say: "I told you the situation it was going to be when we went together, and you accepted it. You're welcome to come if you want." She says: "Well, you like the game, too, but I get so damned tired of sitting up there and watching you play game after game after game." Things would be eased over if I went right home.*

The outright rejection of baseball by the wives and girlfriends of the remaining four players is expressed in their complete or nearly complete disaffiliation from the game and in their attempts to discourage their partners from doing as much of it as they would like to do. They may tolerate a certain level of participation in baseball, though they will have nothing to do with it themselves. And involvement beyond this point generates opposition. In the following passage a girlfriend of one of the respondents who sat in on his interview presents her feelings about his avocation:

*I don't mind him playing baseball; I think it's good for him. But I just wish it weren't on weekends [usually the only time he plays] because it's the only time we really have to do anything together. The only time we have to spend together is Saturday or Sunday in the daytime. And Saturday it's always messing around with his friends and Sunday it's baseball. So I'm a bit lonely. So what upsets me is that my weekend is spent right here in this living room. . . . There's no partying afterward. Some of the players will come over here and drink a few beers and watch TV for awhile. I just find something else to do, because I can't relate to a room full of guys talking about baseball. They don't make any demands on me; they don't insist that I come in and talk. They gave up on me long time ago.*

With one possible exception there is no evidence in the interviews or observations that any relationships have broken up over the issue of the amateur's pastime. So, the degree of strain appears to be less than that found in the parallel group of theater amateurs. But in those instances where baseball is disdained by the woman in the pair, friction is still evident, and perhaps best summed up in the repartee said to have taken place between a devoted player and his wife:

She: "Goddamn it, you love baseball more than you do me!"

He: "Yeh, but I love you more than I do basketball."

### **OCCUPATIONAL MESH: WORK IS A JOB**

Following the procedure established in earlier chapters, we turn first to the effects of work on baseball and later to the effects of baseball on work. All but two of the sample (both were summer students) held jobs during the baseball season.

Though some of them work nights or weekends, eighteen of the respondents reported that their job schedules conflict only rarely, if at all, with their baseball schedule. As in theater and archaeology, substitutes can normally be located or obligations postponed when a practice or game is slated during work hours. Or, in a couple of instances, the boss is sympathetic toward baseball and gives his employee time off to play a game or even a tournament. Self-employment has the same advantages here as in archaeology and theater. Three men in this group composed their present harmony between work and leisure either by seeking work the schedule of which coordinates with that of baseball or by being prepared to quit their job should a conflict arise. One of these players described his occupational situation:

*If I wasn't playing baseball, I could get a better job. But I got a job that fits my baseball. Before I made my decision I had to really think about it. Do I want baseball this bad? I decided, yes, I do. If it's something you really want to do, you'll do it.*

The remaining ten players have learned that, by putting their job first, baseball often suffers. That is, they may have had to sit out an entire season because of an inflexible night or weekend work schedule. Others in this predicament have found they could go only to some practices and games and so have had to settle for limited involvement in their leisure. Whether or not a team accepts this arrangement depends, among other things, on how good a player the man is and how many equally or better qualified teammates he has. One young pitcher doubted he could play baseball in the Open League because his night job obviated full-time participation. He discovered, however, that his team's need for pitchers outweighed even their need for regular attendance at workouts and games.

Among the nine university students in the sample, their inclination to go to a practice or play game may dominate their need to study for an examination or meet a term paper deadline. Some student interviewees make it a practice never to put studies before baseball; others establish their priorities on the basis of the merits of each case of conflict between the two, sometimes favoring one, sometimes favoring the other. As the following passage illustrates the decision to play baseball or study is influenced by various factors:

*As a matter of fact they [examinations] have fallen into two of the softball games that I was supposed to show up for. I've ended up going and playing in one of them. I got a phone call that said we've only got eight players and we need you out here. I called in sick to the instructor because I knew he would never understand.*

Another leisure problem for students, who have a schedule flexibility unavailable to many employed players, is their degree of security on the team. The team roster is set during the school months of May and June, which means that those who show insufficient interest could be cut. High commitment to the books may be defined by the coach as low commitment to the sport. Players who use their time efficiently minimize this potential conflict. But the interviews indicate that, for those who put off

their college work until the last moment only to find themselves forced to choose between it and baseball, a certain degree of guilt is experienced whatever their decision. One way the team is hurt and the individual is labeled as unreliable or uncommitted; the other way his occupational future is jeopardized.

On the one hand, no employers were identified as hostile toward a respondent's baseball, in contrast to the occasional hostility encountered in amateur theater. On the other hand, amateur baseball appears to contribute little to the work effectiveness of the respondents. Further, the benefits of their job for their leisure are negligible. Outside the fact that strenuous work helps maintain a player's conditioning, the skills of the respondents' work and those of baseball seem to be largely dissociated. In Kelly's (1974a) terms there is scant coordination between their jobs and their leisure.

Turning to the question of the tiring effects of work on baseball, the pattern is similar to that observed in archaeology and theater; namely, where work is tiring the thought of playing baseball recharges the individual. Of the twenty-three respondents who said they are untouched by work fatigue when at their leisure, twelve specifically mentioned the stimulation of an approaching practice or game:

*No, I get psyched up when I hit the ballfield. I'm ready to go no matter what kind of day I've had.*

*Yes [I get tired], but I don't let it slow me down. . . .*

*No, I could play baseball every day after work and not have it bother me.*

*Not really. You psych yourself up a little bit. It relieves you from work.*

*No, once I get on that field, I forget [fatigue] and start playing.*

Some of these players, however, reserve their energy on game

days by slacking off on the job. Others work at night and thus have time to rest before baseball. It is possible that the five respondents who say their work effort does deplete their vigor at the ballpark are unable to make either of these adjustments. Altogether, the stamina of the baseball sample is remarkable, given that many more of them work with their hands (nineteen blue-collar, seven white-collar jobs) than do the theater and archaeology amateurs who tend to have desk jobs.

One way that work influences amateur baseball, a way seldom seen in amateur theater or archaeology, is through the rush imposed by late work hours and early games; that is, those that start at 6:30 p.m. Eight players indicated that they scarcely have time to eat supper or have to skip it altogether if they are to be punctual. Several of these store their uniforms in the trunks of their cars, change into them at work, and head straight for the park. That they still enjoy baseball after a day's work and no refueling at the dinner table is a tribute to the appeal of the sport.

Needless to say thoughts of work never intrude on a player while he is at a practice or a game. The baseball respondents answered this probe as did many of the theater and archaeology amateurs: "No, I never take my work home with me"; "No, I completely drop that once I leave;" "Once I punch out that's it."

The other side of the occupational mesh is the effect of baseball on work. Seventeen players reported no ill-effects on their work as a result of their leisure activities. Despite the lateness of some weekday games, the heat in which Sunday games are sometimes played, and the consequences of excessive postgame partying, the majority of respondents find they are still alert enough the next day to carry out their occupational duties with their usual effectiveness. Nine players did report occasional weariness, especially early in the season before they are in condition, or after exceptionally late or hot games.

One effect of baseball on work that is unique among the three fields studied here is that of injuries. Pulled muscles, sore arms, sprained fingers, twisted ankles, and other impairments make it difficult to lift cases of beer, work with a hammer and saw,



write reports, or put up wallboard. Six respondents identified recent injuries that have hampered their performance at work.

A final effect of baseball on work, one that is even more pronounced than in theater, is the degree to which the players think and sometimes talk about it while on the job. Twenty-two interviewees, including all the devotees, said they are often preoccupied with such matters as their errors during the previous night's game, their inability to hit the ball as they should, their pitching strategy for next Sunday's game, and their good plays last night. These reflections spill over into actual talk about baseball. The topic may be their own game or the games of local high school and college teams or the topic of widest appeal — the performances, problems, and pennant chances of the Rangers. The comments by some of the sample indicate the significance of baseball thought and conversation for their workday:

*Oh yes, I try to figure out what I'm doing wrong.*

*Yeh, I think about baseball quite a bit at work. Save my head. It's not like I just thrive on thinking about it. There's nothing else around really to do. But I would think about it anyway to some extent.*

*I think baseball from the time I get up to the time I go to bed.*

*Sure, I think of standings. I'll replay the same situation a hundred times; relive winning and losing moments both.*

*Yeh, painting is the most boring job in the world. I think about it [baseball] all the time. When you're sitting there moving your arm up and down — I'm a straight painter — you're on the outside of the house for four hours just painting the outside or you're inside shooting lacquer or stain, you get wiped out anyway. Your mind just starts wandering. Half the time I forget where I'm at. Your mind does alot of traveling.*

*Yeh, lots of times. Most people ain't interested, but I talk anyway. Some people are interested — mostly I talk about when I played ball today. We got beat, we won, we did pretty good, that's about as far as our team goes. Most of the talk I do is, like, about the Rangers.*

Only two respondents see their work as too exacting to allow thoughts of their avocation to enter their minds while on the job. For the rest, possibly including some of the university students, baseball is the greater love. For it is here that they can best express their capabilities, derive the most honor, and experience the maximum amount and variety of rewards. One participant summed it up well for the majority of the sample:

*I'm a very ambitious person in my work, very ambitious; I work hard, very hard. But, I think I get more satisfaction out of someone coming up to me and complimenting me on my baseball ability than I would in the success I've earned in the . . . profession. It makes me feel good all over when someone talks about my accomplishments in baseball.*

In the perspective of these amateurs baseball is number one — their “central life interest” (Dubin, 1956; Roberts, 1970: 92-102; Goldman, 1973) — as the next chapter demonstrates. On this dimension they differ from many of their counterparts in theater and archaeology who see their work and their leisure as equally attractive (cf. Dubin and Goldman, 1972). In fact amateur baseball appears to be a form of compensation for its practitioners (Meissner, 1971; Kando and Summers, 1971) in the sense that it offers rewards unavailable at work.

But one should never assume that the second part of the spillover-compensation hypothesis always applies to the other two groups. Few of the theater amateurs see any spillover or continuation of their work experiences, skills, or attitudes in their avocation. As discussed earlier, however, many of the archaeologists find one or more links between their job and their fieldwork or its analysis. Since the baseball players of this study are primarily blue-collar workers, one might expect to find, as did Iris and Barrett (1972) in studying a similar group, that job

dissatisfaction spawns some sort of unfavorable spillover into leisure. There is no evidence of such a reaction among the respondents of the present study, although the study was not designed to answer this question.

### Notes

1. This is possible within AABC regulations.
2. Since the sport requires a certain physical ability to do it well, the fading of this ability with age must be considered. Many men are capable of being good players at twenty-four and beyond, but they have fewer good years left than, say, an eighteen-year-old. Thus a professional team gets more for its investment of salary and training from the latter than from the former. Unless, of course, the former is an exception.
3. This information was gathered in a telephone interview with this official.
4. My observations from the stands suggest that some wives and girlfriends have little interest in the games in which their mates are playing. They talk among themselves, oblivious to the action before them, on topics far removed from baseball. Or, at times, the conversation will shift to their mutual plight of waiting for their mates to return to them from the ballfield.

10

*The Amateur  
Perspective  
in Baseball*

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What better way to introduce our discussion of the amateur perspective in baseball than with the following passage of poetic testimony from an amateur ballplayer:

Long shadows  
    fall across the infield  
in the ninth inning.  
    Sometimes ball players  
look like they're dying  
    as they walk off the field  
in the dusk.  
    I knew an old man in San Francisco  
came to life  
    when the Dodgers were in town.  
Now he is dead, too,  
    and Jack is dead,

and the soldiers play baseball,  
no season's end.

"It's just a game,"  
I used to be told,  
"It isn't whether you win or lose,  
but how you  
play the game."

In baseball  
that is how you say  
the meek shall inherit  
the earth.

September 30, 1965,  
Willy Mays has 51 home runs,  
gray hair  
at his temples,  
he says he has been  
getting tired  
for six years.

I know I feel my own body  
wearing down,  
my eyes watch  
that white ball  
coming to life.

Abner Doubleday  
lived in the nineteenth century,  
he is dead,

but next spring  
the swing of a  
35 ounce bat  
is going to flash with sunlight,  
and I will be a year  
older.

My nose was broken twice  
by baseballs.

My body depends on the game.

My eyes  
see it now on television.

No chicken wire —  
it is the aging process.

The season  
can't help but measure.  
I want to say only  
that it is not a  
diversion of the intelligence,  
a man breathes differently  
after rounding the bag,  
history, is there such a thing,  
does not  
choose, it waits and watches,  
the game  
isn't over till the last man's  
out.

George Bowering, "Baseball:  
A Poem in the Magic Number 9"

The plan of this chapter is identical to that of Chapters 4 and 7, an arrangement that aids the comparison striven for in this book. first we consider the amateur baseball players' perspective on self within the framework of the five distinctive attitudes. Next his perspective on his leisure life-style is treated through the structure of its rewards and costs.

## **PERSPECTIVE ON SELF**

By way of review, the five attitudes are self-concept, preparedness, confidence, perseverance, and continuance commitment. The request of the players to identify themselves as amateur or professional resulted in a self-image closer to that of the archaeologists than to that of the theater people. Twenty-seven of the twenty-eight stated bluntly that they are "definitely" or "strictly" amateur, only nine of which added the sorts of qualifications that were so common among the theater amateurs. The following are typical of these qualifications:

*I consider myself good enough to be a pro, but I need instruction to gain this kind of quality.*

*I'd like to consider myself professional, but I can't because I don't make any money at it.*

*I consider myself amateur, but money is the difference. I approach baseball as a professional aspect; when I'm out there I give out 110%.*

*I consider myself an amateur because, in my opinion, a professional is not one that's just been paid for one time, he's one that makes his living at playing a sport. That's my definition of a professional.*

The postprofessional who is also planning to return to professional status is the one player who, understandably, identified himself as a professional.

Now official definitions of amateur and professional in sport are promulgated by such bodies as the International Olympic Committee and the Amateur Athletic Union of the United States and rest mostly, if not solely, on whether the player is paid for his participation. This criterion is clearly accepted by the sample. But a majority of them reject any implication that the run-of-the-mill professional, as monetarily defined, is necessarily a better ballplayer. When asked to compare themselves with AAA-level or minor-league professionals, a comparison sometimes expanded by the respondent to include the average big-league player, eighteen of the twenty-eight (nearly an equal proportion of devotees and participants) asserted that they could play their positions as well. Being professional, in other words, is judged by one criterion — livelihood — while being a good player is judged by a set of different criteria, such as speed, throwing and catching ability, hustle, and the like. The following remarks illustrate this perspective:

*Really, catchingwise, I don't think he'd do no better.*

*Back when I was playing everyday there would have been some, but I could have stayed with a lot of them.*

*I think I'm just as good as anybody else is, but my arm is weak. I can get to the ball and catch it, but not throw as well.*

*If I had the same amount of practice, I don't think he'd be any better.*

*I could probably play pretty good with him. . . . I don't have the arm I should.*

*They're usually faster than I am. . . . As far as glove and arm I am good enough.*

*As far as defensively around the bag, I think I can do as well as the majority of them. I sure do.*

*I honestly believe they don't play it [first base] any better.*

These comments indicate that some of the eighteen respondents see weaknesses in their own playing that, if improved, would enable them to compare even more favorably with the typical professional. Five of these respondents also modified their comparisons by noting that they would be as good as the typical professional if they were in equally good condition.

Nine of the remaining ten players said the run-of-the-mill professional is superior because of his greater experience in the sport, better training, or broader opportunities. One respondent was uncertain about where he stands on this issue.

Each man was also asked a similar question about his batting skills vis-a-vis those of the average professional. Only fourteen were confident that they could "stay with" him here. Another thirteen conceded his superiority only because he is hitting everyday throughout the season or because he has had better coaching or has mastered his "timing" (the hand-eye coordination prerequisite for good hitting). The remaining respondent who was uncertain about his defensive comparison was also uncertain on this query.

The validity of these comparisons is anchored in three sets of events. One is the professionals' errors and weaknesses, which



are quickly spotted by these amateurs. As we have seen, the respondents watch a great deal of live and televised professional baseball, where substandard play, when it occurs, is visible. Seeing such performances also works to enhance the amateur's image of his own playing; if professionals can play badly once in awhile, he reasons, then his own sporadic errors seem all the more excusable.

Another set of events that validates comparisons is currently playing or having once played with men who are presently or formerly professional. Many respondents recalled instances where they stacked up well against such individuals:

*We had two professionals [ex-professionals] play in our league last year. Yeh, I think this one was going back this year; he was a pitcher. They thought he was a super pitcher. I once knocked his head off with a line drive. I felt good about that. He got mad at me too. There were only a couple of guys who were able to hit him; he was pretty fast. I don't even know what he was doing back; he was playing with Kansas City.*

*Of course, for the last two years in this league, I led the league in homeruns. I don't think so, because we're playing with ex-professionals anyway. None of them have done any better than myself. But, I always have been able to knock the shit out of the ball.*

*I know because of an injury I missed a good chance at least to have a free ride through college. And going out into the summer league like this and playing against guys who you know are going to be signed or are fixing to be signed — the scouts are hot and heavy — or even an ex-major leaguer who has had ten years in the majors. . . . And you go out there and play against these guys and do good against them. Well this gives you a little bit of self-rewarding that you know you've done good and everyone else knows you've done good.*

*Remember Rusty Ward out of Arlington? He played for Cincinnati, an AAA team. I remember the year he signed for Cincinnati. He went out there to try out for the city team — center field. I was out there — I beat him out. . . . I'll do it again.*

The third set of events, which applies only to a small number of respondents, is having had the opportunity to compare themselves with other players while at a tryout or camp conducted by a professional team. Those trying out or getting instruction at the camp who are "signed" provide the comparison for the less-fortunate amateur who winds up without a contract. As we shall see some of the interviewees still chafe over assessments made of their baseball skills by representatives of a professional team.

In short, the amateur baseball player tends to identify himself in the same manner as the archaeology amateur, but sees himself as comparing well in ability with his professional colleagues as does the theater amateur. In spirit, then, the baseball and theater amateurs are quite similar here. And were there as sharp a distinction in theater between amateur and professional status as there is in baseball, the large majority of actors and actresses in this study might easily have labeled themselves as amateurs. But classifying professionals in theater solely by the criterion of full-time employment is risky, since finding sufficient work in that art is difficult for all but the most established. Nor is an Equity card of much help.

### **Preparedness and Confidence: Game of Concentration**

Baseball players prepare for a game in at least three ways: conditioning, "mind control" or "psyching up," and concentration. The function of conditioning, which was dealt with in Chapter 8, is obvious; if one is out of shape, one plays poor baseball.

*Psyching up* is a pregame process analogous, in some ways, to the seclusive meditation engaged in by some theater amateurs. In psyching up the player withdraws, physically or mentally, from interaction with others to think about how he will play the approaching game, to focus his attention on his part in it and away from other matters, to convince himself that he can do his best, and the like.

Good mind control aids *concentration*, which is required on defense and offense. The player in the field or the runner on the bases closes his mind to all other thoughts so that he may fix on the situation at the moment; that is, the number of outs, the number of men on the various bases, the count on the batter, the things he should do if a grounder or a fly is hit in any of a variety of circumstances. The parallel here with concentration in theater is patent. The present sample indicated having little trouble concentrating. They make errors alright, but these are seldom "mental errors."

The respondents are generally confident during a game. In fact, making errors rarely enters their mind. Instead they are anxious to get the ball so that they can become involved and demonstrate their ability. The following excerpt from an interview with a seasoned player illustrates this confidence:

*You're out there, you want the ball to be hit to you and you make the catch and throw him out. I mean, when I play the game, what I visualize, when I'm out there, is the great play. I'm hoping the guy will hit a line shot to my right where I can dive and catch it, or I'm hoping I can dive and catch one and throw somebody out. And if you can visualize this in making that play, then you can make it. You know, it's just like telling yourself you can do it. I don't visualize myself missing the ball. A couple of times I have and a couple of times I missed it. That's all you got to do is break that spell, break that string... of confidence. If you ever feel like you're going to mess up, that's the best time to do it. This is a game of confidence, I think. . . .*

A small number of respondents, though normally confident, lose their assurance in tense circumstances, such as a tie game in the late innings with one man out and the bases loaded or a championship game. Others, however, feel as one preprofessional does: "I get even more anxious to get the ball at a time like that." The potential for esteem is never greater.

A "physical error" — an error that results from a failure in skill — can drain away confidence. As in theater, an amateur may dwell on his error, thereby redirecting his concentration.

The result is another one. This time, however, it is likely to be a mental error. And, as his concentration wanes so does his confidence. A small number of players indicated that they think about making errors (*before* their first) and then lose their concentration and assurance after one is made.

### **Perseverance and Commitment: Baseball Fever**

According to one measure anyway, the baseball amateurs can be shown to be drawn to their avocation even more than those in theater and archaeology. Virtually all the respondents reacted as the following three did to the probe: "Do you ever get tired of baseball?"

*Never! I don't think I could ever get enough. . . .I'd play everyday if I could.*

*Haven't so far. . . .I'm ready to play ball anytime.*

*No! The anticipation of the season is almost as exciting as the season itself.*

For many, however, the season is long enough to cure this delirium, which returns in acute form about February or March when the major leagues begin spring training, the college and high school basketball season is nearly over, the weather warms up, the grass turns green, in addition to other familiar signs of spring and the approaching baseball season. Some of the sample also described the way their desire to play builds as a game approaches. Such expectations end abruptly in profound disappointment when the game is cancelled, a matter taken up later in this chapter.

As in archaeology and theater, some of these amateurs have found themselves forced to sit out one or more seasons in order to attend college, hold a particular job, or serve a military obligation. The appetite for baseball is only increased by this denial. And it is an agonizing experience for an enthusiastic player to watch others enjoying themselves at his avocation

when he is unable to do so himself: "Like last year was really bad because I couldn't play because I was working. Didn't have a chance to. It's hard to see these other guys going off to play and me going to work."

Despite the current universal attraction of baseball for the sample, five of them said they withdrew from the sport immediately following high school. After lengthy participation through their school years they found its appeal was fading. For all five, however, this voluntary divorce from baseball has ultimately served to confirm their attachment to it by demonstrating how much they miss it during prolonged noninvolvement.

Beyond the attractiveness of baseball lies the question of the need to persevere at it. Surely, these amateurs feel less pressure to continue at their avocation than their professional counterparts do at their vocation. For the latter have a much longer season, with two to three times the number of weekly games, many of which are played on the road.

Yet the amateur does meet with an assortment of disagreeable situations. Baseball practices are fatiguing, especially during the initial weeks of the season when one is still getting in shape. As the season progresses the daily temperature gets steadily hotter, making Sunday afternoon games, in particular, enervating affairs. And the amateur's interest in Open League baseball may be bound to how well his team is doing. Each year a couple of teams toward the bottom of the standings suffer dissension and absenteeism as they move through the schedule and their less-committed players lose hope of reaching the playoffs or even of winning a few games. Finally, players whose wives or girlfriends merely tolerate or staunchly oppose their athletics have this added barrier to overcome.

Commitment pressures exist in amateur baseball as well, though they remain below the level found in amateur theater or professional baseball. Once a team's roster is fixed its members are expected to stick it out to season's end. If one is scheduled to be the starting pitcher at the next game, one would need a well-

founded excuse to duck this obligation at the last minute. Presumably unreliable players become known for such behavior and their value to a team declines accordingly. Nonetheless, players are generally replaceable; even at the eleventh hour there seems to be little pressure, unlike theater, to play the game despite illness, bereavement, or pregame apprehension. Still, opposition from one's family would probably be an inadequate justification for leaving the team in a lurch.

That many of the respondents are utility players rather than specialists in one or two positions works to keep continuance commitment low. They are less likely than the theater amateurs to wind up participating in their leisure in a way that is distasteful, but that carries the simultaneous requirement to stay with it. Even though a player may prefer a certain position or positions, other positions are only less attractive. The worst situation, by far, most respondents would agree is somehow to be prevented from playing baseball; playing any position is better than this misery.

## **PERSPECTIVE ON LEISURE LIFE-STYLE**

In this section, as was done in Chapters 4 and 7, we look at the bitter and sweet sides of the activity for its amateur practitioners. First we cover the rewards and thrills of baseball, then its disappointments, dislikes, and tensions.

### **Rewards**

Amateur baseball provides most of the personal rewards that amateur theater does: self-expression, self-gratification, self-actualization, self-conception, and recreation. The enriching experiences of theater have no equivalent in baseball, while the gratifying experiences of baseball have no equivalent in theater. Following the established sequence, the benefits of amateur baseball for one's social life are discussed subsequently.

Baseball is thus closer to theater than to archaeology in its

reward structure. In baseball, as in theater, self-expression heads the list of benefits to personality while twenty-three baseball respondents cited it compared with only sixteen in theater. Perhaps this difference is to be expected since the skills of a sport are mostly physical and consequently more evident than the subtle creative or artistic skills needed to interpret a dramatic part. Whatever the reason the respondents frequently mentioned the rewarding qualities of being able to control the ball when pitching or throwing, to handle a bat well, to use their glove effectively, to move quickly, to steal bases, and so forth. Baseball is rewarding because it permits you "to show how well you can do." It is a way of "testing yourself" to see if you can deliver "in the pressure spots." A devotee put the matter this way:

*It's rewarding to get the satisfaction of knowing that I accomplished, you know, a great thing. I went out there and did exactly what I wanted to do — something hard. Just a few people can do it [pause]. I feel like I got power, that's what I feel. The power to do what I want to do with that bat.*

Self-gratification refers to the enjoyment derived from the game of baseball, which is a reward to fifteen of the sample. This benefit was discussed in the interviews in such terms as "I like the game" or "it's fun." To its players baseball is engaging. It is an interestingly structured contest that has the chancy outcome of winning or losing. The self-gratification of baseball differs sharply from that of archaeology, which rests, chiefly, in the intellectual process of puzzle-solving.

The reward of self-actualization, mentioned by nine respondents, denotes the process of perfecting one's skills (instead of expressing those already perfected) or developing one's abilities. It is rewarding to see oneself improve as a pitcher, shortstop, fielder, batter, or base runner. It is equally rewarding, the respondents pointed out, to get into and remain in good physical condition. There is in amateur baseball a "feeling of accomplishment," as many articulated it, in reaching new

heights in the skills of the sport.

Self-conception was mentioned as a personality benefit by six players. This reward appears to be about as salient among baseball amateurs as among those in theater and archaeology. Some of the baseball respondents, having only recently graduated from high school or college, remembered their prominent status as an athlete there. Others referred to a special formal or informal athletic identity, such as most-valuable player, best hitter, or leading base stealer, that they currently hold or once held.

The re-creative benefits of baseball were mentioned by only three players. Far fewer baseball amateurs look on it as a welcomed change of pace than do theater amateurs. The reasons behind this difference deserve further study.

### *Social Benefits: Sweet Competition*

Four social rewards were abstracted from the interviews: competition, sociable interaction, plaudits, and team effort. Two of these were also found in amateur theater and one, sociable interaction, in archaeology as well.

As one might expect *competition* (cited by twenty-two respondents) is a captivating aspect of the game of baseball. For some this means competition between two teams. For others it means individual contests of the sort that occur between batter and pitcher, base runner and baseman, or hitter and fielder. Some players dislike the competition they face in tryouts or the competition between them and another player for the same position. But every player cherishes the competition implicit in the game itself:

*Oh yeh! Sure! Love it. The more competition, the better. You can be playing a great team or a great player on the other one, the better it is. Try to play him down.*

*That's what it's all about. That's what the whole game's about. If you don't have that, you don't have a winning team, you don't have the game. . . .*



*You're always wanting to be better than somebody else; you're always wanting to be the best. If you don't you shouldn't play anyway; you shouldn't be out there. I try to better myself. I got the worst habit: if I don't do something I think I ought to do — maybe I couldn't have done it anyway — but I always feel like I should have. My amateur ability and all that is more to myself. I try to bring the best out of me, and if I don't, you know, I'll be madder than hell at myself.*

*Yes, competition brings out the best in everybody. If there wasn't that competition there, you wouldn't take the serious stance you're in and not do your best. But in the competition there you try, you know; it makes you feel better about it. You're giving your best.*

*Sociable interaction* among the baseball respondents divides into team camaraderie, on the one hand, and extramural socializing on the other. Every respondent treasures the first, which refers to the friendly, beneficent interchanges among players during a practice or game. The comments of one respondent convey this feeling:

*Oh yeh! You bet! I think that's the biggest reason a person plays after he's already gone through his real competitive years. I mean I play now because I enjoy it and I enjoy being around the people. If I don't like the people I'm with, I don't play with them. There's no reason to play if you don't like the people you're with, if you're doing it for the reason I'm doing it. I've played on many teams that they've had a lot of conflicts and you just have to blow them off, you know. There, again, everybody we play with now with this team we've got in the summer league really get along well. . . . I think that's a big factor, the social life.*

Good relations with one's teammates do more than simply promote enjoyment; they also promote teamwork. The pitcher-catcher relationship, for instance, must at least be cordial. They must be able to communicate with one another and to be willing to consider one another's preference on what to pitch next. The catcher must be willing to hold his glove, as a sort of target,

where the pitcher intends to aim his next throw. Enemies, here or elsewhere on the team, are less likely to cooperate to each other's benefit.

Twenty of the twenty-eight interviewees said that 40% or more of their moderate-to-close friends are baseball players. Yet, only ten of them regard extramural socializing as a reward of their avocation. Besides the after-hours eating and drinking, extramural socializing includes team picnics and the League-sponsored all-star game on the Fourth of July. The latter, which may be discontinued starting with the present season, has the all-star game as its main event, during and after which food and beer are served and horsehoes and badminton are played for additional diversion. An older player, and one of the ten who values this socializing, put it this way:

*Oh yes! Sure I would miss the social life. I know, like at practice Sunday, there we were at batting practice, we were standing in the outfield, and I said: "Where are we going after practice?" It was understood we were going to go some place.*

But it is clear from the interviews that it is mostly the single players who most consistently endorse after-hours socializing. Those with wives and longstanding girlfriends feel called to return to them when finished with the practice or game. At times these people accompany players to after-hours gatherings and they probably attend most of the picnics and all-star games. Their presence, however, appears to redistribute the interaction of the team into those with women and those without. And some of the conversational topics of the all-male sessions, such as sex and even baseball, are suppressed when company is mixed. One married player summed it up well for the remaining eighteen respondents: "My social life wouldn't change much if I got out of baseball."

The *plaudits* associated with playing a spectator sport were mentioned by ten respondents as a benefit of their leisure. The baseball player, along with his teammates, is the center of attention. Hence, good play is visible and brings audible approval from teammates and fans. As one interviewee put it: "I play for

the girls.” In addition to its other benefits baseball, for some amateurs, is an “ego-trip.”

Five respondents (similar to the number in theater) mentioned the reward of contributing to a *team effort*. As in theater all must pull together to bring off a success, in this instance a victory. In nearly every situation a baseball player can get into, he is dependent to a degree on someone else. There is a sense of group accomplishment in a baseball game, whether won or lost.

### **Thrills: Personal Distinction**

Among these baseball players the most commonly listed thrills, those exceptional rewards of leisure life that are etched in memory, relate to individual performance in games. The thrills of team achievement were less frequently cited. The personal thrills of amateur baseball are signal performances, outstanding plays, and major awards. The group thrills include winning a crucial game and participating in playoffs. We turn first to the personal thrills.

A signal performance throughout a game was mentioned as a thrill by eleven respondents. They were proudly able to recall when, at one time or another in their baseball career, they pitched a no-hitter, made five unassisted double-plays in a single game, consistently hit off a tough pitcher, or struck out eighteen batters in the same contest. A young pitcher described his biggest thrill:

*The best of them all, was when I almost beat Texas. I got beat in the bottom of the ninth with two outs. That's my big thrill; there were five thousand people there. It was against Jim Gideon [now a professional pitcher]. He got pulled in the seventh.*

Another player recounted his finest game at bat:

*We were playing a game against the Grand Prairie Laundry, and they had a buy on who was a left-hander, his name was Gary Carter. And he was a rifle. I mean, if he was still pitching now, he would be playing pro — I think he threw his arm away, he was so strong at that time. And, as a general rule, when we*

*played them in a game no one hit the ball. Maybe a foul every once in awhile...but he pitched no-hitters just like nothing. And, in the game we played, I hit two balls and bounced them off the fence. What made it such a thrill was that I didn't hit but one homerun the whole year, I mean over the fence. I'm not a homerun hitter. I rely on just getting a hit. And, I bounced these two balls off of the fence. And I was given a trophy that year. That was pretty special.*

The thrilling memory of an outstanding play lingers with ten respondents. Examples include a leaping catch, a grand-slam homerun, a crucial strikeout, or an exceptionally accurate and difficult throw to the plate. Usually these feats helped the player's team out of a tight situation, though they may not have been the play that won that game for them, if they won at all.

Five players define the receipt of a formal award for their superior performance throughout a season as a thrill of baseball. This meant either being chosen as the team or League most valuable player or being nominated to the League all-star team.

Winning a crucial game has been a thrill for seven respondents and playing in a tournament or playoff a thrill for five of them (though they did not necessarily win the championship). Sometimes the crucial game was one against an archrival or against a team the player's team had to defeat to stay in contention for the playoffs. The high level of camaraderie that tends to accompany collective achievement of this kind is an important element in these thrills.

With respect to its thrills amateur baseball is closer to theater than to archaeology. The dramatic thrills of ideal audience reaction and receiving an award resemble certain personal thrills experienced in baseball.

### **Disappointments: Play and Play Well**

The major disappointments in amateur baseball are en-

countered in four ways: obstructed participation, crucial loss, inadequate performance, and bad season. They are treated here in this order.

*Obstructed participation* was the most frequently mentioned of the four (twelve respondents). It takes several forms. Injuries that eliminated the player for a season or more were often listed. Sickness was blamed by one man for keeping him out of a championship game. Another was suspended from his high school team for drinking, and thereby missed his chance to be scouted by the professional teams and possibly to embark on a full-time career in baseball. Sometimes circumstances beyond the player's control conspire to deny him an opportunity to prove himself, as happened to this devotee who signed with a major league club, but found himself unable to perform to his standards at spring training:

*The only reason why I didn't make it was because of my sore arm. I only had twelve days to get myself in shape. So he [the scout] signed me because of my arm. And, here, I worked out five days a week — and it's sore during that whole time — and two days off on the weekend so it can heal. Work out five more days and off two more days to let it heal. So I was supposed to have another five days and two more days' rest, but the day after that [second work-out period] I got on the airplane to go. My arm was sore, I mean it was really sore. But I figured it would be just like high school or college. You'd get down there and they'll start off real slow and give you plenty of time to recuperate and rest, and bang there you are. But, as soon as I got down there, they started right in. After I looked around and saw what I saw, I saw a lot. I told myself it will have to be next year, because I'm not throwing the ball hard. . . . There on my contract if I didn't make outfield they'd put me pitching. So I didn't get to try out for pitching. I haven't seen nobody, not even in AAA, that had as strong an arm as me. I haven't really seen anybody in my whole life. So, old . . . he's the man that signed old Hank Aaron, he signed me. And he told me I had a stronger arm than Hank Aaron.*

A few respondents identified brittle relations with a college or

high school coach as the source of their obstructed participation in baseball, a problem treated more thoroughly in the discussion of disenchantments. Finally, the interviews and conversations with amateurs suggest that disappointments can arise from playing too little in a game or season. Even in the Open League players too weak to start sit out all or most of the close games because the best talent the team can muster is needed to win the contest. Even more disappointing is the failure to make the team.

A common worry associated with many an obstructed participation is its effect on the respondent's athletic future. As mentioned earlier, several players are currently interested or were once interested in playing professional baseball. But they must be visible if they are to get signed. They must be observed by a scout while playing in an amateur league or by an agent while at a tryout or summer baseball camp. And this must occur while they are within the optimum age range (roughly seventeen to twenty-four) and in good physical condition. Being suspended from an amateur team, benched because of injuries or sickness, or overlooked by the coach because of his biases make the player invisible to those in the big leagues. Injuries are the most prevalent and lasting obstruction to participation. It is no wonder that amateurs and professionals alike worry about "keeping healthy." A number of players believe that their professional aspirations were hindered, if not blocked, by such contingencies.

An obstructed participation limited strictly to informal team players is the failure of their team to be admitted to the Open League. This is a bitter issue with them. They recently applied to the League's Board of Directors for admission, but were rejected. As a result several members of these teams have charged that bias is at work among Board members; that for some reason they are being unfairly treated. The Board's position is that it has all the teams (eight) it can effectively handle, given the limited practice and game fields available to it and the amount of effort needed to coordinate a game schedule of this

size. One matter of concern, even if facilities to accommodate more teams could be arranged, is the reliability of new teams. Should one of them fold in the middle of the season, the game schedule laboriously worked out beforehand is thrown into disarray. The first step toward solving this problem, however, must be taken, not by the Board or the informal teams, but by the city recreation department, which controls the baseball diamonds.<sup>1</sup>

The disappointment of a *crucial loss* was cited by six respondents. Crucial losses are incurred against another team in a championship, in a grudge match, or in an archrivalry. This was the only collective disappointment listed by the respondents.

Another six players mentioned how disappointing an *inadequate performance* can be. At times they referred to their inability to make a decisive catch in an important game, to get the hit that would have led their team to victory, to strike out a batter instead of allowing the fly to the outfield that drove in the winning run, and the like. At other times they referred to a weak performance throughout a major game. A seasoned athlete reminisced about one of his inadequate performances:

*One of the biggest errors that ever stands out in my mind was the one I made that cost us the ball game. We were playing in the University of Houston. . . and I had had a fine game. I had already made about eight put-outs and made about four real good stops, threw about three people out from deep in the hole at shortstop. Got down to the last inning and, really I don't know if it even was an error, you know, it took a bad hop on me. There was a man on second, and the ball came up on me and popped me off the top of the shoulder. And the guy scored, and lost the ball-game then. Something like that. . . . To me it was an error. To me, we lost the ball game because I didn't make the catch. That really upset me.*

A *bad season*, also mentioned by seven respondents, is the final major disappointment. A bad season is, for example, a consistently poor team performance, as when one man recalled

how a softball team, whose members hoped would perform in ways quite other than those suggested by its name — The Turkeys — finished the season in last place. Some players could remember a year when they were in a hitting or pitching slump. One usually good pitcher had so poor a record one season that it haunted him through the succeeding winter.

When it comes to disappointments amateur baseball again more resembles amateur theater than amateur archaeology. Only four of the baseball sample have never experienced disappointment in their leisure careers, in contrast to twenty-one archaeologists.

A failure to realize high hopes spells disappointment, but that does not necessarily mean the player is also disenchanted with baseball. With disenchantment he loses faith, which brings him to the brink of quitting the game, permanently or indefinitely, while disappointments could have the opposite effect. Twenty-one of the respondents said they have never been disenchanted with their avocation. So, amateur baseball falls between archaeology, where no disenchantments were reported by the sample, and theater where approximately half the sample recalled such circumstances.

Among the seven baseball players who have been disenchanted, five saw a coach as the agent responsible. In some way he was seen as spoiling the game for the respondent either through his inept organization or administration of the team or through his insensitive dealings with individual players, though possibly someone other than the respondent himself. Consider the following case:

*My coach, this was in high school, he had done this other player really wrong — kept picking on him because he didn't like him. And, since I was with this guy and picked him up that day — he was a good friend of mine. We were both late — I had to go back and get my belt. He saw us coming through (they hadn't left on the bus yet). And he saw my car pull into the parking lot. He said just go ahead and leave them. He turned around and told me that he didn't see us when we stopped. I mean the*



*players on the team said they heard him say that. He told me it was because of the other guy in the car that he didn't play me that game. I said: "alright if you're going to do that after I drove over here and everything, even if I'm a little late, at least I'm at the game." He was ready to kick him [the other player] off the team and eventually he did. After he kicked him off the team, I just went out there with the attitude I'd like to win, but not for him, but for myself. I didn't care about the team anymore. I just was out there kind of for me the rest of the year. . . . He's done a lot of ballplayers wrong.*

### **The Dislikes: Uncongenial Leisure**

Amateur baseball is at least as productive of dislikes as amateur theater. Four were mentioned with significant frequency by the respondents: favoritism, unserious players, coaching problems, and low visibility.

Seven interviewees mentioned *favoritism* as a major dislike, among them were four of the five players from the informal teams. They clearly conveyed their belief that players are too often selected for teams on grounds other than baseball ability; Friendship or family ties are said to be common bases of recruitment. Indeed, nepotism is a genuine possibility since the desire to play baseball appears to "run" in families where fathers, sons, uncles, brothers, and cousins have played or currently play amateur or professional ball. One player commented briefly on the "politics" of amateur baseball: "I was out for a team. . . . The coach was telling me he thought I was a good player and he talked to the other guys. But when it got down to it, there was a lot of bringing in of friends and relatives."

The dislike of favoritism among the present sample hinges on two unavoidable conditions. The first is the history of the typical League team. Each one seems to start, much as the informal teams did, as a group of friends and relatives who were high school or neighborhood cronies. Often it is not until some of these cronies lose interest in baseball (from playing too little or acquiring other obligations) that new players are sought. Or,

to remain competitive in the League, new players may be sought before this time. These new players are discovered during spring tryouts or invited to play on the basis of their athletic reputation in the League, the high schools, or the local colleges. In short, the early germination and growth of the typical league team appears to be rooted in favoritism, which withers as a recruitment strategy as the team matures and is required to take on new personnel.

The other condition is the coach. He holds the greatest and clearest responsibility for developing a successful team, which is done by selecting good players and using the best talent to win each game. Since he is seen by the others as basically one of them — a peer — his judgment carries no special weight. Consequently, when he cuts a player from his team or uses him infrequently because he believes he has better players for the same position or can find someone more amiable, those affected may charge that he is exercising bias. “After all,” they reason, “I know baseball as well as the coach does and, since I’m as good as the other guys, it must be partiality that is guiding his decision.” The coaches adopt different strategies for coping with this difficult situation, none of which is totally effective.<sup>2</sup> It is perhaps the weakest aspect of the overall operation of the League and one that is difficult to strengthen without somehow increasing the respect with which the coaches are held.

The following extract from my observations exemplifies how this second condition is manifested on the playing field:

*Russ is sitting on the bench, fuming. He is convinced that Dick, the coach, will never play him this game. But he is mistaken, for in the third inning Dick motions him to take second base. But this gesture does little to change Russ's outlook. He believes the coach is mad at him for trying out for another team (which Russ is doing because he believes he may be cut from Dick's team). Russ also feels that Dick is partial to his friends and relatives in building the team. The coach, however, knows he can have only eighteen players on his team by AABC regulations. Some aspirants to it will have to be eliminated, and*

*he is unimpressed with Russ's playing ability and wary of his team spirit. Russ, apparently, has a reputation for fractious relations between himself and his teammates.*

The theorem, "if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Thomas, 1951: 81), applies here as in so many other times in life. There are two realities — the coach's and Russ's — with little knowledge of how the other might be defining the same situation. Ultimately the coach has the power to enforce his view of things, which he may do, for example, by cutting Russ from the team or by refusing to play him. But these actions do little to solve the problem that arises in the Open League from time to time: where player and coach disagree on the merits of the former and where there is slight chance for reconciliation because each person sees only one reality, his own definition of his or someone else's athletic strengths and weaknesses.

The *unserious players*, who are cut from the same cloth as those in theater, are disliked by six baseball respondents. As in theater lack of seriousness in baseball takes numerous forms. One is skipping practices without good reason or coming to them late and departing early. Another is trifling around while there. A third is remaining in poor condition long after everyone is expected to be in shape. Sloppy play in a game — making inexcusable errors — is another facet of lack of seriousness. One devotee sees light-mindedness in a few players whose habit it is to drink beer before and during practices and games:

*I'm not adjusted to people bringing beer out to practice or anything like that. When you go to practice or have a game, you know, that's what you ought to be out there for. I'm just not used to them drinking and laughing about it and everything.*

*Coaching problems* were mentioned by six interviewees. They referred to matters other than favoritism, such as communications difficulties with players and poor advice on how to play baseball. A distaste for *low visibility* was reported by three men in the Open League where spectators, though markedly more

prevalent this year, have been largely absent in the past. The League's activities are also ignored by the local newspapers. High school and college players are accustomed to more publicity for their efforts and those of their teams.

Several respondents also mentioned the poor quality of officiating and hence the need for more objective and better-trained umpires. This dislike has been omitted from the present list, however, since paid umpires with a certain amount of training are provided this season for the first time. There will surely be complaints about their calls, too, but the number of complaints will likely to be lower than previously.

Six respondents said they have no major dislikes compared with five in archaeology and two in theater. This distribution squares with the overall impression that amateur baseball and archaeology in comparison with amateur theater contain fewer dislikes and those that exist there are held by fewer people.

### **Tensions**

Four kinds of tensions trouble the amateur baseball player: strained relations with a coach, tryouts, umpires' calls, and pregame apprehension. Since strained relations with coaches have already been reviewed in connection with favoritism and disenchantment, no additional treatment of this subject is planned at this point. We need only note that the censure of coaches might be more frequent, harsh, and direct were it not for the possibility of the censurer being handed the job with the observation: "Since you know so much about it, why don't you do it?" We turn to tryouts.

For seven respondents tryouts are irrelevant because they play exclusively for an informal team, where no tryouts are held, or their positions are secure on their Open League teams. Among the remaining twenty-one players the distribution of those who dread them, those who regard them as a necessary evil, and those who look forward to them is strikingly different from theater.

The majority of this part of the sample (eleven respondents) look on tryouts as attractive; an occasion to display what they can do and to compete against other players. They articulated this view in the following ways:

*I like the competition. I wouldn't like just to be the only guy and know I had the position. . . . You play better ball if you're competing against someone else.*

*When it comes to competition I'm ready. . . . I like competition. I can see what I can do. . . it's a chance to show people what I can do.*

*I look forward to them [tryouts]. It's the idea of getting out there and competing with the other guys.*

I look forward to them way ahead of time.

I look forward to tryouts; I usually play my best baseball.

In the past they've been good, I've enjoyed them.

Four respondents view tryouts in the same light as those in theater who define them as a necessary evil. They neither look forward to them nor dread them. They do see them as an indispensable element in baseball:

*Well, last year it was [trying], they had a bunch of good pitchers and I didn't know how many they were going to keep. It was a lot more trying than it was this year. . . . This tryout thing, it's a time for you to get in shape again when everybody goes out there and they have to — You have to go through it, you can't give up and say well I know I'm on the team. . . .*

Two older players among these four say their feelings about tryouts are influenced by their level of conditioning:

*You know that one of these days you're not going to be able to cut the mustard. It does get to be a little bit rough going through them year after year. That's what it's all about is the best people making the team. Yeah, I'm not too crazy about*

*them any more. Ah, it's the only way to go. If you didn't have tryouts, there'd be favorites and you wouldn't have a good ball club. I'm getting twenty-seven shortly after the season starts.*

*If I'm in shape I like them. It's worse when I'm not.*

The six respondents who dread tryouts include some older men who worry, as did the one just quoted, that they will play poorly against younger competition. The chancy outcome of these tests is evident in the following comments:

*I get nervous at the thought. You can go out and do bad, but still be a pretty good ball player.*

*I think I kind of dread them. They reveal your weak points, especially if you haven't practiced awhile. You know you can do it, but can you do it that time. They worry me.*

*You have to prove something to somebody and face this pressure.*

*You always dread a tryout. I mean you're looking at a guy going in — somebody like me — that has a job and a family who's not playing college ball. You go and you're competing with guys younger, you're competing with guys who have put in, say, three or four months of baseball. They're in shape. They're coming straight from college into your amateur league trying out for the same team. Here you are; unless you've kept yourself in some kind of shape... then there's no way you're going to be in as good a shape as these guys are. ... Oh yes, a tryout is a big threat. You go out hoping you make the team.*

The fear of tryouts is hardly assuaged by the possibility, which appeared dimly in this study, that many younger men may wish to play primarily to win and improve themselves, while many older ones seem to wish to mix these aims with the aim of having a good time.

While the tryouts situation may be less complicated in amateur baseball than in amateur theater many similarities do exist between the two. There are forces beyond the baseball

player's control, such as the condition of the field or mound on which he has to work and the skill and numbers of competing individuals. Additionally, his own apprehension may damage his showing in this critical situation. In the end he, like his theatric counterpart, worries that his performance may undermine his claim to the identity of an athlete worthy of membership on the team. And, as in theater, the individual's apprehension level is raised when trying out for a team composed of strangers.

*Umpires' Calls.* Tensions with the officials may well cool this season under the new umpiring arrangements. But, based on previous seasons in the League and elsewhere, eleven respondents reported at least one case of friction with an umpire. The picture of a player in a heated nose-to-nose argument with an official is too familiar to dwell on at length here. One example of such an altercation involving one of the present sample is sufficient:

*Occasionally. Yes, I sure do. . . . I think I keep my cool about as well as most people do. The only time I don't is when I think I'm right. I remember I got hot last year in this league. I mean I got hot. . . . This was when we were having players umpire. My teammates said that fellow's going to have a heart attack. Veins popped out in my neck. But I was right, and he corrected his decision. It was on a balk situation and he didn't know the rules.*

...

*Pregame Apprehension.* Pregame apprehension is the equivalent of stage fright in theater. Only in amateur baseball it affects more people; twenty-two respondents indicated some degree of queasiness preceding a game as compared with about half the theater sample. Many of those who experience no queasiness play on one of the informal teams.

For most players their butterflies disappear once they reach their first turn at bat, or field or pitch their first ball. But, as in theater, there are differences in the duration of this state. For a few players one or more innings must pass before they begin to

relax. A couple of players said they lose their apprehension once the game commences, even though they have yet to bat or field a ball. Others say they feel little of it beyond the first two or three games of the season. The level of nervous feeling also varies with the level of conditioning and training. Needless to say, a crucial game, especially if the competition is keen, is likely to intensify the apprehension of many players and generate it in those who normally escape it.

One player's account of his apprehension illustrates what many respondents go through to play baseball:

*Pregame nervousness is usually pretty good. You get out there and you start warming up and your legs feel like rubber and your old arms just don't want to throw right, you know. You get ready to go up to the plate and bat and you're swinging the bat and it feels like you've got a hunk of lead in your hands instead of a bat. Yeh, nervousness does play a great part in it. Later on during the season it does seem to go away, I guess because fatigue sets in and the nervousness goes away [laughter]. Later in the game you're not near as nervous either.*

So run the tensions of amateur baseball. Only two men mentioned interpersonal friction with other players. I did watch many brief outbursts of temper, but these are too fleeting to be classified as tensions, which endure for some time. And butterflies for these athletes seem to be less extreme than for some theater amateurs. Only one baseball respondent, for example, indicated being physically nauseated before a game. By contrast, only one respondent said he looked forward to his games with the sort of eager anticipation found among some of those onstage.

Does this mean that amateurs in theater value their avocation more or take it more seriously than those in baseball? I doubt it. It probably means only that the former are more expressive of their feelings than the latter. From all signs the baseball players in this study are as committed to their pursuit as the thespians and archaeologists. And it is because of this strong attachment and its consequences in other spheres of their lives that all three



sets of enthusiasts find themselves cast as marginal people between work and leisure.

### Notes

1. A minor form of disappointment that bears mentioning at this time is the one that develops from a cancelled game. Cancellations resulted, during my observations, from weather, wet diamonds, or lack of field lights. The latter is due to poor coordination between the League and the city recreation department.
2. One coach says he really acts only as a sort of coordinator or organizer, letting the team coach itself. Two other coaches combined their efforts in a single team, thereby having the judgments of two people to bring to bear on problematic cases. Some coaches, it is claimed, cut their unwanted players by not cutting them; that is, the players are left to warm the bench until they get the hint that they are surplus and leave the team. Still others keep the size of their team to a minimum so that everyone gets to play.

## *Marginality and Amateurism*

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We have now completed examination of the routine, personal perspective, and everyday life of amateurs in theater, archaeology, and baseball. They have been treated here as representative of the collective forms of amateurism in art, science, and sport. Though dozens of themes run through the observations and interviews (the data) on which this book is based, the two that best represent what has been said to this point are *marginality* and what may be labeled *contributive participation*. Theoretical discussion of them is saved for the final section of this chapter. Their concrete manifestations among the amateurs

of the present study and among amateurs in general are taken up first.

## ON THE MARGIN

With data from Chapters 2 through 10 as background we are in a better position than we were in Chapter 1 to understand why amateurs are marginal to the world of leisure. But before we consider the four aspects of marginality introduced earlier, it should be made clear that, at least according to Kaplan's (1960: 22-25) "essential elements of leisure," the amateurs of this study are nonetheless pure-blooded users of discretionary time and not curious mulattos of dubious ancestry. Leisure, according to Kaplan (1960: 22) contains:

(a) an antithesis to "work" as an economic function; (b) a pleasant expectation and recollection; (c) a minimum of involuntary social-role obligations; (d) a psychological perception of freedom; (e) a close relation to values of the culture; (f) the inclusion of an entire range from inconsequence and insignificance to weightiness and importance; and (g) often, but not necessarily, an activity characterized by the element of play.

Our amateurs are marginal in the sense that they have chosen a marginal form of leisure; one that is closer to being work than any other. They are not, in other words, participants in *popular leisure* — in nonserious leisure.<sup>1</sup> And, as mentioned earlier, they are neither dabblers nor professionals.

This brings us to the first aspect of marginality; namely, that amateurs are serious about their leisure and therefore misunderstood by those of their associates — friends, neighbors, relatives, workmates — who participate only in *popular leisure*. There can be no doubt about the seriousness of the respondents. All three fields have their strenuous moments; their trying situations through which the amateur must persevere (though the professional must persevere even more) and their costs in the forms of dislike, disappointment, and ten-

sion. In addition baseball and theater require major commitments of time. Despite these potential impediments the amateurs in this research stick it out, though they, too, likely have their breaking points beyond which they would give up.

The amateur's seriousness contrasts with the absence of same in the consumer of popular leisure. A spectator at the football stadium, a Sunday afternoon swimmer, or a dabbler on the guitar usually quits when his involvement gets arduous, requires persistence, becomes too time-consuming, or produces personal tension. In other words, his breaking point comes much earlier than the amateur's. Moreover, many popular leisure enthusiasts participate actively in little or nothing at all (Hodges, 1964: 160-171; Winthrop, 1966: 281; Torbert, 1973: 175-176; Dowell, 1967).

As the term implies, most leisure today is popular leisure, a situation that in itself contributes to the amateur's status as marginal person:

In nearly all empirical surveys, leisure is characterized by a search for a *state of satisfaction*, taken as an end itself.

This search is intrinsically hedonistic. . . . However, the quest for happiness, pleasure, or joy is a basic characteristic of leisure in modern society. Wolfenstein speaks in this connection of a "fun morality." When this state of satisfaction ends or deteriorates, the individual tends to discontinue the corresponding activity. No one is bound to a leisure pursuit by a material need or a moral or legal imperative of *society*. . . . The search for a state of satisfaction is the prime condition of leisure: "this interests me." Such a state may consist in the rejection of all tensions, of any attention or concentration [Dumazedier, 1974: 75].

As we shall see in the second part of this chapter, the reward structure of theater, archaeology, and baseball is far more complicated than that of popular leisure with its dominant if not sole reward of self-gratification (see, e.g., Donald and Havighurst, 1959: 358).

How misunderstood by their associates are the amateurs discussed in this book? The answer to this question depends on

which associates one is speaking of. Every respondent was asked how his nonparticipant friends, relatives, and workmates view his avocation. Archaeology and theater showed a similar pattern with some associates being "respectful," as one person put it, toward the amateur's leisure and others (about the same number) viewing it as quaint. Those who are respectful see the activity as fun or interesting. Some of them are also amazed that the amateur can find the time, and possibly the energy, to pursue it or, in the case of theater, the nerve to get onstage before an audience and perform. They respect his achievements.

Those who define the leisure of the amateur archaeologist or thespian as quaint or odd tend to stress, as they see it, the great effort it takes to produce a minuscule return. These people often measure the rewards of an activity strictly in terms of the money produced, something all three fields fail to do. It also occasionally happens in archaeology and theater, but especially in the latter, that the amateur's associates stereotype his avocational colleagues as "weird" (unconventional behavior, dress, interests), though he is probably seen as an exception (hence it is difficult for them to understand why he seeks such company).

In archaeology the marginality of its amateur practitioners is further enforced by the moral implications some of the respondents' associates see in it. Digging up graves (no matter how old), inquiring into the scientific origins of man, and the like have a definite religious import for certain people. In theater the moral implications center on the alleged sexual behavior of actors and actresses.

The associates of the baseball players are predominantly respectful. Yet, even here, a few interviewees reported that some of their friends view their enthusiasm for the sport as odd, usually because of the time and effort they devote to it without monetary return.

When the amateur's interests and leisure companions are defined by his daily associates as weird, quaint, or immoral he is pushed to a marginal position with respect to them. People who participate only in popular leisure, owing to its mass appeal,

necessarily avoid these unfavorable imputations.

The very conduct of the activities considered here contributes to their practitioners' differentness. The middle-aged, married respondents, like the rest of the sample, focus their leisure away from home, while research in Britain, Canada, Germany, and the United States indicates that leisure among people at this stage of life is typically centered at home and especially on the television set (e.g., Roberts, 1970: 46-47; Milton, 1975: 97; Rapoport and Rapoport, 1975: 211, 254, 269; Havighurst and Feigenbaum, 1959: 399; Scheuch, 1960: 40). And, as a consequence of being away from home and its television, all the amateurs find themselves at least partly estranged from the mass culture of the day.

But in the end, being misunderstood, as an aspect of marginality, is not the same as being labeled a deviant in leisure. The marginal amateur is still within the ambit of respectable society. Leisure in the form of illegal drug use, aberrant sex, gambling, and the like (cf., Kando, 1975: 9; Downes et al., 1976; Klapp, 1969: 200) is, in the eyes of the community, a different sort of fun from that considered in this book.

The second aspect of marginality is the tendency for the amateur's avocation to get out of hand, the tendency toward uncontrollability. This tendency is evidenced in the present research in the preoccupation with baseball, archaeology, and theater at home and at work; in the priority of baseball and theater in the scheduling and conduct of family activities; in the effects of baseball fatigue and injuries on occupational performance. There is also the propensity among many of the respondents in all three samples to procrastinate over the discharge of their home duties. Only baseball, however, poses any threat, if it may be called that, to the family budget, from which the money for athletic equipment and after-hours socializing must come.

The third aspect of the amateur's marginality concerns his outsider position in the professional world, for he must make his living elsewhere. Amateur archaeologists, this study

demonstrates, revere their professional counterparts more than the amateurs in baseball or theater, but respect for the capable professional was evident throughout the research. All respondents strive to meet the standards that the best professionals have established. In theater it is the constant reinterpretation of one's part, in archaeology it is the continuous acquisition of more knowledge of the discipline and of one's research area, in baseball it is the betterment of such skills as throwing and batting. The allure of the professional side of their field is seen, too, in the interest many amateurs have in its lifestyle; in the value they place on their associations with individual professionals; and in their admiration for the professional's outstanding performances and achievements, an admiration communicated through the amateurs' stories and accounts of his behavior and feats. The truly outstanding professionals are the ones to whom we refer here, those people whose accomplishments set standards that the other professionals and the amateurs attempt to meet.

Amateurs are often frustrated in their efforts to meet the high standards of performance set by the top professionals in their fields. This frustration is the fourth aspect of marginality. There is no evidence anywhere in this study that any standards other than professional ones are used to guide and judge the performances of these amateurs. They impose such standards on themselves, for the most part, but they are fully aware that their publics and, of course, their most respected professional colleagues, will also settle for nothing less. As many respondents indicated, frustration comes from the lack of time and other resources that are needed to make themselves into better archaeologists, ballplayers, or thespians.

Neither the professionals as they work nor the consumers of popular leisure as they play have to confront misunderstanding, uncontrollability, outsider status, or frustration in the ways amateurs do. This, then, is marginality.

## AMATEURISM IN INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

The term "amateurism" refers to the process of carrying out amateur pursuits and to the end products of these pursuits. It contributes in numerous ways to individual, profession, and society. Concerning the individual the present study has uncovered eight rewards that attract him to amateurism in at least two of the fields investigated. Generalizing from this research we may say that individuals pursue amateur activities for some, possibly even all, of the following reasons:

### Personal

- (1) for self-actualization
- (2) for self-expression
- (3) for enhanced self-conception
- (4) for self-gratification
- (5) for self-enrichment
- (6) for re-creation

### Social

- (7) for sociable interaction
- (8) for group effort or accomplishment

In these ways, and perhaps others, we benefit ourselves through amateurism.

This list elaborates and extends Dumazedier's (1967: 14-17) three functions of leisure: relaxation, entertainment, and personal development. His relaxation factor corresponds to our recreation in that it promotes recovery from fatigue. Entertainment, since it refers to the satisfying side of leisure, corresponds to self-gratification. The remaining personal reasons are forms of Dumazedier's personal development function. The social reasons appear to have no parallel in his classification and so serve as an extension of it.

Perhaps the most outstanding contribution that amateurism, along with hobbyism (Stebbins, 1977b), can make to their individual practitioners is the fostering of the development and



support of attractive social identities. Amateurism and hobbyism must surely stand as one of the best ways of heeding Glasser's (1973: 63) exhortation:

Since technology has closed most of the fulfillment avenues in paid work *society must seek solutions to work motivation outside the work environment*. It will have to evolve methods of guiding people into using leisure in ways leading to a desirable identity.

Amateurs also contribute to their associated professions. How this is done has already been discussed, in good part, in Chapter 1 in connection with the P-A-P system. But two additional potential or actual contributions remain to be considered. The issue of how much and how often the amateur advances or makes original contributions to his field has spawned conflicting opinions. Barzun (1954: 23-24) declares the amateur actually makes major innovations in his field. Following Henry Ford, he says: "the amateurs seem less familiar than professionals with the impossible, and so conquer it more often." Perry (1904:20), on the other hand, holds the opposite view; it is the professionals who are likely to make the solid advances. The weight of practitioner opinion, incidentally, is toward Barzun's position (see Bickford, 1968, on painters; Fry, 1970, on ham-radio operators). Of the three fields investigated in the present research, only archaeology contains clear evidence of original contributions by amateurs to the profession.

The second contribution of amateurism to its related professions is less in doubt: amateurs as a group constitute the most *steadfast* public their professional counterparts have. That is, in addition to their role as critic in the P-A-P system (see Chapter 1), their numbers and unswerving interest in the field assure their full-time colleagues of a small, but sophisticated, public. The significance of the amateur in sports, entertainment, and science can be seen in the task Curt John Ducasse (1966: 12) assigns to him in the arts:

The dilettante — the man who takes delight in works of art — is the one, with the artist, who counts most, of all the persons who occupy themselves with works of art. . . . The vitality of art depends upon him to a considerable extent — upon his numbers, upon the vigor of his interest, and upon his refusal to let himself be bluffed or his actual taste awed, by the impressive but aesthetically irrelevant learning of the so-called authorities.

Amateurism also contributes to society, again in ways additional to those considered in the P-A-P system. Today it is part of the broader spirit of participation sweeping contemporary North America. But it has been serving in this fashion for many years. Barzun (1956: 437) and Kaplan (1955: 4-6) describe how painting and music arose as mass activities in the 1930s through WPA-sponsored orchestras, supplies, instruments, and lessons in music and art. The origin of the various amateur pursuits, before their days of mass appeal, would have to be established separately in connection with the appearance of professionals in each. Amateurism extends back further than one hundred years in some fields. Mass amateurism, however, bloomed with the shortening of the work week in this century.

Given that amateurs have been around, in smaller or larger numbers, for a long time in North America, what contributions do they make to society? One contribution they make is to help build a unique subculture around their pursuit, which, in turn, helps attract new recruits to it and a larger, more enthusiastic public (in music see Drinker, 1952: 577; Jackson, 1967). Frye (1970) describes how ham-radio operators contribute to the electronic progress of the nation and to the development in youth of an interest in professional electronics. These, he says, are of greater importance than the hams' communications in times of disaster and contribution of trained operators to the military. Persons outside the many P-A-P systems are encouraged through interpersonal ties to watch, view, or hear a performance or work of a friend or relative. In this manner, amateur and professional groups alike gather converts to their system, either as members of their public or as practitioners.

Toffler (1964) and Bell (1958: 185-189) see another contribution made by the recent upsurge of mass amateurism in America. Speaking particularly about the arts, Toffler (1964: 51-52) notes: "The rise of interest in the arts by a mass public in the United States could, despite all the tinsel and tomfoolery it entails, herald something quite important in the social development of modern man." In other words, when many individuals profit from amateur pursuits (and we could add certain hobbies here) in many or all of the eight ways listed earlier in this section, the entire community profits from the resulting personal satisfaction. Maybe if we *work seriously* at our leisure as amateurs do (in those activities where serious work is possible), our leisure will be less likely to be described as a malady of contemporary Western civilization (e.g., Glasser, 1970: 190-192).

Third, it is likely as Albonico (1967) has suggested for university sports, that collective amateur activities of many types contribute to community and societal integration. This would seem to occur whenever people from different walks of life come together to engage in common leisure pursuits, before a public, and perhaps in competition with one or more other such groups (e.g., a national college basketball tournament, a touring university extension theater group, a statewide meeting of amateur archaeologists). Leisure promotes solidarity through acquaintance and understanding, which it does better than work (Parker, 1971: 56-57).

A final contribution of amateurism, and possibly the most far-reaching, is its *salutary effect on the commonweal*. This, of course, is one of the main justifications of any profession: it contributes to the public good in a unique and beneficial manner. Since amateurs serve publics, often the same ones the professionals do, and since the amateurs serve their allied profes-

sions through many routes, there can be no gainsaying that they, too, benefit society by means of their activities. Performing this sort of function only serves, once more, to point up their marginality in contrast to those who partake of the more hedonistic popular leisure, which is believed to be destroying society. Kando (1975: 100) describes the pernicious effects of today's popular leisure on cultural life:

Our civilization's inability to translate gains in free time and money into leisure and the causes of this failure are ultimately rooted in the very fiber of our social system. . . . The dilemma is this: the same elements which were instrumental in creating the prerequisites for leisure — a materialistic and aggressive civilization able to develop technology and willing to use it — are now the obstacles to reaping the logical and beneficial outcome of these conditions. . . . We see, consequently, that our vast affluence and the enormous energy that has been freed over the past decades are diverted into dead-end streets and blind alleys, requiring continued energy expenditure but no imagination. . . . By choosing comfort over anxiety, we also opt for decay rather than growth.

## MARGINALITY AND PARTICIPATION

I have argued here that amateurs are the marginal men of leisure, a statement that while technically true, could lead to some theoretical confusion. For they are not the marginal men of whom Robert Park and Everett Stonequist speak; these writers, among others, have used this term to refer to groups of people caught between two cultures. The marginal man, as they saw him, is often a member of an ethnic minority whose marginality is a way of life that affects nearly every corner of his existence.

Marginality in leisure is hardly that pervasive. Rather, I got the feeling from conducting the present study that amateurs are centrally located in many, perhaps all, of the other spheres of their lives; in family life, in work, in religion, and even in other

areas of their leisure. Their's is a segmented marginality.

Hence the amateur is more accurately conceived as occupying a marginal status, or "marginal role" as Walter Wardwell (1952) presented the idea in his study of chiropractors. A marginal role is one that is incompletely institutionalized. There is ambiguity among its incumbents and in the wider community as to what the former should do and how they should behave. Such roles are in the process of crystallization. And they are a common element in industrialized societies, where rapid change spawns new occupations and new forms of leisure.<sup>2</sup>

I think "ambiguity" hits precisely at the heart of what is marginal about the status or role of the modern amateur. The amateur's friends, relatives, workmates, and neighbors, on the one hand, are often in the dark about what it is he does and why he tends to pursue it with such passion, matters treated earlier under the headings of seriousness and uncontrollability. On the other hand, the professionals in the field understand perfectly well what it is the amateur does. Yet both amateurs and professionals are uncertain as to how many functions of the latter should be attempted by the former. The present study uncovered such ambiguities as how much theoretical work should amateur archaeologists engage in? How often should amateur actors and actresses perform for pay? Should they be permitted to instruct theater? Even in baseball, where these lines are clearest, the use of amateurs to pitch big-league batting practices is questioned. And their occasional semiprofessional status is a source of concern both to themselves and to professionals.

For the amateur's part he is ambivalent in some ways about pursuing his avocation. Family, work, and leisure pull him in two, if not three different directions, making time demands that often far exceed the total available hours. Additionally, there is an absence of community wide institutional support for his position, such as those that help sustain serious involvement in family and work activities. For example, such widely accepted values as being a good provider or hard worker or being a family man, which help justify our efforts in these spheres, are simp-

ly lacking in amateurism. Moreover, their very existence in the institutions of family and work threatens amateur involvement elsewhere by forcing the would-be participant to confront them when his avocation calls him away.

Most critical, however, is the fact that amateurs are marginal to the institution of leisure itself (on leisure as an institution, see Dumazedier, 1971: 201-202; Kaplan, 1975: 28-31; Kelly, 1974b: 137-139). That is, they implicitly or explicitly reject many of the values, attitudes, and patterns of behavior that constitute its core. Like marginal people everywhere they therefore lack key institutional supports for their goals and for their personal and group ways of reaching them.

*Contributive participation* summarizes both the spirit with which amateurs approach their avocational leisure and the effects of that activity on themselves, their allied professionals, and the community. Amateurs are first and foremost doers rather than consumers of what someone else has done. They are proud of their active approach to leisure, while they disdain the passivity of, for example, steady television viewing. But in participating in their avocation they also contribute to the development of a science, the level of art in the community, or the availability of spectator sport. As significant, amateurs contribute to themselves through the personal and social rewards of their avocation. In short, amateurism is beneficial leisure.

This brings us to the question of creativity and marginality. It would be inaccurate to assert that amateurs, because they occupy a marginal role, are therefore creative. But turned around, it is possible that some creative people, including amateurs (most likely those in art and science), are also marginal. Edwards states the case for marginality as a condition for at least some creativity:

But it does seem likely that the creative person — for reasons that are not yet understood . . . is able to turn his marginal status, whether sought or unsought, to good advantage. Biographies of creative individuals suggest that marginality is usually a temporary episode in a creative career. . . . From a sociological point

*of view, the striking fact about such careers is the ability of creative individuals to alternate periods of disaffiliation and solitude with periods in which a variety of social roles are sustained with great effectiveness [Edwards, 1968: 448].*

It is doubtful that amateurs alternate between aloneness and gregariousness, but their marginality, restricted as it is to the sphere of leisure, may still foster a degree of creativity among some of them.

When compared with other leisure participants, amateurs are small in number but large in effect. It is for their many contributions to self and society that their activities truly merit the distinctive label of *avocation*, which is a subordinate occupation pursued in addition to one's regular work. That avocation is the amateur's second calling.

### Notes

1. Many hobbyists, because of their seriousness, fall outside the category of consumer of popular leisure. The popular leisure addict is often a consumer of mass leisure and culture, but not always. He is characterized chiefly by his nonseriousness, which may be expressed in such activities as eating at extremely expensive restaurants or smoking a water pipe, activities that few people are able or willing to do.
2. Role marginality is different from status inconsistency, a term that refers to incongruent requirements among two or more already crystallized roles. A substantial degree of role clarity is necessary for the inconsistencies to be apparent.

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## *About the Author*

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Robert A. Stebbins is Professor of Sociology and Head of the Department of Sociology at the University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Since receiving his Ph.D. in 1964 from the University of Minnesota, he has taught at Presbyterian College, Memorial University of Newfoundland, and the University of Texas at Arlington. In addition to numerous journal articles, he is the author of *Commitment to Deviance: The Nonprofessional Criminal in the Community*, 1971; *The Disorderly Classroom: Its Physical and Temporal Conditions*, 1973; *Teachers and Meaning: Definitions of Classroom Situations*, 1975. He is also the editor (with William Shaffir and Allan Turowetz) of a

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For the past five years Dr. Stebbins' research and writing have centered almost wholly on the subject of amateurism in art, science, sport, and entertainment. He is currently engaged in a study of amateur magicians as a type of avocational entertainer. His recently completed study of amateur and professional astronomers, in combination with the work on archaeologists in this book, has become the basis for a proposal for an amateur sociology (see *The American Sociologist*, November 1978). In his leisure he is a devoted performer of chamber and orchestral music and Chairman of the Amateur Division of the International Society of Bassists.

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