

## **Stages of Modernity: The Federal Theatre Project and The New American Welfare State**

Dr. Kelly K. Ronayne



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The Federal Theatre Project (FTP) under the umbrella of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) was born in 1934 as a way to provide relief to artists who were out of work during the Great Depression. While this relief was immediate and short-lived, the outcomes of this program were long-lasting. The Federal Theatre Project introduced the notion of mutual reciprocity, art as a national treasure, and equal opportunity. In addition to this program, it pioneered the use of art as an educational and therapeutic medium. As a result of the FTP, American government is modernizing to meet the demands of the Great Depression, and in this way citizens now expect more of their government. This book will analyze the history of global subsidy in the arts compared to the United States. The author will also evaluate the FTP plays with regard to their themes of nationalism, their call to action, and their history. The FTP was a political organization from its onset; it was created by the government, and many believed that governmental involvement in the arts in a democracy was problematic. The author will examine public reaction and politics involving the agency. Last, sociocultural changes occurred as a result of the project. Some of these changes were intended whereas others were not. This aspect will be examined further by looking at groups and domains that were aided: blacks, women, children, education, crime prevention, and therapy.

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