The Metacritical Model for Judging Interpretation Events

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Oral interpretation as a forensic event has been the target of substantial criticism both from those within and outside of forensics. Two major criticisms frequently arise: 1) inferior literature is too often chosen by the interpreters and 2) the performances are too often an empty display of technical facility with little or no regard for the integrity of the literature.[1] Suggested solutions include designating specific literature to be used in competition both to insure that quality literature is used and to give the judges an opportunity to become familiar with the literature they will hear. To improve the performances, some suggest we abandon tournaments and perform literature only in a festival format.

The way oral interpretation is presented in forensics is important because so many students have their first or only exposure to the art in forensics. If the tournament experience is not true to the art, too many students will arrive at a false impression of what is supposed to be. While the suggestions mentioned above have their strengths and weaknesses, there is little doubt they will be slow in finding widespread acceptance. Oral interpretation is a popular part of forensic contests and will be with us for the foreseeable future. Since forensic practices are generally a response to what contestants and coaches believe will win, another approach to improvement is to alter the way the events are judged. This essay will suggest a metacritical judging model that is intended to address the criticism of oral interpretation in forensic contests.

A forensic contest is a situation quite different than either a classroom or public performance. Like the classroom instructor, the forensic judge's purpose is instructional; however, since the

[1]Hal H. Holloway, et al. "Report on the Action Caucus on Oral Interpretation in Forensic Competition," *National Forensic Journal* 1 (Spring 1983): 43-58. Hal Holloway, et al. "Oral Interpretation in Forensic Competition: Representative Papers," *National Forensic Journal* 4 (Spring 1986): 53-73. Todd V. Lewis, David A. Williams, Madeline M. Keaveney, Michael G. Leigh, "Evaluating Oral Interpretation Events: A Contest and Festival Perspectives Symposium," *National Forensic Journal 2* (Spring 1984): 19-32. Elighie Wilson, "Has Technique Replaced Interpretation?" Unpublished paper presented at the Speech Communication Association Convention, November 15, 1986.

judge does not know what the student has been told about oral interpretation, the judge cannot tell the student if he/she is following the principles being taught. Conversely, the student does not know what the judge believes about oral interpretation. As Ronald Pelias points out, there are different schools of thought regarding oral interpretation and those differences affect the critic's response to the performance whether it is a public performance, festival, or tournament.[2] Unlike either the teacher or the public performance critic, the forensics judges must rank each performer in comparison to the others. The contestant, on the other hand, faces an audience that has not gathered primarily to be entertained; instead, the audience has gathered to compete against the performance and compare it to others. Thus, a judging model must address not only the problems generally associated with the performer-critic relationship, but also those that arise due to the tournament situation.

The metacritical model acknowledges that oral interpretation is an art requiring critical decisions from inception to the final performance. A critical decision is made when the performer decides a particular piece of literature is worthy of presentation and suitable for the particular audience for whom it will be performed. Critical decisions are made when the performer analyzes the literature to determine the author's intent and to discover the relationship between the style and the meaning. Critical decisions are made when the performer adapts the written material for performance, choosing which parts are necessary and which may be suitably omitted. Finally, critical decisions are made when the performer makes performance choices; for example, the performer decides how best to use voice and body to communicate "to an audience a work of literary art in its intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic entirety."[3]

When oral interpretation is performed as a forensic event, the critical decisions leading to the final product are often ignored by the judge as a means for reaching a decision. Thomas Colley's observation, commenting on his experiences judging forensics tournaments, identifies what appears to be the predominant judging model. He said, "Judging was reduced to a matter of technique, degree of slickness."[4] Many who have

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[2]Ronald J. Pelias, "Schools of Interpretation Thought and Performance Criticism," *Southern Speech Communication Journal* 50 (Summer 1985): 348-365.
[3]Charlotte Lee and Frank Galati, *Oral Interpretation.* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977) 3.
[4]Thomas Colley, "Oral Interpretation in Forensics," *National Forensic Journal* 1 (Spring 1983) 44.

judged oral interpretation at forensic contests share his "feeling of having heard a series of contrived readings. The aim of the readers seems to be to display facility."[5] The emphasis on the performance by oral interpretation judges is documented by Pelias who found that 55% of judges' comments emphasize performance techniques and only 14% reflected a concern with the literature.[8]

Although the proper degree of emphasis on performance technique is a matter of dispute among interpretation scholars, they agree that the basis of a performance is an analysis of the text. The proper aim of the reader should be to render a performance that reflects the critical thinking that went into the preparation. If successful, the audience will share common meaning with the interpreter as well as participate in an aesthetic experience. The proper role of the judge of oral interpretation in forensic contests is to be a metacritic—a critic of the interpreter's critical thinking.

In order to perform the role of the metacritic, the judge must evaluate the fit between the literature, the performance, and the performer's critical judgments. To accomplish that goal, the forensic interpretation may be conceived as an argument. During the introduction, the interpreter makes a critical claim about the literature and supports that claim through the performance of the literature. The judge evaluates both the introduction and the performance to determine if (a) the literature supports the claim, (b) the performance supports the claim, and (c) the literature supports the performance. The literature supports the claim if the written text provides sufficient grounds for accepting what was said in the introduction. The performance supports the claim if the behavioral choices of the interpreter provides sufficient grounds to accept the introduction. The literature supports the performance if the text legitimately calls for the interpreter to behave as he/she does when presenting the literature. The superior performance meets all three requirements.

The metacritic also evaluates the claim made in the introduction to determine if the thinking behind the performance is really interpretation or merely description. Interpretive claims are those that explain why the literature is particularly noteworthy; they critically examine the writer's style, or thoughts, or

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[5]Colley, p. 45.

[6]Ronald J. Pelias, "Evaluating Interpretation Events on the Forensic Circuit," *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 20 (Spring 1984): 224-230.

ability to capture universal themes in a unique manner. Interpretive claims may explain what the literature has to say about people, about life, or about particular universal events. There is a wide range of choices for worthwhile claims which could be used in an introduction. A contestant could, for example, argue why a work is unique, how it is universal, or what it suggests.[7] The work could be defended as articulating a particular philosophy in a work of fiction. The nuances of a literary school of thought could be illuminated. Classic works could be used as a means to provide insights to contemporary conditions. An alternative to making a claim in the introduction about the literature is to make a claim about some aspect of life and use the literature as support for that claim. In such an instance, the contestant will use the literature to support the contestant's ideas rather than use the introduction to illuminate what the author did; either choice could be critically valid. There are certainly other types of interpretive claims that all share the quality of probing beneath the surface of the literature both to show an understanding beyond the superficial and to help the listener better appreciate the literature.

Descriptive claims are more superficial and are not at all critical. They are often merely plot summaries; sometimes they are as simple as a description of the action that will take place "in the following selection." Descriptive claims neither demonstrate the performer's appreciation for the subtleties of the literature nor provide insightful foreshadowing for the listener; they merely describe what should be apparent to anyone listening to the performance. There is no argument because the support is only a restatement of the claim. While the performance may be entertaining, the critical thinking behind the performance is not clear and the judge has no way of telling if the performer is accomplishing what was intended.

There are also times when the introduction presents no claim at all. When the introduction consists of rhetorical questions of the "What if" variety and the judge is expected to discern the author's answer or if the author really meant to answer that question at all, there is no claim presented by the performer. For the metacritic, no claim is even less valuable than descriptive claims.

When using the metacritical model, the judge's response to the interpretation must be related to the contestant's critical judgments. The judge asks such questions as the following: Were

[7]See Lee and Galati, pp. 8-10.

the performance choices justified by the literature? Is the contestant's claim justified by the literature? The metacritic judges the performance in light of the interpretation and the performance rather than the performance alone.

Adopting the metacritical model increases the importance of the introduction in forensics competition. Presumably because it wins, the current practice is to present an introduction indistinguishable from the literature. With the exception of setting the scene or establishing the characters, the introduction is usually unnecessary to the appreciation of either the performance or the literature as it is currently presented. Since an introduction is expected, all contestants who want to do well dutifully present one even if it is only two sentences. The metacritic wants the introduction to set the scene, establish the mood, and highlight aspects of the interpretation that are not obvious in the performance.

For the metacritic, the introduction must be used to present the claim(s) about the literature; the purpose is to explain the performer's critical judgments. The introduction creates the basis for the decision by both telling the judges for what to listen and by establishing why the literature was chosen. After hearing the introduction, the judge may then listen for how well the literature and performance support the claim. In the process of making the claim about the literature, the performer is explaining why the literature is something worthwhile for an interpreter to use and for the audience to listen.[8]

The importance of the introduction in the metacritical model is also of practical importance to the competitors. No judge can fairly evaluate what a performer is attempting without first knowing what the performer is attempting. By requiring the contestant to articulate the claim in the introduction, the judge can fairly evaluate if the performer failed or succeeded as well as if that approach is justified. Currently, if a judge wants to evaluate such success, he/she is forced either to assume the contestant's interpretation matches the judge's interpretation, guess what the interpreter is trying to accomplish, or infer the intent after most of the performance is completed. Well-established claims in the introduction can make the judging process more

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[8]Some may say that any literature is worth using. Even if I were to agree with such a position, (which I do not) the point here is that our purpose is to encourage the contestant to think about why literature is worthwhile. Thus, even if the contestant performs literature that is universally acclaimed, the work's unique worth, in the mind of the contestant, should still be communicated to and evaluated by the judge.

fair for every contestant. No claim in the introduction almost forces the judge to use a performance model that tends to reward the spectacular performance while overlooking those that are more subdued, even if the subdued performance is more true to the text.

Developing the introduction as a claim can also serve to overcome the judge's ignorance of, or bias towards, particular literature. No judge is familiar with all the literature that can possibly be used in contests, and that unfamiliarity may result in bias towards some literature or to misperceptions of the literature. Familiarity may also lead to bias or a limited perception of a work. For example, a critic who has encountered a piece of literature performed in the past may have a restricted notion of how it should be interpreted or may believe it is not worth performing. Perhaps, on a first encounter, the critic may not realize the work's quality or may completely miss a nuance important for a valid interpretation. An introduction that serves as a claim as well as setting the scene calls on the metacritic to consider the literature in terms of what is claimed at that time, keeping an open mind to discover if the claim is justified. This consideration may result in an interpretation that is very different from that which the judge might have originally thought possible, but an interpretation that is valid nonetheless.

Well-developed claims in the introduction also promote the use of more unusual literature in contests. As Colley writes, much of what is heard at contests sounds very much alike.[9] This phenomenon is due in part to similarities in delivery styles, but also in part to contestants who use very similar literature. When all contestants are required to defend their choices of literature, and when judges listen to those defenses with an open mind, students will be freer to explore unusual forms. The metacritical model does not suggest that any literature should be acceptable simply because it is different; instead, it does allow for critical examination of literature not typically used in competition.

Almost all literature used in college tournaments is dramatic in form. Prose is chosen because one character is delivering a monologue or two (or more) characters are engaged in dialogue; much of the poetry that is interpreted is either a dramatic monologue or dialogue. Most of what we see at contests is also contemporary literature. While there is a case to be made for the use of new literature, the current practice leaves a wealth of literature unexplored. Our students and our activity would bene-

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[9]Colley, p. 44.

fit from exposure to folk literature, to classic literature, to descriptive literature, to impressionist, expressionist, surrealist, and absurdist literature. When the introduction is developed as a claim, the judge does not have to be an expert in all forms of literature; instead, he/she can rely on his/her ability to listen to claims, listen to support, and evaluate according to what is said and done.

The following example is an introduction containing a critical claim for a prose interpretation presented by Kelly Swenson in 1983:

> A reader of horror fiction has to first be able to believe in the characters in order to later believe in the rather extraordinary circumstances those characters will be placed in. Therefore, one of the skills an author of this genre must possess is the ability to make his or her characters believable. Stephen King, a rather well-known author, fortunately, has the ability to give the reader credible characters, such as two characters found in a rather painful and delicate scenario in "Cujo," by Stephen King.

While the introduction was not developed with the metacritical model in mind, it did anticipate the perspective. By stating the critical claims (King's ability to create credible characters which horror fictions writers must do, and the two characters are in a painful and delicate scenario), she asks the judge to base a decision on her support for the claims (her ability to suggest believable characters and her ability to suggest their pain). She also provides a basis for judgment that isn't dependent on the judge's initial acceptance of the value of Stephen King's works.

While the metacritical model calls for changes in the contestant's performance, it also calls for judging that is specifically related to the interpretation. The comments on the ballot should relate to what was attempted by the contestant rather than the judge's idea of how the piece should be interpreted. Comments should include statements about the clarity of the claim, the support for the claim in the literature and in the performance, the validity of the performance choices, and the success of the performance choices. Such comments are more helpful because they respond to what the performer is trying to accomplish. The judge is still free to disagree with the interpretation, but this disagreement is justified by pointing out flaws in the contestant's ideas and explaining how they do not fit the text.

Comments that are not specific to the student's interpretation become meaningless. For example, ballots that have "git"

or "jist" with no explanation for the comment respond neither to the worth of the literature nor the attempts of the interpreter. The metacritical model calls for the judge to consider and explain why "git" and "jist" are inappropriate performance choices—sometimes they are and sometimes they are not. Also, the metacritic is called upon to explain the meaning of such comments as, "This piece is overused." Such comments should explain how frequency of use relates to the reasons the performer chose the piece and to the validity of the interpretation. For the metacritic, all comments must relate to the contestant's interpretation. The judge, however, cannot adequately respond to the contestant's interpretation unless the contestant has articulated that interpretation.

Widespread adoption of the metacritical model might also lead to greater intellectual depth by the performers. Forensic contestants do not presently need to express the thoughts that are behind their performances, but the metacritical perspective demands that they explain at least some of their thinking. Since one of the beliefs of the speech communication discipline is that ideas are clarified and tested when they are communicated, the educational value of the metacritical model should be clear.

The presentation of the contestant's thoughts may also lead to the use of higher quality literature in tournaments. Since the contestant only has to perform the piece, the burden of defending its worth or objecting to the lack of it currently falls on the judge. If poor literature is used, the judge is forced to explain why it should not be used. If contestants must support the merits of their literature to achieve the rewards of participation, they are more likely to choose defensible material. While many of our students do choose high-quality literature, many do not and will not until they are asked to explain what makes their piece worthwhile, and until that explanation becomes part of the basis on which they are judged.

The metacritical judging model may also help students recognize the rhetoricity in inherent in poetics. As Helmut Geissner argues, works of literature are intended to influence others rhetorically.[10] The judging model that fails to ask performers to

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[10]Helmut Giessner, "On Rhetoricity and Literarity," *Communication Education* 32 (July 1983): 275-284. See also Elizabeth P. Lance, "Report on the 8th International Colloquium on Communication: The Relations Between Rhetoric and Oral Interpretation," unpublished paper presented at the Speech Communication Association Convention, November 5, 1982, and Michael Osborn, "The Rhetoric of Theatre," unpublished paper presented at the Speech Communication Association Convention, November 5, 1982.

discuss the meaning of the literature that focuses attention solely on the performance without investigating the thoughts that influenced the creation of the literature and the performance, is bound to ignore the rhetoricity of the literature and the rhetorical possibilities of the performance. Since forensics is often housed in departments devoted to the study of the meaning of communication and the effect of behavior on that meaning, it seems reasonable to expect that meaning and intended influence are suitable for investigation in all forensics events.

The metacritical model is not intended to make oral inter-pretation of literature sound like debate or persuasive speaking. The claims and, evidence discussed: above do not come in the form of testimony, statistics, or empirical studies. The evidence is in the literature and in the performance. If the performance substantiates what is claimed in the introduction, and if the claim in the introduction is supported by the literature, then the argument is made in a manner relevant to the forum in which it is presented.

In calling for a greater emphasis on the introduction, the metacritical model is not intended to eschew the traditional basis of oral interpretation by focusing attention in a way that is different from the requirements of a public performance; in fact, just the opposite is intended. The metacritical model is intended to promote performances that are not easily identifiable as "forensic" interpretations by altering the current basis of decisions, encouraging the use of different literature, and promoting standards that encourage analysis of the material.

Further, this model does not favor sloppy performances over well-prepared performances. There is nothing inherently wrong with a polished performance, but in current practice a high gloss is apparently the primary standard for which to strive. This model advocates that the slickness of the performance should match the literature as well as the intent as developed in the introduction and exemplified in the literature. If, for example, the literature is noteworthy because it captures natural conversation then a perfectly smooth delivery is out of place because natural conversation is characterized by hesitations, false starts, and other conversational characteristics. If the literature is said to exemplify the superficiality of relationships then the slick delivery could be very appropriate. The point is that the judge should make the decision based on how well the performance fits the intent of both the author and the performer. The judge should not simply accept any performance choices as correct

because everyone else has chosen them nor incorrect because no one else has chosen them.

   The metacritical model calls for the peformer to present critical claims about the literature and use the performance to support those claims. The judge is called on to listen to the claims with an open mind and evaluate how well the performance matches the claim. By emphasizing the critical decisions reduce the emphasis on purely technical proficiency as a basis for decision and to increase the emphasis on the text. The ultimate intent is to reduce the distinctions that separate oral interpretation as practiced in forensics from oral interpretation as conceived by experts in performance studies.

The Effect of Attire on Forensic Competitors and Judges: Does Clothing Make a Difference?

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John T. Molloy's book *Dress for Success* (1975) and his companion text, *The Women's Dress for Success Book* (1977), have become the bibles of business dress for many corporate executives and working professionals across the United States. Although his fundamental premise in each of the books is not new, his advice about the particulars of business dress may be (Davis, 1984). Research conducted prior to and after Molloy published his "definitive" studies on business attire gives strength to his position that attire as a nonverbal component of communication plays a significant role in our daily encounters with others. For example, researchers have reported that attire is influential in first impression formation (Buckley, 1983; Conner, Peters, & Nagasawa, 1975; Hamid, 1969; Darley & Cooper, 1972; Hendricks, Kelley & Eicher, 1968; Lennon & Miller, 1984; and Rucker, Taber & Harrison, 1981); that a relationship exists between attire and personality (Dubler & Gurel, 1984; Hoult, 1954; Rosenfeld & Plax, 1977; and Taylor & Compton, 1968); that people tend to exhibit similar attitudes toward preferred clothing styles (Buckley *&* Roach, 1974; DeLong & Larntz, 1980; DeLong, Salusso-Deonier *&* Larntz, 1983; and Dillion, 1980); and that attire affects the credibility of individuals (Bassett, 1979; Forsythe, Drake & Cox, 1985; Korda, 1975; and Lang, 1986).

These particular research findings should be of interest to those concerned about adequately preparing our students to communicate effectively in real-world settings. One activity in particular that serves as an effective training ground for those real-world settings is forensic competition in public speaking, oral interpretation, and debate. One evaluation criterion common to all three competitive genres is delivery, and a component of delivery is appearance.

Although many leading texts in public speaking offer general advice about the need to create an effective appearance in order to gain credibility, no research to date has been conducted

to determine specific guidelines or "rules" to follow when students confront different types of speaking occasions.[1]

To validate the previous research findings and to make explicit the standards for attire in intercollegiate forensic competition, the author surveyed both competitors and judges at two national intercollegiate forensic tournaments. Prior to conducting the survey, several hypotheses were made: 1) that attire standards exist for both students and judges engaged in competitive speech communication events; 2) that a student's attire may affect the outcome of his or her rank and rating; 3) that a student's performance is affected by the chosen attire of competitors and judges, as well as his or her own attire; 4) that standards for attire conform to the "dress for success" models suggested by Molloy and others.

Procedure

Instrument

Two questionnaires were developed, one for students and one for judges. Students were asked sixteen direct questions eliciting attitudinal responses about the relationship between attire and performance. Additionally, students were requested to rank, from male and female attire, descriptions of their preferences for the proper attire of male and female judges as well as male and female competitors. Further, male and female competitors were asked to rank, from those same descriptions, their preferences for the attire that best enhanced their individual performances. The attire descriptions were developed from three categories identified as conservative, sport, and casual (Lang, 1986). The conservative descriptions were those types commonly found in real-world corporate settings or semi-formal social situations (Bixler, 1984; Jones & Kneblik, 1986; Mitchell & Burdick, 1983; Molloy, 1975; Molloy, 1977).[2]

Males were asked to rank from the following articles of clothing: 1) a long-sleeve shirt, slacks and tie (sport); 2) a blazer, shirt and tie (sport); 3) a complete matching suit with shirt without a tie (sport); 5) a shirt and jeans (casual); and 6) a long-sleeve shirt and slacks without a tie (sport).

Females were also asked to rank six descriptions developed from the three identical categories. Their choices were the fol-

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[1] Though texts stress the need to adapt to particular audiences, they do not offer specifics with the exception of popular magazines such as *Success, MS, Management Solutions Management World,* and *Working Woman* which primarily address standards of attire for business presentations.

[2] The author argues that the models for appropriate dress have developed from the influence of Molloy and others. The influence is most obvious in the ideal look of the "Yuppy," an image marked by a conservative attire.

lowing articles of clothing: 1) a blouse and pants, not jeans (sport); 2) a dress (conservative); 3) jeans and a blouse (casual); 4) a blazer, skirt and a blouse (conservative); 5) a matching skirted suit (conservative); and 6) a matching pants suit (sport).

Judges were asked to respond to ten direct questions eliciting their attitudes toward the relationship of attire to a competitor's performance and to rank, from male and female attire descriptions, their preferences for the proper attire of the male and female competitor. Their options were identical to the students' options.

Methodology

Questionnaires were distributed to students and judges attending the 1986 Cross Examination Debate Association National Tournament sponsored by Wichita State University and the 1986 American Forensic Association National Individual Events Tournament sponsored by the University of Texas at Arlington. Students and judges who attended both tournaments were asked to respond only once to the questionnaires.

Four questions from the Students' Questionnaire were discarded because they were redundant, and those responses from both questionnaires that failed to follow our requested procedures were also eliminated.

Results

Students' Questionnaire

Combined percentages reveal that a majority of respondents not only believe that individual attire selections affect individual performances, but also the attire selections of judges as well as competitors influence a competitor's performance. With the exception of Question #2, however, no majority support a significant relationship of attire to performance (See Table 1).

Seventy-one percent of the 141 students who responded to Question #1 believe that the apparel and grooming of their judges affected their performance levels; only 28% of the respondents claim no effect at all. Eighty-six percent of those who answered Question #2 stated that a professionally dressed judge positively affects their performances, but only 14% believe the effect is negative. Of the 136 responses to Question #3, 71% assert that apparel and grooming of their fellow competitors in individual rounds affect their performance levels; the remaining 29% profess no effect. Only 8% of the 133 respondents claim no effect on their individual performance ratings because of their personal attire selections (See Question #4).

Male and female competitors prefer sports attire for male judges and conservative attire for female judges. Cumulative rankings of male and female students indicate that a blazer with slacks, shirt, and a tie rank first as the proper attire for male judges; a blazer, skirt, and blouse rank first as the proper attire for the female judge. The conservative male type ranks fifth among the six descriptions, yet the three conservative female types—the blazer, skirt, and blouse; the dress; the matching skirted suit—ranked first, second, and third respectively. Both sexes rank casual attire last (See Table 2).

Both male and female students prefer sports attire for male competitors; their first choice is the blazer with slacks, shirt, and tie. The conservative types for females ranks first, second, and third. Students prefer the matching skirted suit for female competitors.

Students rankings for the least preferred attire are consistent; casual attire ranks sixth (See Table 3). The cumulative rankings of male and female competitors are also consistent with their individual first choices. Males prefer the blazer with slacks, shirt, and tie; females prefer the matching skirted suit (See Tables 4 and 5).

Judges' Questionnaire

Combined percentages of the judges' responses reveal that they acknowledge a relationship of attire to performance, but no majority claim a significant effect of attire on performance (See Table 6). Eighty-five percent of those who responded to Question #1 believe that their perceptions of students' performances are affected by the competitors' attire; only 15% claim no effect. Whereas 90% of the 103 respondents to Question #2 think that a poor appearance harms a competitor's rank/rating, only 61% of the 117 respondents to Question #5 penalize a student's rank/rating because of poor appearance. On the other hand, 91% who answered Question #3 believe that a good appearance helps a competitor's rank/rating, but only 87% admit to coaching their students on proper appearance and grooming habits for competition. Of those, only thirty-six of the eighty-seven respondents (41%) coach students significantly about proper appearance and grooming habits (See Question #6).

Sixty-one percent assert that apparel and grooming standards differ between debate and individual events, but the researcher could not generalize nor categorize those differences due to contradictions. For example, some profess that debate is inherently more formal; consequently, it demands a more professional attire as described by Molloy and others for the corpo-

rate executive. Yet there are others who adamantly state that debate requires no standardization of attire. Still other judges believe that debaters should dress neatly, but informally.

A large number of judges think that individual events contestants should be more formal in their attire than debaters, but that speakers should not be restricted to a conservative model. Public speakers should select attire appropriate to their personality and personal preference while oral interpreters should not only consider personality and personal preference, but they also should consider the personae in the text(s) performed.

Judges are consistent with students in ranking preferences for male and female competitors' attire. With the exception of one inversion tabulated for the male attire, the preferences are identical (See Table 7).

Conclusion

The results of this study confirm all but one of the original hypotheses. Both students and judges claim that attire is influential, that attire standards exist in forensic competition for male and female competitors as well as for male and female judges (though the standards for students are more conservative than they are for judges), and that standards for female judges and competitors are more conservative than they are for male competitors and judges. Furthermore, a student's attire may affect his or her rating and may influence other competitors' performances.

As predicted, both students and judges prefer the conservative descriptions for female competitors; however, students and judges do not prefer the male conservative type as the proper attire for competitors and judges. Though many might consider the blazer with slacks, shirt, and tie a conservative style of dress, the description does not conform to the preferred "dress for success" model in many major corporations nor does it conform to the expected standard of dress for semi-formal functions (Bixler, 1984; Jones & Kneblik, 1986; and Molloy, 1975).

Although the results certainly support the notion that attire is an important component of performance, one cannot conclude that a successful or unsuccessful performance depends significantly upon attire nor can one view attire as an independent variable with carries greater importance than other variables within a round of competition. Thus, further research is warranted to determine the significance of attire in relation to other variables in performance as well as to test the free-choice preferences of competitors and judges for clothing styles, colors, prints, and fabrics.

Table 1
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Students' Study Questions and Results

		Male Responses		Female Responses		Total	
1. Do apparel and grooming of your judge affect your performance level?	Significantly	2	2%	4	8%	6	4%
	Somewhat	31	34%	24	48%	55	39%
	Very Little	26	29%	14	28%	40	28%
	Not at All	32	35%	8	16%	40	28%
	Total	91	100%	50	100%	141	100%
2. If your judge is professionally dressed, how is your performance affected?	Positively	52	91%	27	87%	79	86%
	Negatively	9	9%	4	13%	13	14%
	Total	61	100%	31	100%	92	100%
3. Do apparel and grooming of your fellow competitors in your round affect your performance level?	Significantly	7	8%	7	15%	14	10%
	Somewhat	31	34%	24	52%	55	40%
	Very Little	19	21%	9	20%	28	21%
	Not at All	33	37%	6	13%	39	29%
	Total	90	100%	46	100%	136	100%
4. To what degree does your attire affect your performance level?	Significantly	17	20%	24	49%	41	31%
	Somewhat	39	46%	16	33%	55	41%
	Very Little	19	23%	7	14%	26	20%
	Not at All	9	11%	2	4%	11	8%
	Total	84	100%	49	100%	133	100%

*Percentages were rounded off.

*Not all students responded to all questions

Table 2
Students' Cumulative Rankings of Male and Female Judge's Attire

Male Attire	M	F	Cum	Female Attire	M	F	Cum
Long sleeve shirt, slacks with tie	2	1	2	Blouse and pants (not jeans)	4	2	4
Blazer, slacks with shirt and tie	1	2	1	Dress	3	3	2
Complete matching suit, shirt and tie	5	5	5	Jeans and blouse (shirt)	6	6	6
Blazer, slacks with shirt and no tie	3	3	3	Blazer, skirt and blouse	2	1	1
Shirt and jeans	6	6	6	Matching skirted suit	1	4	3
Long sleeve shirt and slacks without tie	4	4	4	Matching pants suit	5	5	5

*Cumulative rankings were determined by adding the total rankings of mate and female rankings prior to determining the final individual group rankings.

Table 3
Students' Cumulative Rankings of Male and Female Attire for Competitors

Male Attire	M	F	Cum	Female Attire	M	F	Cum
Long sleeve shirt, slacks with tie	3	3	3	Blouse and pants (not jeans)	5	5	5
Blazer, slacks with shirt and tie	1	1	1	Dress	3	3	3
Complete matching suit, shirt and tie	2	2	2	Jeans and blouse (shirt)	6	6	6
Blazer, slacks with shirt and no tie	4	4	4	Blazer, skirt and blouse	2	2	2
Shirt and jeans	5	5	5	Matching skirted suit	1	1	1
Long sleeve shirt and slacks without tie	6	6	6	Matching pants suit	4	4	4

Table 4
Male Preference for Attire that Best Enhances Performance Level

	Number	Percentage	Rank
Long sleeve shirt, slacks with tie	15	18%	2
Blazer, slacks with shirt and tie	39	47%	1
Complete matching suit, shirt and tie	15	18%	2
Blazer, slacks with shirt and no tie	0	0	5
Shirt and jeans	12	15%	3
Long sleeve shirt and slacks without tie	2	2%	4

Table 5
Female Preference for Attire that Best Enhances Performance Level

	Number	Percentage	Rank
Blouse and pants (not jeans)	0	0	4
Dress	11	25%	2
Jeans and blouse (shirt)	0	0	4
Blazer, skirt and blouse	5	11%	3
Matching skirted suit	28	64%	1
Matching pants suit	0	0	4

Table 6
Judges' Study Questions and Results

		CEDA		AFA		Total	
1. Does the attire of competitors affect your perception of their performance?	Significantly	2	6%	11	14%	13	12%
	Somewhat	14	40%	40	52%	54	48%
	Very Little	12	34%	16	21%	28	25%
	Not at All	7	20%	10	13%	17	15%
	Total	35	100%	77	100%	112	100%
2. How much can a poor appearance harm a competitor's rank/rating?	Significantly	1	4%	9	12%	10	10%
	Somewhat	10	38%	34	44%	44	43%
	Very Little	11	42%	27	35%	38	37%
	Not at All	4	16%	7	9%	11	10%
	Total	26	100%	77	100%	103	100%
3. How much can a good appearance help a competitor's rank/rating?	Significantly	2	6%	7	8%	9	7%
	Somewhat	18	51%	49	58%	67	56%
	Very Little	11	31%	22	26%	33	28%
	Not at All	4	12%	7	8%	11	9%
	Total	35	100%	85	100%	120	100%
4. Do apparel and grooming standards differ between debate and individual speaking events?	Yes	24	71%	46	57%	70	61%
	No	10	29%	35	43%	45	39%
	Total	34	100%	81	100%	115	100%

Table 6 (Continued)
Judges' Study Questions and Results

		CEDA		AFA		Total	
5. Do you penalize a student's	Often	1	3%	5	6%	6	5%
rank/rating because of a poor	Sometimes	8	24%	19	23%	27	23%
appearance?	Seldom	10	29%	28	34%	38	33%
	Never	15	44%	31	37%	46	39%
	Total	34	100%	83	100%	117	100%
6. To what extent do you coach your	Significantly	13	43%	23 11	40%	36	41%
students on proper appearance and	Somewhat	6	20%	16	19%	17	20%
grooming habits for competition?	Very Little	7	23%	7	28%	23	26%
	Not at All	4	13%		12%	11	13%
	Total	30	99%	57	99%	87	100%

*Percentages do not always equal 100 because the numbers were rounded off.
*Not all judges responded to all questions.

Table 7
Judges' Cumulative Rankings of Male and Female Attire for Competitors

Male Attire	Rank	Female Attire	Rank
Long sleeve shirt, slacks with tie	4	Blouse and pants (not jeans)	5
Blazer, slacks with shirt and tie	1	Dress	3
Complete matching suit, shirt and tie	2	Jeans and blouse (shirt)	6
Blazer, slacks with shirt and no tie	4	Blazer, skirt and blouse	2
Shirt and jeans	6	Matching skirted suit	1
Long sleeve shirt and slacks without tie	5	Matching pants suit	4

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Instructional Practices

Competitive Impromptu Speaking

Christina L. Reynolds and Mitchell Fay*

When the powers that be in forensics created the limited preparation event we now know as "Impromptu Speaking," it is doubtful that they knew what would come of their creation. This event, which began as a sort of "off-the-cuff" extemporaneous speech, has evolved to include business or rhetorical situations, speaking about objects or cartoons, and analyzing a quotation or adage. The event has grown in popularity; it is now second largest in size at the average tournament, smaller only than the interpretation of prose.[1] Novice impromptu speaking is offered at some tournaments, and many debaters choose this event at combined tournaments.

In short, many students are attempting impromptu speaking. Unfortunately, only a small number of those students clearly understand the event. Impromptu is too often used as a place to "throw speakers in," should the novice speaker need a first tournament or the interpreter need a fifth event for pentathlon. Standards of judging are varied and vague, and methods of coaching often appear nonexistent. As a result, we will explore impromptu speaking in both its theoretical and practical elements.

We address this essay primarily to collegiate forensics coaches. We hope that much of our ideas can also be applied to high school variations of the event; moreover, we hope that students benefit by some of the ideas we present here.

Theoretical Grounding

Justification

Impromptu speaking is a peculiar event. On the surface, it seems to deal exclusively with preparing a speech in an inadequate amount of time. We seldom speak on quotations or objects in the "real world." This mongrel of an event, then, relates to forensics only, doesn't it?

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[1]The last ten years of ISTR reports by Howe & Harris confirm this finding.

We must disagree. First, impromptu speaking is the only forensic event that doesn't call for particular specialization. Extemporaneous speaking requires extensive knowledge of current events, rhetorical criticism demands a grasp of communication theories, and we hate to imagine (or remember) interpreters of poetry with no sense of metre, But the field of expertise for an impromptu speaker is whatever belongs to the individual speaker. No one field of knowledge is presupposed to be the absolutely vital one. At the same time, impromptu speaking allows the speaker to utilize fields of knowledge that may be of no use at all in other events. Topics such as sports, history, famous people, science, and philosophy are all heard with regularity in rounds of impromptu speaking, while these topics may be wholly absent from other competitive events. This is not to say that impromptu speaking is merely a trivia game; rather, we emphasize how it tends to draw and reward the well-read individual.

A second justification can be found in the practicality of the event. Although Mark Twain once observed that it takes three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech, the competitor must be ready within a minute or two. We know that in our lives we are, and often will be, called upon to make a speech that we must deliver spontaneously. This speech make take the form of arguing for a new school at a P.T.A. meeting, presenting support for a program at a business conference, or being asked "at the last second" to make a speech "because I knew you did that stuff in college." Clearly, impromptu speaking increases our ability to adapt to the situation by preparing and delivering in difficult circumstances. While the actual form of the event is not duplicated in other situations, the skills that it imparts are indeed necessary.

A final justification of impromptu speaking is found within forensics itself. For the forensic competitor, this event offers variety, presents new challenges, and appeals to diversity. Because of the relative unpredictability of the event, it is more likely to produce surprising final rounds. Moreover, this unpredictability offers a stronger common bond between competitors (this is especially true when you consider that most rounds of impromptu require all speakers in the round to speak on the same quotation or object). As a result, impromptu speaking is unique in its function as a competitive speech.

Nature of Impromptu

Almost every other event in forensics has what we easily recognize as a long history, replete with discussions and arguments about what it is and how it may be improved. Surely we know of theories of persuasion, of the oral interpretation of literature, or how to approach communication artifacts to explain their effectiveness. Impromptu speaking, however, does not appear initially to have this theoretical background.

And yet, did not Aristotle speak of the devices of invention and memory? These two components of speaking, we believe, are what impromptu speaking offers to a large degree while other events tend to lack. What was the domain of rhetorical invention as given to us by the classical rhetoricians? Invention was a broad and complex concept that subsumes the process of speech-making, the product itself, and aspects of the task of the critic.[2] The canon of invention includes the entire investigative undertaking of the rhetor and it functioned to "stimulate and train thinking."[3]

Invention demands that the speaker or writer "search for and capture thought." The thought searched for is not in a magazine or book, but within the rhetor's mind: "The scope and end of (this) invention is readiness and present use of our knowledge."[4] Thus, invention becomes an investigative undertaking that involves knowledge of self, the subject matter, and a search for that particular knowledge that will be useful in a given discourse.[5]

How a speaker searches for thought was a question to which the classical rhetoricians paid much attention. Three of the four books in *The Rhetorica Ad Herennium* focus almost exclusively on invention. Aristotle devoted *primary* attention to the canon, and Quintilian expanded the work of both Aristotle and Cicero. As Thonssen and Baird note, "certain writers—Aristotle among them—give more attention to invention than to other parts of rhetoric. This is done on the ground, and perhaps properly, that the content is the most important part of the speech."[6]

Tools to stimulate the investigative process, and thus stimulate the discovery of substance, were discussed under the names

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[2]Lester Thonssen & A. Craig Baird, *Speech Criticism: Development of Standards of Rhetorical Appraisal,* (New York: The Ronald Press, 1948), p. 78.
[3]Hoyt M. Hudson, "Can We Modernize the Theory of Invention?" *Quarterly Journal of Speech Education,* (1916), p. 325.
[4]Hudson, p. 325.
[5]Thonssen & Baird, p. 78; 83-84; Hudson, p. 326.
[6]Thonssen & Baird, p. 79.

of "topoi" (Greek), "loci" (Latin), or *topics*. "Topics" are the places "where arguments and ideas may be found and when derived; they are, as the old writers used to put it, the 'common places' of argument."[7] Topics were not determinate entities; rather, they were starting points from which to ask questions about possible discourse content. Classical topics provided a method, a rule that would help the speaker ferret through the immensity of available material. Classical rhetoricians also implemented motives, virtues, constraints, and values in their toolkits. Such notions help to spur the questioning process in which the speaker or writer must engage. In this sense, even virtures, motives, and goals were fundamentally topical in nature, function, and scope.[8] The thrust of this investigative process was to keep the subject (the substance of the discourse) alive in the rhetor's mind—"to keep doing something with it, to look at it from all sides."[9]

The cliched admonition, "Know thyself," takes on greater import in the classical notion of rhetorical invention. Understanding the constraints of a situation and the audience to which the discourse is address is critical in the speechmaking process. But as Harrington argues, the *primary* focus must be on the speaker's or writer's relationship to the substance of discourse:

> Before the speaker or writer thus enslaves himself to an audience, he stands alone, an individual and, we hope, a scholar. He works out that type of relationship to his subject that later will give the brightest lustre to his style, his delivery, and all the other aspects of his rhetorical art.[10]

Knowing the subject matter thoroughly will, in turn, suggest what the speaker or writer can choose to do with the organization, style, and delivery of the discourse. Comprehensive investigation will also suggest to the rhetor the appropriate ways to present content to an audience.

Strategies of invention are not just tools by which we initiate, search out, and capture thought in discourse. They also function as "a realm in which the rhetor thinks and acts."[11] The topics, for example, are both an instrument and a situation; they are "the instrument *with which* the rhetor thinks and the realm

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[7]Hudson, p. 326.
[8]Hudson, p. 327.
[9]Hudson, pp. 333-34.
[10]Ebert Harrington, "A Modern Approach to Invention," *Quarterly Journal of Speech,* 48 (December, 1962), p. 378.
[11]Scott Cosigny, "Rhetoric & Its Situation," *Philosophy & Rhetoric,* 7 (November, 1974), p. 182.

in and *about which* he thinks."[12] Ultimately, invention involves the rhetor's discovery of the process of inquiry. Speakers or writers must learn to identify and apply modes of discover that cross disciplines. They learn to be aware of where they are in the inquiry process, as well as how they arrived there from that "starting point." In other words, they discover the logical of rational inquiry.

Invention is much more than uncovering the right response to a situation or adapting ideas to an audience; it is an encompassing way of thinking, an "attitude of mind."[13] When approached in this manner, invention denotes rhetoric as "a counterpart of our modern method of inquiry an offshoot of all knowledge."[14]

When the canon of invention is seen in the classical form, the disappearance of the canon of memory is easier to understand. Taking invention out of the realm of rhetoric also effectively eliminated a rhetor's need to explore thoroughly "what one knows." Speakers or writers did not need to investigate their own thoughts for discourse substance; they gathered content from external sources. Nor did the rhetor need to develop the liveral and diverse "storehouse of knowledge" that was memory. As education became specialized, the breadth of personal knowledge on which one could drawn eventually diminished. Memory fell from mutual interdependence with invention to a notion which does not resemble its classical conception at all (many students have a difficult time of remembering what that "fifth" canon was called).

Invention corresponds to the speaker's analysis of what his/her job is in a particular speech. It asks how he/she will deal with a quotation, object, or, word. Unlike other events, this analysis must be made on the spot; furthermore, the speaker is not merely asked a question (as in extemporaneous speaking). Instead, the motivation for speech is much more open-ended, often deliberately vague and confusing. No ground rules are given to limit a speaker's choice; thus, speakers must invent, using the imaginative and logical powers to create what they will discuss.

In this way, we may think of the quotation, object, or word as metaphor. The metaphor is given to the speaker, and from it the speech must be fashioned. A high degree of interpretive skill is required—skill that will be compared to those of all other

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[12]Consigny, p. 182.
[13]Consigny, p. 182.
[14]Harrington, p. 377.

competitors on the same limited choice of metaphors. The metaphor, however, is only the starting point for the speech; it is not the sole purpose of it (as in a persuasive speech). The metaphor must be explained through the use of memory.

The relationship between the canon of memory and extempore speaking was posited by Quintillian in the Institutes of Oratory:

> The ability of speaking extempore seems to me to depend on no other faculty of the mind than this; for, while we are uttering one thought, we have to consider what we are to say next; and this, while the mind is constantly looking forward beyond its immediate object, whatever it finds in the meantime it deposits in the keeping as it were of the memory, which, receiving it from the conception, transmits it, as an instrument of intercommunication, to the delivery.[15]

Quintillian's view can be extended to include the impromptu speaker because, in essence, the cognitive process of eliciting ideas from the "storehouse" is the same. Quintillian suggests that ideas must be positioned in the memory in order to be brought forth. This justifies the idea presented by Eubank and Owens when they suggested that the impromptu speaker be well-read in order to speak with substance on a variety of topics.

Further evidence for the faculty of memory is offered by Richard Weaver. According to Clark T. Irwin, Jr.:

> Memory is the precondition because it stores past experiences; history is a present recall of past thought about that experience. History involves valuations; the rhetor retrieves from memory thoughts about those historical incidents of war, diplomacy, or personal life whose valuations have become relevant for rhetorical appeal. These fragments of value-laden past experience must appear or lie implicit in, even the most avowedly logical appeal.[16]

Weaver's view of memory suggests that the mind will store experiences about events as well as facts from sources other than personal recall. This allows the student in impromptu a wider range of experiences to "tap" for speech content. Not only does this broaden the speaker's range of possible strategies, but

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[15]Quintillian, *The Institutio Oratorio of Quintillian,* Trans, by H. E. Butler, (London: William Heinemann, 1961), IV, Book XII.

[16]Clark T. Irwin, "Rhetoric Remembers: Richard Weaver on Memory and Culture," *Communication Quarterly* 21 (Spring, 1973), p. 25.

serves to legitimate the "personal experience" appeals from the speaker as well.

Memory is a simple enough concept to understand. It only means that the speaker is using what he/she already knows, calling it into use in the speech. The memory is comprised of the speaker's fields of knowledge. As we noted earlier, many different fields are employed in impromptu speaking. These should be areas with which the speaker is genuinely familiar, not simply some trivia overheard in the hall.

The larger and more extensive the speaker's memory, the more varied and creative his/her speeches will be. Memory will aid invention by goading the speaker to call up more than a limited range of examples and proofs. An excellent memory also will be one that is not simply comprised of facts, but interpretations of those facts.

We wish to offer one caveat. Too often, we hear impromptu students and coaches refer to using "blocks" or canned speeches. The problem with this is not that they might get caught being repetitive, but that such set pieces do not employ memory and intention in tandem. This attitude and practice runs the danger of producing stiff and unimaginative speeches that are not adapted to the demands of each specific metaphor.

A second problem that arises out of the use of blocks is complacency. If speakers already have established what they will discuss in a given round, then they will not continue trying to expand the fields of knowledge or use newer learning. This type of thinking, even in a purely forensics sense, precludes development. In a larger sense, using only memory co-opts the purpose of the event in a way that can make it meaningless as an educational tool. Just as we would not welcome a speech that is only analysis with no concreteness, so should we discourage those speeches lacking the speaker's original thought.[17]

Qualities of the Ideal Impromptu Speaker

Many of the abilities of the ideal impromptu speaker are no different from those considered advantageous to other speakers. The speaker should have a good voice, gesture effectively, speak clearly without marked defects, and be able to use a variety of proofs and arguments. But in seeking out the ideal impromptu speaker, there are certain other qualities that cannot be overlooked.

In addition to the primary requirements of invention and memory, the impromptu speaker needs poise. A speaker who is

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[17]Harrington.

easily flustered or who is easily thrown will have difficulties. That poise is also necessary to convince an audience that may already have heard a conflicting interpretation of the metaphor. Finally, poise is necessary when the speaker uses a less traditional approach to the event or the metaphor.

For three specific reasons, the ideal student of impromptu speaking should also have a sense of humor. The most obvious reason is the communicative abilities of humor— establishing rapport, making a point through irony or sarcasm, or in simply making a more interesting speech. The second need for humor is related to a rich understanding of the metaphor. Often, there is an inherent or implied joke within the quotation form. Failure to understand the humor may result in misunderstanding the metaphor. Finally, a sense of humor is necessary to help cope with the inevitable bad round. Even the best speaker is going to experience those occasions where not only did the audience get confused, but even the speaker did not know what he/she was trying to say! Being able to "laugh off" these problems is essential.

The third major skill of an impromptu speaker should be a solid command of the mechanics of speech structure. Impromptu speakers must be explicit and completely organized as they make their way through the speech. Inability to show clearly the speech's direction forces the listener and critic/judge into a "detective story" set of Sherlockian deductions. An impromptu speaker who simply rambles from one point to another without relating ideas back to the metaphor is delivering a less than ideal speech.

Finally, an impromptu speaker needs the ability to go beyond what seems obvious to synthesize new ideas. We have seen too many instances of speakers listing proofs for an idea without contextualizing the impact of significance of those proofs. The speaker must show the audience why it has been important to listen to the speech, why this public discourse was justified. This demands that the speaker have enough insight or foresight to see beyond mere facts, to provide some valuable perspective on the metaphor's symbolic nature.

The abilities of poise, humor, organization, and synthesis, combined with invention and memory, provides a picture of the skills we seek in an ideal impromptu speaker. Obviously, the skills are varied, and they are not always found in a single individual. The coach and speaker need to evaluate, on a theoretical level and a skill level, if the speaker has enough of these qualities to pursue the event.

Thus far, we have explored the nature of impromptu speaking. Clearly it is a worthwhile event, possessing its own special place in forensics. With a longer scholarly background than we usually imagine, we turn now to the more practical side of impromptu speaking by exploring preparation and practice strategies.

Practical Elements

Preparation

The coach and student need to understand initially that one cannot simply walk into a round and hope to deliver a great speech. We will examine what can be done in practice sessions and at the tournament to ton a student's propensity for this event. Between tournaments, the speaker should practice. When we hear impromptu speakers tell us that they are afraid they'll "burn out" if they practice, we are amazed. This is like a baseball player saying he can't take batting practice or he'll burn out! impromptu speaking needs drill work—work enough that it can become second nature to do things that were previously difficult (or impossible).

First, one must recognize that an impromptu speech is divided into two parts—what is said and the time that leads to the speaking. Of these, the preparation is the more important. An excellent means of preparing for tournaments is to concentrate on the thought process that leads to the speech. Since this thought process ordinarily includes an analysis of the metaphor (also called the "translation"), we begin by giving students a number of metaphors and having them translate the metaphors. The student's translation should make enough sense that it can be defended; it should be germane to the topic, and it should allow for some latitude in discussion. The translation is not simply "what the quotation says," but what meaning the student wishes to draw from it.

Another drill can involve the translation and application of the metaphor. In our experience, application is too often left until the end of the speech, at which point the speaker "wings it;" however, application of the metaphor is central in going beyond the obvious and should be planned. This drill reinforces that idea upon the speaker. Application is as simple as stating the translation's relevance to the student's own life.

A third thought process drill adds to these components by asking students to support their claims in the speech. It should be noted that this is simply a key idea, not the developed speech. For example, a student might list support for a transla-

tion as Abe Lincoln and the Chicago Cubs. In an actual speech, the student would describe further these two areas; however, here the student merely lists. The purpose of these drills is not to produce complete and perfect speeches, but to create a time-efficient exercise that develops the thought process that leads to better speeches.

Finally, the coach can work with students by using an expanded thought process drill. Students can be asked to give all possible translations which they can imagine, all applications, all examples. The purpose of this longer drill is to reinforce the idea that students should not limit themselves to the obvious or the tried and true.

All thought process drills can be performed privately by students. They carry additional advantages of exposing speakers to increasingly varied quotations, objects, or words, as well as encouraging students to reduce the time necessary to prepare in actual rounds.

The second type of pre-tournament work concentrates on the mechanics of speaking off-the-cuff. Improvisational games can be of great service here. The first of these games gives students a subject on which they are an expert. Students then decide in what situations they are speaking and what audience they are addressing. After speaking for a few minutes, they may take questions from the audience. This game is extremely challenging, and it can present quite a number of problems (such as trick questions or being an expert on something the students knows absolutely nothing about).

A second game randomly selects a word from the dictionary. Students must define the word without giving its real definition, then give an example of its use in a sentence or trace its etymology.

A third, less improvisational game simply asks students to relate an experience, but makes them do so as a speech. They may simply explain how their political science test went, but they must use organization, examples, and all the other components of a good speech. This is a less threatening means of teaching speakers how to use proper form and to deliver speeches conversationally. These secondary games, then, are designed to improve the actual performance of the speech.

At a tournament, it is difficult if not impossible to practice with a coach. We recommend that speakers engage in thought process drills privately. A small supply of quotations transported to the tournament allows the students to "warm up" before competition. Running through a few metaphors and deciding

how one would develop them is an effective method of preparing for the actual contest. Warming up is perfectly acceptable and certainly better for the speaker than standing in the hall gossiping or pacing.

We wish to make clear that these drills do not substitute for performing practice speeches. The latter are not only fundamental, they are about the only means of teaching the speaker to sense how long those seven minutes really are. But practice speeches alone will not help as much as will a supplemental program of understanding the various parts that comprise the entire speech.

Strategies

Participants often forget that, in impromptu speaking, there are a number of ways to organize and develop ideas. It is important to recognize that the speech is essentially persuasive. The speaker should propose a position or advocate an attitude change and offer arguments for it.

The most basic method of arrangement (and the most prevalent, it seems) is an agreement with the metaphor and examples that tend to support it. In recent years this has led to the development of the "O.P.L." (our "Own Personal Lives") point to lend some legitimacy to the speech. However, impromptu speakers need to be reminded that this is not the only way a speech can be arranged.

Many impromptu speakers are impressed when someone disagrees with a quotation, but this is just a different interpretation of the metaphor. It is the metaphor as used by the speaker (and not just the word, object, or quotation) that is of major importance. So we are still left with only speeches that agree with the metaphor. Also, one may elect to say "now this is the metaphor" and disagree with it (although the distinction seems minimal).

However, more creative strategies are available to us. The compare-and-contrast speech, which inherently has two different means of conclusion, seems a better truth-tester than simple agreement. In the first type, the speaker's third area will be spent examining which side of the metaphor fared better and how we might emulate that kind of behavior or thinking. If we wish to show that "Honesty is the best policy," we might demonstrate how one man prospered through honest and another man met his downfall through deceit. Thus, the message to the audience can be clear and easy to follow.

A variation of the compare-and-contrast method is to consider the first two points as the thesis and antithesis of an argument. The third then explores a synthesis between the two. This strategy may be especially useful when the metaphor cannot be seen as black, or white—when some middle ground must be sought. The synthesis approach avoids "sitting on both sides of the fence" because it seeks to find that which is new.

One might also explore the significance of the quotation or the object to demonstrate its place in history and contemporary society. Of course, this requires familiarity with the metaphor, but it can be quite effective as it shows definite links between speech and subject. While this could be the entire strategy for a speech, it can also be used as a subordinate point. For example, a speaker well-versed in Chinese history might conclude a speech based on a saying of Confucius by explaining what role it has had in that nation's development.

Another method displays why the metaphor is worthy of our time. It could be compared to other thoughts and shown to be more complete or more elegant. It might be considered a unique perspective, heretofore unnoticed. Justification for the speech could be found in the fact that the message is simple and even commonplace, but too often overlooked. Or it may be that the metaphor expresses something about us, not simply in its matter, but in its manner of telling.

We also must remember that these methods can be combined in a variety of ways. A speaker could begin by examining the style of the metaphor, compare and contrast examples, and conclude by showing how that argument has shaped us to this day. Given some thought and practice, the strategies for developing the speech can expand rapidly beyond mere agreement.

General Thoughts on Coaching Impromptu Speaking

In addition to drilling students, listening to practice speeches, and encouraging qualified speakers to try impromptu, coaches can do much to improve this event. With one's team, a coach can encourage taking impromptu seriously. Not only does impromptu speaking require practice, but it requires students to know themselves and their areas of personal expertise. The coach can and should expect that students will improve mastery over these areas. To this end, a coach can urge speakers to utilize knowledge that they are obtaining currently in classes. Coaches can emphasize the importance of outside reading in the students' particular fields, and can encourage students to explore the extent of their knowledge.

With other coaches, more planning can be undertaken so that the same quotations or objects do not appear at tournaments over and over again. Tournament directors might consider including a list of the topics used in the results packet. This not only would prevent repetition, but would give competitors a greater variety from which to practice.

Additionally, tournament directors might consider experimenting with their usual format. One might hold a tournament using nothing except proverbs as topics, or one might use a different subject each round. Perhaps a person could be the subject of an impromptu speech, or the speech could be based on three words which are revealed as the speech is in progress. As long as people are alerted before the tournament (for practice's sake), variation can only serve to strengthen the enjoyment and educational benefit of the event.

General Thoughts on Judging Impromptu Speaking

Since we have already dealt with the important issue of "canned speeches," we need not delve into it again. However, the judging in this event can be improved in several ways.

Impromptu speaking cannot be judged quite like any other event. It is far more transient than even an extemporaneous speech or debate, and doesn't always leave a firm impression in the competitor's mind. Thus, comments need to include more emphasis on improving the student's abilities as an impromptu speaker, not merely what went on in that round. To be noted is the fact that the speech will never be given again, and so many comments that are too content specific are of little application for the student.

At the same time, it is better to give too many comments than none at all. It is very difficult for most speakers to gauge how they are doing as they are doing it. It is even more difficult in impromptu—thus criticism is vital if the speaker is to improve. Ranking and rating is not the entire job, only a start.

On the question of time, we will only say that too much emphasis on "filling up the time" leads to speeches that wander for the last minute or two, grow redundant, and expand simply for the sake of not being short. We question whether "taking more prep time" will guarantee that the student will have enough more to say to fill the time; taking additional preparation time just to avoid finishing early seems dishonest. Just as we do not want speakers to speak before they are ready, we should not insist that they wait after they are.

If there is no place whatsoever in forensics for personal examples or humorous asides, then where is our connection to humanity and "real life" speaking? Comments such as "Who cares what you think?" are not only rude, but they introduce a dangerous precedent to the event. Ordinarily, we expect that a spontaneous speech will be somewhat off-the-cuff. It is not unreasonable to allow for more informality and conversationally to be used in impromptu speaking.

Judging impromptu is not an easy matter. Many of our finest coaches competed in the event, and many more are uncertain of how to approach it. By insisting that we improve the quality of competition, we believe that we will also improve the quality of judging.

Conclusion

This article has only begun to approach the issues that need to be addressed with respect to impromptu speaking. A firmer grasp of its theoretical groundings and nature are a first step to a better understanding of how impromptu may be practiced in forensics. More and more emphasis on taking the event seriously and assiduously striving to improve it will elevate the level of performance.

"But Seriously Folks..."
Suggestions and Considerations for Writing the Competitive After Dinner Speech

Gary C. Dreibelbis and Kent R. Redmon*

Coaches and competitors who observe the event of After Dinner Speaking throughout the forensics season may eventually come to the conclusion that never have so many been entertained by so few. After Dinner competition, especially the final round, typically attracts a large number of students and coaches as audience members. Despite the potential for large audiences and making people "roll in the aisles with laughter," relatively few students compete in After Dinner Speaking (ADS). A survey of both the National Forensic Association's and the American Forensic Association's National Tournaments reveals that After Dinner Speaking is surpassed only by Rhetorical Criticism/ Communication Analysis in having the fewest competitors.[1]

When attempting to determine the reasons for the dearth of competitors in ADS, one may arrive at the conclusions that there are a lack of talented and creative students or that good, humorous material is too difficult to develop. Perhaps a more realistic reason is that both students and coaches experiences frustration when trying to decide what makes a good ADS and how to interpret the rules of the event.

In 1973, forensics coaches who wanted to make After Dinner Speaking a national event were delighted with the prospect of having competitors perform enjoyable speeches designed to make the audience laugh. In 1973, the National Forensic Association rules for After Dinner Speaking stated that "a contestant will present an original speech whose point is to make a serious point through use of humor, should not be a saring of jokes, but an organized speech."[2] It can be argued, and justifiably so, that the rules for ADS are quite clear. What is not clear, however, are the reasons for so many different interpretations of the national rules for ADS. What is mean by "original"? What does a "serious point" actually mean? Is it permissible to have a

[1]Based on entries at both the AFA National Individual Events Tournaments and the NFA Individual Events Nationals, 1980-86.

[2]Taken from the National Forensic Association's Individual Events National Tournament invitation, 1973.

"string of jokes" if the jokes are related to the topic of the speech?

Many forensics competitors become frustrated with the event because they don't understand what it takes to be "successful." Even those students who are fortunate enough to have the audience reach a euphoric state of laughter look to their coaches in amazement when they discover that they received the lowest rank in the round. These students may then ask the question "What does it take to be successful in ADS?" Some coaches and competitors believe that a "funny" topic is necessary or that a "punched-up" oratory is just as good, while others believe that a string of jokes along with a smooth delivery is enough.

The purpose of this essay is to present recommendations concerning three major aspects of After Dinner Speaking: 1) organization of the After Dinner Speech; 2) treatment of the serious point; and 3) thematic vs. presentational styles. These three areas of discussion were chosen because they are elements common to the event rules of both national tournaments. The National Forensic Association and the American Forensic Association rules for After Dinner Speaking are the following:

> Contestant will present an original speech whose purpose is to make a point through the use of humor. Should not be a string of jokes, but an organized, developed speech. Limited notes are permitted. Qualifies from Humourous Speaking, Speaking to Entertain, etc.; event must have required an original, unified, thematic speech whose purpose was to entertain or use humor.[3]

> An original humorous speech by the student, designed to exhibit sound speech composition, thematic coherence, direct public speaking skills and good taste. The speech should not resemble a night club act, an impersonation, or comic dialogue. Audio-visual aids may or may not be used to supplement and reinforce the message. Manuscripts are permitted. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes.[4]

The essay will also make a distinction between After Dinner Speaking (ADS) and the Speech to Entertain (STE), a popular two-year college event.

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[3]Taken from the National Forensic Association's Individual Events National Tournament invitation, 1985.

[4]Taken from the National Forensic Association's Individual Events Tournament invitation, 1985.

Organization

Some students and coaches believe that because ADS is a humorous speech they can develop an "anything goes" attitude regarding structure/organization or that they can neglect organization altogether. However, a review of the event description of both national tournaments indicates that the ADS should be organized. The NFA description states..."should not be a string of jokes, but an organized developed speech," while the AFA description reads..."Contestants should exhibit sound speech composition and direct communicative public speaking principles."

Based upon these descriptions, one may conclude that the ADS should be organized, but what patterns of organization are appropriate for this event? A suggestion is for students and coaches consider structuring the ADS as a humorous, persuasive speech, attempting to make a point by changing attitudes or behavior. This suggestion seems consistent with the NFA philosophy that the speech should make a point through the use of humor. Another argument in favor of this suggestion is that a number of tournaments are specifying in their event descriptions that the ADS should not be a "funny informative."[5] Finally, most coaches and judges would probably agree that the ADS should contain a "serious point." Structuring the ADS as a humorous persuasive or speech to convince assists with establishing a serious point.

If one accepts the premise that the ADS should be treated as a humorous persuasive speech then speakers will want to use a method of organization that is appropriate with persuasive speeches such as a problem-solution format. When writing the ADS as a humorous persuasive, speakers should first concentrate on the purpose or goal of the speech. In many instances it appears that speakers become so obsessed with the creation of humorous material that the basic elements of content and organization are sacrificed for the sake of making the audience laugh. If speakers present a problem in the early stages of their ADS, they should first define the problem, and then they can present the significance and causes of the problem.

A recent example of an ADS employing a problem-solution method is a speech concerning military recruiting. The student explains that a problem now exists with the recruiting of men and women to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces. The recruiting officer's attitude of "we'll take anybody" has made the screening of our military personnel obsolete. The cause of the problem

[5]Several tournaments specify that the After Dinner Speech should not be a "funny informative."

is a quota imposed by the Defense Department that "x" number of new recruits must enlist each month. The student attempts to demonstrate the nature of the problem through humorous examples:

> My recruiter told me that if you join the army you learn a lot of great songs and have a great time too. Little did I know, he didn't care about me at all. He just wanted to meet his quota of four recruits a month. I should have gotten the hint when he started to tell me about the programs and facilities.

> Recruiter: We'll have you up early in the morning with a fantastic, strenuous exercise program. Then you'll be tutored in the culinary arts, cleansing detail is next, and finally, a recreational ten mile run in order to work off all that fun you had earlier. And that's just by 9 a.m.!

> Recruit: Wait! What I'm hearing you say is... I'm going to be dead meat by 9 a.m.

> Recruiter: No, you misunderstood. What I'm saying is that in the army, we do more by 9 a.m. than most people do all day.

> Recruit: Thanks for clearing that up for me. (Never use reflective listening on an army officer).

The student continues to address the problem by giving the audience some exaggerated examples of what can happen when unqualified and dangerous people enlist in the Armed Services, including references to a Drill Instructor named Sergeant Manson, a recruit who confuses the command to "abort launch" with "abort lunch" which causes him to complain because he missed breakfast, and an instructional film about naval adventures produced a la "Love Boat." The student then tries to solve the problem by suggesting ways in which the Armed Forces may appeal to those who are qualified. Some of these persuasive appeals included endorsements from *Vogue Magazine* telling recruits about their new matching uniforms and "luggage," all-purpose black shoes, and khaki as the "color of the '80s." Other incentives may include your own company transportation (Jeep or Sherman tank) and choice vacation areas such as Fort Dix, Fort Bragg, and Fort Bliss.

Following the humorous, exaggerated examples, the student attempts to involve the audience with the topic by having them consider the military quota system as a problem and an issue that needs their attention. While this audience involvement step

may be labeled "the serious point" of the speech, the student has addressed the serious point throughout the speech by integrating factual content with some of the more humorous examples. Factual sources in this speech are syndicated columnist Jack Anderson and past issues of *Time* and *Newsweek.*

Assuming that After Dinner speakers are able to organize content in a logical and coherent manner, speakers may then turn to the task of treating the serious point within that pattern of organization.

Treatment of the Serious Point

For many observers of ADS, the words "but seriously folks" have become something of a dreaded cliché. The first mention of a serious point in many After Dinner Speeches occurs sometime during the last thirty seconds of the speech after a long succession of humorous bits and jokes. Once again, the event rules of both national tournaments state that After Dinner Speeches should attempt to make a point as well as entertain the audience.

Another ADS cliché that often appears on speakers' ballots is the judge's comment, "I really like how you weave the serious point throughout your speech." If this "weaving" of the serious point is such a desirable characteristics, how can a speaker accomplish this goal? While coaches and judges may define "weaving" the serious point in various ways, basic speech composition principles suggest that the serious point could be introduced and reintroduced throughout the presentation.

Again, following the basic rules of speech organization and composition, the speaker can introduce the major thrust or point of the speech in the thesis statement. As in the case with any good public address, speakers should alert their audience as to the purpose of their presentation and what the audience can expect during the next few minutes.

An After Dinner speaker may also emphasize and reemphasize items that support the serious point the speaker is attempting to make. A recent example of an ADS that provided its listeners with several variations on a theme regarding its serious point was a speech concerning the inadequacy of our Civil Defense plan in the event of a nuclear attack. The speech included actual elements of the government's Civil Defense plan such as "even-odd" license plate evacuation, shielding oneself from a nuclear blast by digging a hole and hiding in it under a mound of dirt, and traveling to towns designated as government safety areas (the strange aspect of this part of the government's

plan was that the towns designated as safety areas were not notified by the federal government of their designation). These actual examples, coupled with original humorous material, helped to demonstrate the absurdity of the government's Civil Defense plan and the need for change. Original humor probably has more impact on the audience if it is combined with actual situations or some justification as to why the speaker chose to include a particular joke or bit. This principle is well known to comedians as the "set-up." In most cases, the better the "set-up," the more effective the accompanying gag. The original piece of humor delivered "out of the blue" may elicit laughter from the audience for that particular moment; however, the total impact of the speech may be lost when compared to speeches that are more unified or thematic in their approach.

Thematic vs. Presentational Styles

Both the AFA and the NFA National Tournaments are consistent in their preference for a thematic approach as opposed to a presentational style of delivery. A thematic speech is one that has a strong central idea or nucleus with the content of the speech eventually leading to a point or goal. The presentational speech is one where humor is the primary function of the speech and making a point is secondary. The presentational style ADS tends to rely heavily upon humorous devices such as characterizations or "bits," impressions, overt movement, visual props, and sound effects.

Since both national tournaments express a preference for the thematic ADS, does this mean that students' presentations should contain large portions of exposition devoid of any of the above-named humorous devices? Probably not. Humorous bits and gags can assist the speaker in clarifying and solidifying the serious point. These types of humor should be used to illustrate and enhance points in the same manner as do case studies, examples, and visuals in traditional public address. They should not, however, become the dominating force or *raison d'etre* of the presentation.

For example, several years ago a speaker had modest success with a speech that discussed the work of cartoonist Gahan Wilson (popular *Playboy Magazine* artist) and the unique manner in which Wilson views people and things. The speech was a series of visuals (examples of Wilson's cartoons) discussed by the speaker with little or no original material. The visuals were, in essence, the speech.

As mentioned earlier in this essay, both the AFA and NFA rules support the thematic development for ADS. If one were to take these rules literally, it would appear that humor for humor's sake does not a good ADS make. A speech event that is intended to explore different types of humorous devices is the Speech to Entertain (STE). The STE is a popular two-year college event introduced by the Phi Rho Pi national two-year college speech organization.

After Dinner Speaking vs. The Speech to Entertain

Some may feel that if the "rigid rules" for ADS were followed to the letter, then creativity, innovation, and "just plain fun" would never materialize. Frustrated competitors have asked the question, "Isn't trying to be funny enough without the burden of a serious point?" The answer to this question must have been a resounding "yes" because of the creation of an event similar to ADS—the Speech to Entertain (STE). There is some confusion concerning the rules for STE and ADS. The Phi Rho Pi national speech organization describes STE as the following:

> This should be the original work of the participant, the primary purpose of which is to entertain. There should be a central topic, theme, or thesis statement which the speaker develops. This event is not merely a series of jokes or a "stand-up" routine. Time limit: 10 minutes maximum.[6]

The rules for STE differ from those of ADS in that there is no mention of the "serious point." Instead, the focus is on a central topic, theme, or thesis statement. Is there a difference between the serious point of ADS and the central topic, theme, thesis statement approach of the STE? Much like baseball manager Billy Martin in the Lite Beer commercials, one may "feel very strongly both ways."

Many competitors and coaches believe that the "serious point" implies that one must demonstrate through humor that some dreaded, ironic, sad, and/or urgent problem exists that requires immediate attention. This point often comes in the last thirty seconds of the ADS. So, isn't this the same as the central topic? No, because a central topic, theme, or thesis statement merely implies that the content of the speech should be consistent throughout the discussion and that the speech should not ramble with a series of unrelated jokes or other material. Also, the central topic theme or thesis statement must be clarified at the start of the speech, usually in the introduction.

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[6]Taken from Speech to Entertain rules, Phi Rho Pi, 1985.

To illustrate this difference between the serious point and the central topic, theme, or thesis statement approach, it is necessary to discuss how these two principles of humorous speaking impact on topic selection. In many cases, a topic that is performed as an ADS can be adapted to an STE; however, this is not always true when performing the STE for ADS competition. For example, if one wanted to perform an STE on worms, he/she would be justified in doing so if it were made clear from the start that the entire discussion would be aimed at presenting humorous material about worms. On the other hand, if one wanted to perform an ADS on worms the question may be "What is the serious point?" and "What exactly is the problem with worms?" The central topic, theme, or thesis statement approach seems to be a tactful way of suggesting that material should be organized and related throughout the speech.

There is another issue involved. Over the past eight years, two-year colleges have frequently attended competitions at four-year schools. A "gentlemen's agreement" that ADS and STE are the same event seems to have emerged even though the events may have some differences. One important difference may be the purpose of each speech format. STE states that "the primary purpose is to entertain" whereas ADS states that its purpose is to "make a serious point through use of humor."

Does this mean that the STE should be judged primarily on the amount of laughter that a speaker receives through a variety of humorous devices? Should other factors besides laughter be used to judge the success of ADS? Based on informal observation at the national level, STE does seem to be judged primarily on the amount of laughter generated. In terms of performance, the STE speaker seems to apply more devices such as props, visual aids, movement, and sound effects than does the ADS participant. In many instances, the STE also appears to be less structured than the ADS.

A growing number of judges are beginning to judge ADS on factors other than laughter. Such elements as structural development, statement of the serious point, and good taste are also being evaluated. In view of the differences between ADS and STE, one can begin to see why frustration and confusion exists among coaches and competitors. In an attempt to clarify differences in STE and ADS performances, the following suggestions are offered:

1. Coaches should read the rules listed in the event description when going to a tournament with what appear to be different event categories.

2. Students who transfer from two-year colleges or graduate from high school should familiarize themselves with the rules appropriate for intercollegiate tournaments.
3. Coaches and judges should judge STE's using STE rules and criteria and the same should hold true for ADS.

Conclusion

Organization, treatment of the serious point, and the difference between thematic and presentational styles were the major points of discussion concerning the event of After Dinner Speaking. A distinction was made between the After Dinner Speech and the Speech to Entertain along with recommendations to coaches and participants in the event of STE.

By introducing these issues and suggestions, the authors hope to initiate more discussion regarding ADS that will assist students in preparing for the event while also establishing criteria for coaching and judging the event. Laughter and audience response are convenient barometers for evaluating After Dinner Speeches; however, the rules for both national tournaments clearly state that there are other elements to consider when judging the event. But seriously folks, the authors hope that in the not too distant future both coaches and competitors will be able to remark that now many are being entertained by at least a few more.

Review Of Professional Resources

Jack Kay, Editor

American Forensics in Perspective: Papers from the Second National Conference on Forensics, ed. Donn W. Parson. Annandale, VA: Speech Communication Association, 1984.

Reviewers usually opt to critique state-of-the-art writings and theories in their field of inquiry, focusing on the latest texts and/or theoretical developments. Thus a decision to review the report of a 1984 conference initially seems a bit peculiar. However, the nature of this publication suggests that a review well after the fact is probably the best approach to take. *American Forensics in Perspective (AFP)* is essentially a work in which the leaders of the field take stock of the present and offer suggestions for the future. Since the future is now, it seems particularly appropriate to consider the work of the conference participants in retrospect, especially since talk of another national conference—designed specifically for individual events—is in the air.

One of the strongest aspects of the conference proceedings is the atmosphere of cooperation and concern emanating from the writings of the participants. The chapters on "Rationale for Forensics," "Strengthening Educational Goals and Programs," and "Interorganizational Cooperation" reflect a sense of mission among members of the forensic community—that mission being the continued professionalization and inter-organizational cooperation in the field. While the establishment of an umbrella Council of Forensics Organizations (as suggested in *AFP* and later implemented) serves a mostly symbolic function, it is a necessary symbolic function in a field composed of so many different organizations and philosophies.

AFP contains some valuable dialogues on contemporary concerns in forensics such as the tension between winning and learning, ethics and how to police them, the wording of debate topics, and judging standards for individual events. These dialogues are most informative when the chapter authors recreate the essence of the panel discussion rather than simply abridging and highlighting the panel resolutions and position paper excerpts. Fortunately, most chapter authors avoid the tendency merely to abridge.

While much of *AFP* centers on discussion of issues, there are still a number of specific suggestions for improving forensics. The "Strengthening Educational Goals and Programs" chapter

provides a list of resolutions which collectively offer a blueprint for how to run effective, professional programs and tournaments. The participants on these panels* deserve thanks from the forensic community for their thorough and detailed outline of prescriptions to improve the health of forensics.

Thanks are also due to G. Thomas Goodnight for his cogent reminder of the link between scholarship and the forensic community in *AFP's* final chapter. In a competitive activity there is always a danger that participants may lose sight of the higher goal of the activity. Fortunately, Goodnight puts that higher goal into perspective for all to read. Forensics, he says, is the pursuit of knowledge and the shaping of the whole person. Therefore:

> The task of the forensic community is nothing less than the active, rigorous, on-going discovery, creation, interchange and critique of social knowledge. Social knowledge is the product of inter-disciplinary inquiry and the prerequisite to public deliberation. . . . Unhampered by ideological commitment, methodological circumscription, or professional self-interest, forensics offers a unique laboratory in which the dialect of public discourse can be creatively pursued (97).

Ironically, the strength of *AFP*—its focus on the "big picture" of forensics—weakens it for this focus creates some unpleasant side effects. First, discussion is weighted too heavily in favor of the philosophies of forensics and of directors of the activity. While these issues are certainly important, many are already generally agreed upon within the forensic community. For example, "Promotions and Tenure Standards" chapter authors Dudczak and Zarefsky note at the outset that "evidence does not support the belief that there is a crisis" (23) surrounding the issue of promotion and tenure of forensics coaches, yet the chapter spends 12 pages discussing issues related to tenure and promotion—issues that seem, for the most part, agreed upon by administrators and those in forensics.

Second, discussion of already agreed upon general philosophies tend to obscure the need for treatment of smaller, more pressing issues. Although some problem areas are discussed in *AFP,* they are either treated too briefly (e.g., the chapter on judging standards in individual events is only a little over six pages) or fail to move significantly beyond general philosophical grounding to specific practices (e.g., the chapter on ethics). Overall, this philosophical focus gives the reader the impression that forensics has little with which to be truly concerned. Only two of *AFP's* chapters convincingly articulate the belief that they

were dealing with major problems concerning forensics: debate topic wording and individual event judging standards.

Third, the feeling that forensics is in good shape philosophically dilutes the obligation members of the community feel to address specific concerns that do receive illumination, a problem not found in the text but reflected by it. That is, the forensics community is so convinced of the value of the forensics ideal (as it should be) that it often neglects to examine seriously or, after examining, act upon the real (the philosophy in practice). Thus, we see the establishment of a Council of Forensics Organizations, but the council does little outside of the symbolic. We see resolutions about debate topic wording, but not acted upon; concern about "the spread" mentioned, but not directly addressed; suggestions for improving tournaments articulated, but rarely put into practice; recognition of ambiguous individual event judging standards, but few suggestions for improvement offered and/or implemented; and the list goes on.

Perhaps one of the problems in the idealism/realism dichotomy is that forensic organizations are reluctant to legislate or encourage change. Thus, the onus falls upon individual directors to act singly and hope for others to follow the lead. Since that course of action seems doomed to mediocre success, maybe it is time forensics organizations consider sanctioning tournaments, putting their stamp of approval on tournaments demonstrating commitment to encouraging what is presently only discussed at conferences. Regardless of the steps taken, future conferences would do well to consider the weaknesses of past efforts and look for the real implementation of the forensics ideal.

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*The "Strengthening Educational Goals and Programs" chapter is actually the work of two panels: 1) Increasing the Educational Value of Forensics and 2) Strengthening and Expanding Programs.

Debate and Argument: A Systems Approach to Advocacy, by Michael Pfau, David A. Thomas, and Walter Ulrich. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman & Company, 1987.

Michael Pfau, David A. Thomas, and Walter Ulrich have written what promises to be a new landmark text on argumentation and debate. *Debate and Argument: A Systems Approach to*

Advocacy is a fresh look at the theory and practice of argumentation appropriate for both curricular and co-curricular use. It is the first text to my knowledge that approaches argumentation from a policy systems analysis basis rather than a "stock issues" basis.

The writers, distinguished teachers and coaches at Augustana College, the University of Richmond, and Vanderbilt University, note accurately that there has been a noticeable shift toward policy systems analysis, but no theoretical/practical text to undergird this development. Increasingly the negative team in a collegiate or secondary school debate presents an alternative plan similar to those heard in congressional debates or in debates one is likely to hear in any public arena. No longer are debates measured strictly on whether an affirmative proponent "proves" need, develops a workable plan, and show benefits. This was always a static, sterile, and unrealistic exercise. Thus, this welcome addition to the literature of the field has potential for becoming a standard text.

The text, I believe, stands out also because it is unusually well written. None of the unevenness of writing styles often encountered in multi-authored volumes seems to be present. The style is readercentered, clear, concise, and interesting. Argumentation texts have never been books to curl up with on a Winter's eve, but this one is actually quite readable. Dare I say that it is "user friendly?"

Debate and Argument: A Systems Approach to Advocacy has three major divisions. The first is an overview of debate processes. Part two centers on research, briefing, tools, evidence, and reasoning. Part three presents guidance on case construction, strategies, and tactics, refutation, cross-examination, and style.

Another delight in this volume is the candor and professionalism with which the authors approach the issue of delivery skills of scholastic debaters. Issues such as incomprehensibility in delivery, in both articulation and in rate, as well as issues of insincerity and disrespect/discourtesy. Frank discussion of these characteristics is a delight because I personally have arrived at the point where I do not wish to judge or even hear many debates. I am weary of the rude, brash, arrogant "motor mouths" who (along with the coaches who condone and, in some instances, promote this behavior) have all but succeeded in turning scholastic debate into something other than a communication

event. There is hope if scholars and practitioners will take seri-
ously the wise communication advice expressed in this volume.

In the chapter, "Style and Delivery," the authors referred to
the problems and concluded:

> Their opposites include making sense; speaking truthfully;
> engaging your opponents and your listeners with respect
> rather than as crooks or fools; maintaining your own
> authenticity and integrity; and exhibiting wholesome zest and
> enthusiasm for the intellectual game. Those are not bad ide-
> als with which to conclude a chapter on style and delivery,
> or a book on debate and argumentation.

Not bad ideals at all.

Millard F. Eiland
Prairie View A & M University
Prairie View, Texas

Editor's Forum

An Historical Examination of
I.E. Nationals Finalists—An Update

Michael D. Leiboff

The 17th National Tournament of the NFA was held on the campus of Mankato State University in Mankato, Minnesota, on April 23-27, 1987. This author's article in the Spring, 1987, issue of the *National Forensic Journal* sought to preserve the achievements of institutions and individuals at the National Tournament. In order to recognize noticeable accomplishments as well as to maintain the historical records of the Association, this short update is presented.

The 17th I.E. Nationals saw several noteworthy individual performances. David Bickford of Brown University joined Theresa McElwee of Eastern Michigan University as the only three-time winner of an event. Bickford was the National Champion in Extemporaneous Speaking for the *third year in a row—a* feat never before accomplished at the contest. Kim Roe of Eastern Michigan University became one of the select few (only ten others) to repeat as a National Champion. She won After-Dinner Speaking for the second consecutive year.

Several contestants joined the list of overall career finals leaders. Tom Doyle of Bradley University brought his total number of national finals to seven and Laura Duncan of Eastern Michigan University each reached six career finals. Duncan became only the seventh contestant to reach four finals at one Nationals and Bickford only the sixth to win three national tides.

In the school competition, Eastern Michigan University won its ninth national title. Illinois State University moved into fourth place on the total number of finalists list passing Ball State University.

1.	Eastern Michigan	...184
2.	Bradley University	... 91
3.	Ohio University	... 59
4.	Illinois State	... 34
5.	Ball State University	... 31
6.	George Mason University	... 23
7.	Bowling Green State	... 21

8.	Miami University (Ohio)	... 18
9.	Ohio State University	... 17
10.	Stetson University	... 16

Illinois State University also moved into third place in the number of times they have finished in the top ten sweepstakes at Nationals. Ohio State University tied with Princeton University and George Mason University with four national champions behind Eastern Michigan University, Bradley University, Ohio University, and Illinois State University. Bradley University continued its lock on Duo Interpretation by winning the event for the fourth consecutive time. Speakers from Eastern Michigan University finished first, second, third, and sixth in After-Dinner Speaking.

Finally on a historical note, research into old NFA files discovered that a competitor in the early years of the National Tournament was omitted in the original article. David Beal of Ohio University placed in seven final rounds and won three events from 1972 through 1974.