Theory and Practice in Communication Analysis

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In opening one of their recent articles on communication analysis, Dean and Benoit lament, "there is a dearth of information available to assist the coach and student" in preparing this type of speech.[1] At about the same time, a work group at the National Developmental Conference on Forensics struggled with the same sorts of issues: How does a critic judge a round justly? What standards should be used to evaluate student speeches? Several of the participants endorsed the idea of developing specific criteria for each event and encouraged research along those lines.[2]

Devotees of communication analysis have answered that call with a vengeance. It has changed from the least to perhaps the most analyzed event. The authors of these varied studies have found much in the practice of the event to applaud, but even a casual review of the writings reveals a strong sense of discomfort. The unease seems centered on the relationship of student to method to text. Do students truly understand the theories they have chosen to use? Do they grasp the strategies of the speakers? The critics of communication analysis have focused on the problems of theory and practice. The difficulties that distress many educators can be understood and alleviated if students, coaches, and judges make the text of the artifact, not the methodology, the focus of the critical process. To explain my position, I shall first review the recent literature on communication analysis and reveal the emphasis on method; second, put that preoccupation into perspective by looking at the use of textual criticism in rhetoric and public address; and, finally, offer some tentative suggestions that could help improve the practice of communication analysis.

Communication analysis occupies a unique place in the forensic world. No other event is so clearly based on an academic activity and has such strong ties to "the rest of the department." As a result, students and coaches have always felt uneasy about the final product. If the speeches are supposed to resemble published criticism, they fail that test. If not, then what purpose does the event serve? This confusion has led many to ignore communication analysis despite its proclaimed educational value.[3] Some have sought to provide clarification by publishing guidelines for potential participants. These essays fall into three categories. The first type of article dispenses practical directions for doing the event. The

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second kind of study reveals the judging standards used in the event according to survey research. The third category encompasses argumentative essays, polemics that attack or defend the nature and purpose of communication analysis. All of these studies demonstrate the preoccupation that forensic participants and educators have with methodological concerns and the corresponding lack of interest in textual analysis of rhetorical artifacts.

Most of the essays in the *National Forensic Journal's* special issue on communication analysis fall into the first category. In fact, William Benoit, the guest editor, notes in his introduction that the issue "is devoted to pedagogical essays, articles on coaching competitive rhetorical criticism."[4] To Benoit's credit, the clear majority of the articles fulfill that purpose and are of great value to the coach and competitor. It is important to note, however, that the "rules of the game" have long included an obsession with methodology.

In the lead article, Kathleen German has as her topic the choice of a methodology. She notes that most students who try the event face a crisis when "they realize they need a 'methodology.'"[5] The essay defines "methodology" and provides some guidelines to aid in the selection of an appropriate one. While German clearly assumes the necessity of analyzing the text to determine the best method, she does not provide any means for doing so.

Kevin Dean makes the same assumptions in his essay. Dean outlines the process of writing a communication analysis. He argues that the research phase has four steps: "selecting an appropriate rhetorical artifact for study, understanding basic rhetorical theory, gathering background information about the rhetoric and the situation in which it occurred, and selecting a methodological tool to aid in the evaluation."[6] Only in the last area does Dean discuss the need to analyze the text of the speech. He states that a student should select a method based upon the "most powerful or the most unique strategy(ies) employed by the speaker."[7] Again, the process by which those strategies are found is ignored. Presumably, the student will study "basic rhetorical theory" such as "Aristotle's ethos, pathos, and logos; Bitzer's exigence, constraints, and rhetorical situation; Burke's identification; and Fisher's Motives" and use these principles to analyze the text.[8] Dean reveals an even more profound bias toward methodological concerns when he discusses the elements of a written speech. He outlines a large number of tasks for the speaker, but only in the "application" of the method "to the artifact" is the text involved.[9] Dean argues that a student should incorporate "illustrative examples from the artifact" at "every possible juncture."[10] The theoretical portion of the

speech is logically prior to the text, and pieces of the text are used only to prove the explanatory power of the theory.

Two other essays in the special issue also seek to instruct. Benoit and Dean attempt to broaden the range of possible artifacts by arguing that literary works can be examined in communication analysis.[11] Given the previous study by Dean, one presumes that the structure and direction of the student's speech would remain the same even with the use of a literary text.

Shields and Preston undertake the task of explaining fantasy theme analysis.[12] They provide the student with five assumptions, twelve technical terms, and three evaluative concepts.[13] They also give several illustrations of how the method could be used. While these "mini-critiques" rely on the text of the artifacts, they also ignore the conventions of a student speech. With the wealth of technical terms and the implication that fantasy themes are nearly universal in application, I believe that a speech using this theory would still have the preoccupation with method that characterizes most current communication analysis.

Those concerned with teaching the event heavily emphasize the methodological portion of the speech for a reason. They understand that that part of the speech, along with delivery, dominates the judging criteria used in the event. In 1983, Shawn McGee noted that little research had been done on the judging criteria in communication analysis.[14] Since that time, two studies have answered McGee's challenge by investigating this question.

Dean and Benoit use content analysis to examine "over three hundred rhetorical criticism ballots from four tournaments held in different regions of the country."[15] They develop two major divisions of comments, one concerning speech skills in general and the other dealing specifically with communication analysis. Five of the eight categories in the latter division inherently include methodological concerns.[16] The others could easily do so. While the speech skills section measures criteria such as delivery, one category deserves special attention. Many judges, Dean and Benoit report, want further documentation. That does not mean, however, that they want more evidence from the text to support the speaker's assertions. Instead, "most" of these "comments relate to the effects of the speech, the original source for the critical method, and the historical/background information about the artifact (s) studied."[17] Textual documentation is not emphasized.

Larson, using survey research of judges and coaches, departs from Dean and Benoit in at least one crucial area. She not only investigates what is, but inquires about what should be; she measures perceptions held by the forensics community about the ideal

evaluative criteria for communication analysis.[18] Her results differ from Dean and Benoit on one critical point: Larson finds significantly more emphasis on the use of "proper support (illustration) material" from the text than did Dean and Benoit.[19] Again, though, the theory seems logically prior to the text. The method comes first.

The results of these studies provide a ready explanation for the suggestions offered in the instructional set of articles. Judges want an introduction of the method, an explanation of the method, an application of the method, and methodological conclusions. Naturally, pragmatists concerned with coaching the event do not want students to lose consistently, so we encourage a focus on methodology. In the process, the goal of teaching criticism can be lost, and the critics of communication analysis tend to focus on that concern.

At the Second Summer Argumentation Conference in 1981, Brenda Logue took as her task the evaluation of argument in prepared public address.[20] The section on communication analysis is revealing. Her examination of the six 1981 AFA-NIET finalists suggests to her that the speaker "performing a communication analysis basically advances a classificatory claim."[21] The speaker states "that a given communicative act can be categorized or examined by a particular analytical method."[22] Relying on Brockreide's schema of possible types of claims, Logue argues that such a claim is not very significant: "The critic knows what he [sic] is going to find and merely puts examples into 'appropriate cubbyholes.'"[23] She contrasts a classificatory claim with a claim of explanation:

> In other words, the critic would be providing more significant arguments if the critic explained rather than categorized communication. None of the six communication analysis finalists explained the communicative acts from their own perspective, but rather classified via an established classificatory perspective.[24]

Logue's position is clear, and time has not changed the validity of her criticism. The state of argument in rhetorical criticism is not good.

Murphy agrees with this position in a later Argumentation Conference paper and traces the problem to the demand that students make a contribution to rhetorical theory.[25] He argues that that requirement causes the contestant to focus on the theory to the detriment of textual analysis. He advocates the elimination of that demand and a turn to social, or what Campbell calls "ephem-

eral" criticism. Rosenthal makes essentially the same point in the special issue of the *National Forensic Journal.*[26] He also claims that the burden to make a contribution to theory is too much to expect from a student in a ten-minute speech. His description of what "pragmatic" criticism would entail, however, still places a strong emphasis on established theory.[27] Finally, a continuing debate in *The Forensic* has focused on the validity of the event as an educational activity, and much of the concern has centered on the use of theory by students. The affirmative argues that the contestants are trying to do a good job, and despite the fact that they do not produce academic criticism, their efforts are sound educational experiences. The negative maintains that the event produces superficial analysis and "cookie-cutter" criticism.[28]

Finally, the problems of communication analysis can also be traced to the criteria for evaluation. Currently, students measure the success of their artifact in one of two ways. They maintain that it "fit" the method they explained at the outset of the speech. Clearly, this criterion has led to the charges of inferior argumentation leveled by Logue and others. Second, they claim that the speech had measurable effects. It succeeded according to the *New York Times* and the Gallup poll. Dean makes a strong argument in defense of this position: "While other standards are advocated by various writers, the criterion of effects is most appropriate for evaluating a persuasive artifact."[29] While rhetoric is clearly designed to have a practical impact on real problems, the use of the effects criterion as the major, or even sole, criterion for evaluation creates significant difficulties. Judgments of effects rely on historical information extrinsic to the speech and thus lead students away from the text. The effects standard does not give the critic latitude to praise good speeches in impossible situations.[30] Finally, this criterion does not allow the critic to evaluate the means that achieved the end. Questions of truth and ethics are irrelevant.[31] The two criteria for evaluation used by most communication analysis competitors do not encourage the development of good critical or argumentation skills.

The current practice of communication analysis, then, does not match the high expectations held for the event. Pedagogical articles and research on judging standards place methodology and theory, not text, as central to the critical process. Such a preoccupation leads to classificatory claims and "cookie-cutter" criticism. In addition, given the peculiar nature of competitive forensics, a number of other harms result. Forensics claims to teach argument skills; yet, as noted above, the classificatory nature of the event limits its ability to do so. Forensics claims to encourage wide par-

ticipation; but the focus on theory in communication analysis leads to low involvement by students and coaches. The welcome mat seems out only to those who are interested in "methodology." In reality, all students who want to analyze and understand contemporary culture and politics should have a place. Moreover, their apathy is often encouraged by judges who do not want to cope with the event. Through no fault of their own, they find themselves listening to youthful declamations on the current state of rhetorical theory, rather than to clear analyses of persuasive discourse. If trained communication scholars cannot understand these speeches, then perhaps the speeches, not the judges, need improvement.[32]

In 1980, a prominent rhetorical critic spoke of similar concerns. He noted problems "expressed in terms of confusion about the relationship between theory and practice, complaints about methods that lose contact with the object of study, and warnings about the mechanical imposition of *a priori* categories on rhetorical artifacts.[33] Michael C. Leff, as the guest editor of a special issue of the *Western Journal of Speech Communication,* was reviewing complaints made about the practice of rhetorical criticism. Three of the articles in that issue strongly argue for more textual analysis as a cure for difficulties that bear a striking resemblance to the ones encountered in forensics.[34] A review of the essays can yield some important insights into the current controversies about communication analysis.

G. P. Mohnmann examines "the critical hobby-horse" of "traditional" scholarship.[35] While noting that this critical perspective remains alive and kicking, Mohrmann turns his essay into a call for more detailed attention to rhetorical texts. He begins by noting the criticisms leveled against Neo-Aristotelean criticism. Quoting Douglas Ehninger, Mohrmann states that such criticism often resulted in a "mechanical summing up of how well a speech fit an *a priori* mold."[36] Unfortunately, the solutions to this problem have not been found in the proliferation of new methods: "New molds for old is no answer."[37] Mohrmann argues that these "contemporary adaptations and departures" have brought critics no closer to what should be the central focus of their activity, and that a return to tradition, to a system of topics, could be salutary: "Used with intelligence and imagination, the available topics may help us truly to understand and to appreciate the text and texture of messages."[38]

Edwin Black addresses the same problems with different vocabulary. He speaks of "emic" and "etic" criticism. Etic criticism "approaches a rhetorical transaction from outside of that transac-

tion and interprets the transaction in terms of a pre-existing the-ory."[39] Emic criticism allows the text to speak for itself:

> The emic critic, on the other hand, holding that rhetorical transactions themselves constitute the chief source of knowledge in the field and the sole defensible ground for its theoretical formulations, proceeds to the task of criticism with a willing suspension of the will itself, seeking to coax from the critical object its own essential form of disclosure.[40]

Black, in remarks that describe the event of communication analy-sis, states "that there is not a single case in the literature of our field in which a rhetorical theory has been abandoned as a result of having failed an application."[41] An etic critic examines the arti-fact with a predetermined viewpoint, finds what s/he wants to find, and is triumphant: "The system is infallible. But it is also sterile."[42] Black argues that neither the critic nor the theory can profit from such an approach and urges a turn to textual analysis.

Michael Leff, in his diagnosis of the ills of contemporary rhe-torical criticism, echoes the words of Black and Mohrmann. While not able to accept quite as sharp a distinction between emic and etic criticism as Black proposes, Leff endorses a focus on the text as a key to progress in the field.[43] Initially, like Mohrmann, he turns to the past, to the 1957 special issue on rhetorical criticism, and notes that those authors saw the same problems. Preoccupa-tion with the method of Neo-Aristotelean criticism led many away from texts and toward historical reconstruction. Edwin Black's landmark analysis of Neo-Aristoteleanism as a monistic method, however, did not result in a completely successful change. New methods appeared with startling regularity "without any of these methods solving the problem that lies at their collective origin—the Neo-Aristotelean tendency to impose mechanistic categories on texts."[44] An emic perspective, while not a panacea, at least "forces the critic to engage the text before distorting it."[45]

Since that special issue, "textual analysis has become increas-ingly fashionable among rhetorical scholars."[48] While "fashion" is certainly no reason to urge acceptance of an approach, the in-creasing attention paid to texts by such insightful critics as Edwin Black, Michael Leff, Stephen Lucas, and Karlyn Kohrs Campbell indicates the potential utility of this perspective.[47] As Lucas argues, the "center of a critic's concern" should be the text itself.[48] Leff quite reasonably observes that a *rhetorical* critic must "account for what the speech does, . . . to appreciate the way it articulates and structures what is said as the discourse unfolds.[49]

The problems that the critics of communication analysis see, then, have been wrestled with before. Forensics educators should note the increasing focus on the text in rhetorical criticism and apply that lesson to students in the event of communication analysis. Too often and for too long, forensics competitors have ignored the "center of a critic's concern" in favor of creating genres or making broad theoretical statements. Campbell argues that the "first stage in the critical process" is an understanding of the text.[50] Students need to have the ability to accomplish that task before they can profitably move on to theory.

Clearly, a focus on text does not mean a complete abandonment of methodology. James Aune, for instance, conducts an excellent textual analysis of Lincoln's Second Inaugural by using concepts drawn from American cultural studies.[51] The importance attached to the development of the methodology in the student speech, however, should be reduced. Students should even feel comfortable simply outlining the difficulties faced by a particular speaker and the strategies used by that rhetor to attack those obstacles. For instance, in her book, *The Rhetorical Act,* Karlyn Kohrs Campbell provides a series of questions termed the "Elements of Descriptive Analysis" that are a clear, useful way into the text. In addition, the book outlines "The Rhetorical Problem," one option for organizing the historical/contextual information about the speech.[52] Of course, Campbell's system is not the only one a critic can use; whatever the choice, the focus of the communication analysis should be an explication of the text of the speech.

Textual analysis does not preclude theoretical statements; in fact, it may be the only fruitful way to build theory. Yet eliminating the requirement that these students contribute to rhetorical theory in their ten-minute speeches offers a number of advantages. That change would help to reduce the role of method in the speech and focus more of the student's attention on the artifact. Moreover, novice critics simply do not have the time nor the ability to create theory in these short speeches. Finally, a change to "ephemeral," or "social," or "pragmatic" criticism can fulfill an important purpose for the field of communication. In 1970, Karl Wallace commented: "It seems to be generally agreed among rhetoricians that one of their signal failures in the last seventy years is the failure to produce in any significant numbers of practicing critics of public discourse."[53] Campbell repeated this lament in 1974 and pointed out: "Given our professional commitment to freedom of speech and discussion, the discipline of speech communication needs to honor and encourage the trained critics who enter the public arena to critique contemporary persuasive acts."[54] The event of commu-

nication analysis has the potential to train thousands of students to participate in the public realm in this way, and that is a far more attainable and worthwhile purpose than anything so far achieved in rounds.

Finally, such changes in communication analysis would also require a reduction in the use of the effects criterion. Again, rhetoric should bring about practical changes in the world, and the effects criterion measures those changes. Yet it also, as indicated, presents a large number of problems and should not be used in isolation.s[5] Instead, students should primarily focus on what Campbell calls the "aesthetic criterion." The argument of the student speech should center "on how effects are produced. . . achieves its purpose, of how creatively a rhetor responds to the obstacles faced, of how inventively a rhetor fulfills the requirements of a form.[56] While as a critic of *communication* the student should place these considerations first, s/he should also not be shy about asking pointed questions concerning ethics or truth. Ephemeral criticism should encourage debate and discussion, and little will do that faster than use of an ethical criterion.[57]

At the risk of redundancy, this essay has again addressed the problem of communication analysis. The judging standards in the event do not lack uniformity, as may be the case in other events. Instead, the event suffers from a rigid obsession with methodology in the speech, from the requirement to add to rhetorical theory at the end of the speech, and from evaluative criteria that often have more to do with history than with analysis of the artifact. The standards of the event need to change to reflect an increasing concern with the texts we study. The relationship between an artifact and rhetorical theory is by no means a simple one. Yet, as Michael Leff argues, "We have erred so long in the direction of the abstract that it now seems reasonable to encourage efforts that begin with the particular."[58] The educational purpose of the event should be to produce trained critics of public discourse. That goal can best be accomplished by demanding attention to the text and by requiring evaluations based on that analysis. In that way, communication analysis can best serve the students.

Endnotes

[1]Kevin W. Dean and William L. Benoit, "A Categorical Content Analysis of Rhetorical Criticism Ballots," *National Forensic Journal,* II (1984), 99. I personally prefer to label the event "rhetorical criticism." I found as I wrote, however, that constantly distinguishing between "competitive rhetorical criticism" and "academic rhetorical criticism" became burdensome. Thus, I have used "communication analysis" to refer to the forensic activity and "rhetorical criticism" to label the academic endeavor.

[2]John Murphy, "Order and Diversity: The Search For Standards in Individual Events," in *American Forensics in Perspective,* ed. Donn Parson (Annandale, VA: Speech Communication Association, 1984), 87-90.

[3]Most tournament directors can testify that communication analysis is the smallest event. At the Miami (Ohio) Rose Bowl, for instance, the event had twenty participants in a tournament with over four hundred slots entered. On the same weekend, the event had about fifteen participants at the Colorado College tournament with a similar number of total slots.

[4]William Benoit, "Special Issue on Competitive Rhetorical Criticism," *National Forensic Journal,* HI (1985), i.

[5]Kathleen M. German, "Finding a Methodology for Rhetorical Criticism," *National Forensic Journal,* III (1985), 86.

[6]Kevin W. Dean, "Coaching Contest Rhetorical Criticism," *National Forensic Journal,* III (1984), 118.

[7]Dean, 121.

[8]Dean, 119-120.

[9]Dean, 124.

[10]Dean, 124.

[11]William L. Benoit and Devin W. Dean, "Rhetorical Criticism of Literary Artifacts," *National Forensic Journal,* III (1985), 154-162.

[12]Donald C. Shields and C. Thomas Preston, Jr., "Fantasy Theme Analysis in Competitive Rhetorical Criticism," *National Forensic Journal,* III (1985), 102-115.

[13]Shields and Preston, 102-109.

[14]Shawn L. McGee, "Judging Criteria for Rhetorical Criticism" a paper presented at the Central States Speech Association Convention, Lincoln, NE, April 7, 1983.

[15]Dean and Benoit, 101.

[16]Dean and Benoit, 104.

[17]Dean and Benoit, 103.

[18]Suzanne Larson, "Communication Analysis: A Survey Research Report," *National Forensic Journal,* III (1985), 140-153.

[19]Larson, 148.

[20]Brenda J. Logue, "In What Ways Is Argument Applied In The Prepared Speech Events?" in *Dimensions of Argument: Proceedings of the Second Summer Conference on Argumentation,* ed. George Ziegelmueller and Jack Rhodes (Annandale, VA: Speech Communication Association, 1981), 384-394.

[21]Logue, 190.

[22]Logue, 190.

[23]Logue, 392. The quotation is from Brockreide.

[24]Logue, 392. I have a peculiar insight into Logue's analysis since I was one of the finalists she discussed. She's right.

[25]John Murphy, "Rhetorical Criticism as Argument: A Need for Social Criticism," in *Argument in Transition: Proceedings of the Third Summer Conference on Argumentation,* ed. George Ziegelmueller and Jack Rhodes (Annandale, VA: Speech Communication Association, 1983), 918-926.

[26]Robert E. Rosenthal, "Changing Perspectives on Rhetorical Criticism as a Forensix Event," *National Forensic Journal,* III (1985), 128-139.

[27]Rosenthal, 131-134.

[28]See Larson's review of that debate, 140-142.

[29]Dean, 117.

[30]For an analysis of the problems of the effects criterion, see G. P. Mohrmann and Michael C. Leff, "Lincoln at Cooper Union: A Rationale for Neo-Classical Criticism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech,* 60 (1974), 459-467.

[31]Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, *The Rhetorical Act* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1982), 153.

[32]Too often I find students making the excuse that they have a good speech, but the judge is too stupid to understand it. I too become frustrated at some ballots, but even speeches in this event should be understandable to the coaches and judges.

[33]Michael C. Leff, "Interpretation and the Art of the Rhetorical Critic," *Western Journal of Speech Communication 44* (1980), 337.

[34]G. P. Mohrmann,"Eulogy in a Critical Grave-yard," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 44 (1980), 265-27'4; Edwin Black, "A Note on Theory and Practice in Rhetorical Criticism," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 44 (1980), 331-336; Leff, "Interpretation and the Art of the Rhetorical Critic."

[35]Mohrmann, 266.

[36]Mohrmann, 272.

[37]Mohrmann, 272.

[38]Mohrmann, 272.

[39]Black, 331.

[40]Black, 332.

[41] Black, 333.

[42]Black, 333.

[43]Leff, 348-349.

[44]Leff, 345.

[45]Leff, 345-346.

[46]Stephen Lucas, "Textual Studies in Public Address," a paper presented at the Central States Speech Association Convention, April 1986, 7.

[47]In addition, the Western Speech Communication Association has started *Communication Reports,* a new journal desiring "data-based" articles. Judging from the papers on Lincoln's Second Inaugural, the Journal seems likely to focus on textual analysis.

[48]Lucas, 7.

[49]Quoted in Lucas, 7.

[50]Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, *Critiques of Contemporary Rhetoric* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1972), 14.

[51]James Arnt Aune, "Lincoln and the American Sublime," *Communication Reports* 1 (1988), 14-19.

[52]Campbell, *The Rhetorical Act,* 19-34, 147-152.

[53]Quoted in Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "Criticism: Ephemeral and Enduring," *Speech Teacher 23* (1974), 9.

[54]Campbell, "Ephemeral and Enduring," 10-11.

[55]See notes 30-31. See also John Rathbun, "The Problem of Judgment and Effect in Historical Criticism: A Proposed Solution," *Western Speech 23* (1969), 146-159.

[56]Campbell, *The Rhetorical Act.*, 154. For an excellent discussion of evaluation in criticism, see Northrop Frye, "Tentative Conclusions," in *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 341-356.

[57]See, for instance, Philip Wander, "The Ideological Turn In Rhetorical Theory," *Central States Speech Journal 34* (1983), 1-18.

[58]Leff, 346.

"Trigger" Your Audience: Trigger Scripting as a Contemporary, Integrative Event

Michelle Miller-Rassulo*

The competitors who comprise our individual events constituency increasingly include students who possess varied life experiences and desire to impact others in every aspect of their communication beyond competitive forensics. Recognizing this, communication scholars in the area of interpretation studies are focusing in on utilizing interpretation of literature as an informative and persuasive medium of communication responsive to the needs and issues of contemporary life (Valentine, 1986).

During the 1982 and 1983 action caucuses on oral interpretation in forensics, interpretation scholars resoundingly called for forensic activity to reflect current practices in performance and interpretation studies (Holloway, Allen, Barr, Cooley, Keefe, Pierce & St. Clair, 1983). This request calls for a perspective of oral interpretation in forensics to consist of the recognition that:

1) interpretation is both an art and a communicative act;
2) a presentational form can be found for literature, including but not confined to, the printed word;
3) audiences as well as expressive agents are to be educated; and
4) interpretation is the study not just of written texts, but of how literature affects participants in specific settings (Valentine, 1986, p. 399).

Messages in interpretation studies are no longer viewed as primarily the written literary text, but as literature created from "oral traditions, oral histories, interviews, documentaries and postliterate inventions" (Valentine, 1986).

Reflecting the changes in interpretation studies along with a response to the call for experimental events at forensic tournaments, I propose a unique event that integrates both persuasion and oral interpretation, group performance with rhetoric and logic with emotion. The event is TRIGGER SCRIPTING.

Performance as Persuasion

The term "trigger scripting" refers to the use of carefully selected literature to kindle responses from a targeted audience (Valentine, 1979). Carefully arranged selections of literary text are used to "trigger" a reaction, motivation, activation or change. Past

research indicates that performance is a very powerful communicative event; it has the capacity to reveal experience, increase learning and knowledge, and structure the social environment rhetorically (Capo, 1983; Cloerkes & Wohr Hans, 1982; Gimmestad & Dechiara, 1982; Hartman, Hartman, Alho & Fritsche, 1978; Manchester, 1971; Miller-Rassulo, 1987; Pelias, 1984; Smart, 1986). Performance is viewed as an instrument for discourse about change. Bormann (1985) suggests that a single dramatic case has greater impact on attitudes and commitment than statistics or other generalized statements. It is asserted that much of what has been deemed persuasion can be accounted for on the basis of "group fantasies," fantasizing in conjunction with the emotional arousal of a performance drives the participants in the communicative act toward actions and efforts to achieve them (Bormann, 1985). Drama has the potential to be rhetorically aesthetic. That is, it has the potential to be both rhetorical and aesthetic. Performance is empowering, not only to the performer but to the listener, because it gives voice and visibility to another group, to an idea, to a purpose. Performance connects us as human beings, helps us control our lives, and strengthens our sense of community (Conquergood, 1986).

Parker (1982) believes that researchers are reticent to deal with emotional approaches in communication:

> Persuasive rhetoric need not eschew all the devices used by propaganda. Emotion is not only inevitable in discourse, it is a necessary base for action. Propaganda has emotion—Poetry and propaganda differ in the ends they seek, but they use the same means. Emotion is part of life, part of language (p. 9).

Performance studies research in the past two years strongly suggest that the trigger scripting method of performance has the capacity to modify attitudes, increase awareness of issues, and transform social fantasies (Mann, 1987; Miller-Rassulo, 1987; Smart, 1986). Through literature, The process of transformation is brought about by the following: 1) **Identification**—the audience member experiences emotion towards a character or situation and there is a level of emotional investment; 2) **Projection**—the audience member infers the motives involved in the programmed literature and then applies those to his/her own life; 3) **Catharsis**—the verbal or nonverbal expression of emotion in relation to the experience; and 4) **Insight**—the audience member recognizes him/herself and significant others in the symbols and characters in the literature (Mclnnis, 1982). The next step following transformation is 5) **Action**—the emotional, physical or social enforcement prompted by the transformation.

The trigger scripting method of performance has been used to induce attitude change and behavior change concerning issues such as assertiveness, rape, stepfamilies, handicaps, old age, and intercultural communication (Mann, 1987; Miller-Rassulo, 1987; Valentine & Valentine, 1983; Cloerkes & Wohr Hans, 1982; Hartman, Hartman, Alho & Fritsche, 1978). Trigger scripting methods are currently being employed in the curriculum of interpretation in social contexts. The National Endowment for the Humanities provided the project, "Angle of Vision: Interpreting Contemporary Western Fiction," a sizeable grant on the basis of effectiveness of the trigger scripting method. This synthesis of persuasion, individual interpretations of literature, and readers theater is well suited to competitive forensics to broaden the scope of the available performance experiences as well as to remedy the disparity between academic oral interpretation performance and contest interpretation.

Rationale

The results of the 1984 Developmental Conference on Forensics provided encouragement for the creation of experimental events that are not sanctioned by the NIET (Manchester & Friedley, 1986). The inclusion of a group performance of literature with the purpose to persuade follows this encouragement and is a natural offshoot from the already existing events of persuasive speaking and oral interpretation of literature.

Most importantly, forensic experience should be relevant to the students' lives, and the skills learned must have transfer value to the world outside of the classroom. Participants in a trigger scripting event would specifically derive the following benefits: 1) analyzing relationships between literary messages, audience, and themselves; 2) analyzing persuasive messages as acceptable means of effecting social change; 3) exposure to new and different literary texts; 4) literature as a rich source of supporting material; 5) adapting rate, pitch, loudness, quality, articulation, and pronunciation so as to communicate the persuasive message effectively; 6) studying the impact and adaptation of nonverbal communication on the interaction of audience and interpreter; 7) learning, as they work on group performances, to select a leader, research material, script and edit material, and add their expertise and ideas to the group process during the give-and-take interaction preceding and during the course of forensic competition; 8) realization of the power and relevance of literature as a communicating and persuasive event (adapted from Valentine, 1986, p. 402). Overall, trigger scripting provides a framework to develop those skills utilized in

FIGURE 1

Coping and Groping as a Stepped-On Parent

All:	COMMANDMENT #2 Don't expect instant love.
Stepchild: LITERARY TEXT	DEAR DIARY: Mom's really furious with me, but I don't care. My stepdad said hello and I didn't respond. Just because someone says hello to you doesn't mean that you have to answer. The main problem with Joel is that he is always being so nice. And he is soooooo nosey!! He just comes in my room and goes, "Hi." Do you believe that! (Ephron, 1986)
Stepfather: LITERARY TEXT	DEAR DIARY: Jenny's reacting to the fact that there is a new man in her mother's life. Usually I arrive home and she retreats to her room. But this time I went into her room to give her a present. She wouldn't look at me. Anne suggested that she say thanks. She did. To be precise she said, "Thanks. Now can I go back to what I was doing?" Anne was pretty upset about it. Actually I find the whole thing amusing. She's just a kid. It'll pass. (Ephron, 1986).
Narrator 1:	Don't ignore problems. Deal with them early on.
Narrator 2:	Stepparents also have the right to enforce the rules of the house. Avoid dividing up your family, such as, "It's your kid – you take care of it."
Stepmother: NARRATIVE MATERIAL	He undercuts me. I'm not really the parent when his children visit. He feels bad about the broken marriage and can set very few limits. They can do whatever they want. They don't listen to me and they get away with murder. They come every weekend and I can't wait for them to leave. I feel helpless.
Narrator 1:	There are currently 35 million stepfamily systems in the United States. Thirteen hundred new stepfamilies are formed each day. The stepfamily represents the fastest growing family form (Glick, 1984).
Narrator 2: STATISTICS	Experts predict that the stepfamily will be the most common family form by the mid-1990's (Glick, 1984).
ALL:	Society hasn't prepared us.

Stepmother:	COMMANDMENT #3 Don't take all of the responsibility. You're just like the rest of us mothers – gluttons for punishment – greedy for guilt. Every time one of our kids does something wrong, we blame ourselves. But let me tell you, when Joey got the zipper in his fly caught on his you-know-what, and came screaming to his kindergarten teacher, I decided for the first time in my life that **that wasn't my fault** (Vail-Thorne, 1983).
LITERARY TEXT	
Narrator 2:	Blame is a waste of time.
SF:	I look at them. . .
SM:	. . . our children
SC:	Separate and strong
SM:	And with more power against us than any God. . .
SF:	The conflict is. . . that we compare them. . .
SM:	. . .to each other. . . and to ourselves.
SC:	But they are separate. . . They are not the same
SF:	They are no us. . . And
SM:	They are not ours. . .
SF:	We transfer to them all that we wished for ourselves.
SM:	So it is we. . . That are bound to them. . . En-route to ourselves…
SC:	So let them be. . .
SM:	Less like we are. . . And more like ourselves. . .
SC:	Then. . . maybe. . . That will set us free
SF:	From trying to be different than we are (Malloy, 1977)

The scripting of narrative material could consist of monologues, dialogues, and adaptation of monologic narration into a scene. For example:

Narrative Story:	It's so confusing this issue of "names." When I was living with Mary and Jeffrey, I never knew what to call him, you know, how to refer to him. One time a friend of his called and asked for Jeffrey; he was out and the kid asked who I was. I didn't know what to say! Am I his friend, his father, John, uncle – what?
	Now Mary and I are married and I can, at least, refer to myself as Jeffrey's "stepfather."

Adaptation for scripting:

Friend:	Is Jeffrey at home?
John:	No, he's out.
Friend:	Oh, is this his father?
John:	No, this is Jeffrey's er . . . I never knew what was the right answer; then Mary and I married. Now I'm able to respond, "This is Jeffrey's stepfather." Jeffrey, on the other hand, continues to introduce me as his "er. . .".

Event Guidelines

The audience should have a feeling of a unified whole in which each performer contributes to the total persuasive effect. Team entries will consist of a minimum of (3) performers and a maximum of (14) performers. Time limits are suggested to adhere to 25 minutes maximum, including set up and take down.

In establishing parameters for this event, the goal is not one of attempting to confine performers, the goal is one of attempting to define the possibilities for this event. In light of defining the possibilities for this event, the following mechanics of the presentation are posited (adapted from Phi Rho Pi Handbook, 1986):

2) Costuming should not be the focus of the presentation; however, suggestions in ensemble dress may be used.
3) Off-stage, on-stage and audience focus may be utilized to reflect accurately the message of the script.
4) Reading stands, chairs, stools, ladders, platforms, and steps may be used; however, facility limitations (space, equipment, time, etc.) should govern the director's choice.
5) Performers may stand, sit, or both, or may move in the designated stage space. The movement should be consistent with the ideas or moods of the literature and the over all concept.
6) Music/sound effects, lighting effects or visual aids are acceptable as long as they do not dominate or distract from the presentation.
7) Two teams will compete in each panel. Three judges will be in each preliminary round and three in the final rounds.
8) Judging will be accomplished via a win/loss and quality points approach.

Each team in a panel will be awarded a win or loss. Quality points to each team will utilize the following scale suggestion: 40-50 superior, 30-39 Excellent, 20-29 Good, 10-19 Fair, and 0-9 Unprepared. (See Figures 2 and 3 for example ballot and criteria.)

FIGURE 2

Trigger Scripting Performance Ballot

Round _____ Time _____ Room _____ Judge _____

Performing First (Team Code) _____ Title _____

Performing Second (Team Code) ____ Title _____

Quality Points:	**40-50 Superior** **30-39 Excellent**	**20-29 Good**	**10-19 Fair** **0-9 Unprepared**

Win

(Team Code)	(Title)	(Quality Points)

Loss

(Team Code)	(Title)	(Quality Points)

(Judge's Signature)	(Judge's School)

Comments:

Team 1:	Team 2:

Reasons for Decision:

FIGURE 3
Trigger Scripting

Overview: The Trigger Scripting event is a group per-
formance event to synthesize persuasion and the
oral interpretation of literature.

Description: A thematic program is to be presented through
performance with the purpose to persuade,
actuate or motivate the audience.

Judging Criteria

Scripting: Scripting addresses the content and arrangement
of the materials selected for performance.
Specific aspects may include: reasoning,
argument, development, balanced use of appeals,
appropriate supporting materials, credibility,
referencing, continuity, editing, creativity,
emotional range and impact.

Performance: Performance addresses those vocal and physical
aspects of the performance which facilitate the
communication of the message. Specific aspects
may include: vocal variation (volume, rate, pitch,
intensity, projection, articulation, pronunciation)
and physicalization (gestures, body posture,
nervousness, energy, eye contact) .

Blocking: Blocking addresses the overall physical staging of
the trigger scripted performance. Specific aspects
may include: balanced staging, creativity,
enhances message, motivated movement.

Purpose: Purpose addresses the overall issue of whether the
message was persuasive, was it effective
"triggering" attitude or behavior change? Specific
aspects may include: clarity of purpose,
arguments well supported, overall achievement of
purpose.

Research Possibilities

Despite the popularity and assumed efficacy of the individual speaking events in forensics, few researchers have dealt with empirically validating this efficacy. A coherent body of knowledge is necessary to generate growth in the area of individual events.

Experimental studies are needed to assist in the examination of the audience/performer/text relationship. Focus on persuasive effectiveness of performance on both audience and performer is viable for forensic investigation. The trigger scripting event provides an opportunity for research in several areas. Attitude change, audience response, behavior change, perspective-taking abilities, message construction, and analysis of competitive success are all possible foci for forensic pedagogy and scholarship concerning the proposed event—trigger scripting.

Within the forensic community, interpretation with intent to persuade will link public speakers with interpreters in an effort to make informed choices and decisions about their lives and influence the world around them through the sensitive communication of literature. The adoption of this event as an experimental event at recognized forensic competitions acknowledges an effort to contemporize current oral interpretation practices to reflect current interpretation theory. Adoption of the trigger scripting event also has the potential to benefit the student participants, the judges, the audiences and the scholars whose research interests lie in performance and/or persuasion.

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Judging After-Dinner Speaking:
Identifying the Criteria for Evaluation

Colan T. Hanson*

In setting forth Resolution 45 at the Second National Conference on Forensics (1984), participants argued that the proposed standards for evaluating public address events would permit a more coherent evaluation of the contestants and provide a frame of reference for criticism. The crucial concern addressed by this researcher is whether the Conference's standards of evaluation are applicable to the event of after-dinner speaking. This theoretical article will briefly review those standards and the rationale for those standards; it will assess the applicability of those standards to the contest category of after-dinner speaking; and finally, this article will offer some suggestions on how the critic-judge might improve ballot commentary by expanding upon the scope of the current set of evaluation standards.

The standards of evaluation for public address which are included in Resolution 45 are:

1. the speaker's presentation should identify a thesis or claim from which the speech is developed;
2. the speaker's presentation should provide a motivational link (relevance factor) between the topic and the audience;
3. the speaker's presentation should develop a substantive analysis of the thesis using appropriate supporting materials;
4. the speaker's presentation should be organized in a coherent manner;
5. the speaker's presentation should use language which is appropriate for the topic and the audience;
6. the speaker's presentation should be delivered using appropriate vocal and physical presentation skills (1984, p. 90).

The rationale for those standards of evaluation was characterized by Hanson (1985). The rationale for the first standard suggested that students need feedback on whether they are effective in focusing the listeners' attention on one major issue. The rationale accompanying the second standard stressed the importance of affording the contestants feedback on whether they were capable of capturing and sustaining the attention of the listeners. The ra-

tionale supporting the third standard of evaluation underscored the importance of affording feedback on the issue of subject-matter development. The rationale for standard number four called attention to the need for feedback on the organization of the materials in the message. The rationale related to the fifth standard argued that it is important for the contestants to receive feedback on how they used language to facilitate the acceptability of their messages; and finally, the rationale supporting the sixth standard suggested that it is important for speakers to receive an assessment of whether the delivery of their speech was acceptable for the contest situation (Hanson, 1985, pp. 37-39).

The Conference's standards of evaluation, and the subsequent rationale explaining those standards, provide the judge with a frame of reference. Consequently, the judge should be able to function in a more pedagogical manner because there is a set of criteria to apply. Although the professional training of the critics may vary, criticism of the contestants need not be inconsistent. Andrews (1983) stressed the importance of systematic evaluation:

> A critic is a specialist and must be able to communicate to others the results of his or her critical observation and inquiry. A critic combines knowledge with a systematic way of using that knowledge and constantly seeks his or her practice of criticism. In the most fundamental sense, the critic is an educator. He or she confronts a message; his or her reaction to that message is not the same as the reaction of the casual or even the critical listener. The critic seeks to understand what is going on in order to interpret more fully the rhetorical dynamics involved in the production and reception of the message and to make certain judgments about the quality of the message (pp. 5-6).

Armed with an acceptable set of criteria, the critic-judge ought to be in a position to function as an educator. With the set of evaluation criteria afforded by Resolution 45, the critic ought to be able to provide feedback on the dynamics involved in the production of the message, the quality of the message, as well as report on the observed impact of the speech materials on the audience.

The more pervasive question, however, remains: Are the criteria stated in Resolution 45 applicable to the contest category of after-dinner speaking? Perhaps one way of responding to that question is to examine what forensic theorists offer as judging criteria for after-dinner speaking, and also examine what judges are saying about the evaluation of after-dinner speaking in the actual contest setting.

While one could hardly claim that there is a plethora of theoretical constructs available to the judge of after-dinner speaking, there are some thoughts afforded by theorists. According to Swanson and Zeuschner, items to be included in the evaluative assessment of an after-dinner speech are:

1. Was the subject suitable?
2. Did the speech reveal originality and creativity in the development of the subject?
3. Was the speaker's use of language appropriate to the audience and the occasion, and did it enhance the ability to compel attention and secure interest?
4. Was the speaker's delivery adapted to the nature of the materials? (1983, p. 45).

Swanson and Zeuschner's thoughts seem to complement those standards espoused by the participants at the Second National Conference on Forensics [2NCF].

Using a slightly different focus, Miller (1974) wrote that attention by the speaker [and one might add by the critic-evaluator] should be given to one's ability to share humor. Miller stated:

Some speakers use various forms of humor better than others. How effective are you, for example, in using exaggeration? understatement? puns? irony? Can you talk entertainingly about the peculiar traits of people? Are you effective in treating serious ideas lightly or light subjects seriously? (p. 157).

Miller went on to note that some attention should also be given to one's abilities to tell stories, the "sense of the fitness of things," and one's ability to use effectively both an introduction and a conclusion as well as attend to other concerns related to an appropriate thematic development of the topic (pp. 157-158). While Miller's theoretical construct does not differ significantly from those constructs developed by the participants at the 2NCF, he does imply that the speaker should exhibit a talent for sharing humor and demonstrate an ability to tell stories. Miller does not, however, provide the critic with any particular set of behavioral acts which the critic might use as criteria for evaluating either the talent for sharing humor or the ability to tell stories.

Klopf (1982) noted that there is one special feature of after-dinner speaking which is different from other principles of composition and delivery in public address, and that feature is the entertainment factor of the speech. Klopf wrote:

An after-dinner speech does not have to convert an audience into a howling mob convulsed with laughter; a speech that is brightened with humor and that offers a good natured ap-

proach to a worthwhile subject usually is more appropriate. A speaker achieves his or her purpose through the use of anecdotes, illustrations, and humorous stories, if these are appropriate to the audience and the occasion and are related to the subject. Many beginning speakers fail because their material is not in harmony with the mood of the listeners and the occasion (1982, p. 234).

As Klopf suggested, a special consideration in evaluating the effectiveness of the after-dinner speaker is that of assessing the person's ability to manage the entertainment dimension of the speech situation.

Another set of forensic theorists expressed some frustration over the lack of precise standards used in describing the contest category of after-dinner speaking:

. . . there is considerable confusion about just what the speaker should do. Although most coaches would probably agree that he should entertain in some manner, they might well disagree on how the entertaining should be accomplished.

. . . The coach and student are left without a clear mandate in preparing an after-dinner speech other than to be humorous. Unfortunately, however, original humor does not come readily to most people. . . . In selecting a subject for a contest in after-dinner speaking, moreover, the student faces a particularly artificial situation. . . . There will be no meal served before the speech and no occasion which can be simulated (Faules, Rieke, and Rhodes, 1976, pp. 221-222).

A literal interpretation of the name of the contest event of after-dinner speaking, like the one identified above, does pose problems for both the contestant and the critic-evaluator. If the event of after-dinner speaking is regarded as an example of a type of rhetoric, however, less confusion may exist. In subsequent remarks, Faules, Rieke, and Rhodes suggest that the student be evaluated on the basis of being able to find a subject which is humorous, and that one appropriate topic area other than forensic experiences might be foibles of human beings (1976, p. 222). Additionally, they suggest that the means of eliciting humor through the use of comic techniques and timing might be another area for potential evaluation of the after-dinner speaker (1976, p. 222). The general impression one receives from the treatment of the after-dinner speech by Faules, Reike, and Rhodes, however, is that they perceive a lot of uncertainty surrounding both the nature of the event and the actual judging of the event. Even though their assessment of the situation may have changed because of greater exposure to

after-dinner speakers, their overall claim that the standards of evaluation lack unity seems to have a measure of ongoing validity.

While the number of theorists writing about after-dinner speaking is rather limited, one other source of insight into the criteria being suggested for the evaluation of the after-dinner speaker may be the handbooks or rules books of the various state speech organizations. In the *North Dakota High School Activities Association's Handbook* (1986), for instance, the judge is asked to rank and rate contestants using the following criteria: "the originality of ideas, clarity and effectiveness of organization, use of language, communication of purpose, delivery and general effectiveness" (p. 47). Exploring such high school handbooks can be useful as a means of helping to complete the picture of the variety of standards being employed by critics in evaluating after-dinner speaking.

Most of the forensic theorists suggest criteria for the evaluation of after-dinner speaking which are rather similar in nature to those expressed by the participants at the 2NCF. While the public address standards of the 2NCF appear applicable to the judging of after-dinner speaking, the literature review does reveal that there are additional items which might be added to the set of standards generated by the 2NCF. The standards discussed by Miller, Klopf, Faules, Rieke, and Rhodes seem reasonable and also seem to add more focus to the evaluation process. Specifically, there is an added perception that the critic-evaluator ought to assess the originality and creativity exhibited by the speaker; assess the ability to share humor, and tell stories (perhaps by using the narrative); assess the ability to manage the entertainment aspect of the speech; and assess the means by which the humor is elicited, including a consideration of the suitability of the humor.

Another avenue of assessing the applicability of the standards of evaluation suggested by the 2NCF is to note how those criteria interface with the opinions of judges currently involved in criticizing contest speakers. The data base for input of that nature is extremely limited. One study, however, does shed some light upon what standards judges are using as criteria of evaluation as they assess contest speakers in after-dinner speaking (Anderson and Martin, 1983).

According to the findings of Anderson and Martin (1983), judges saw after-dinner speaking as a legitimate contest event and indicated that they enjoyed judging the event. Judges also claimed that they felt the overall amount of humor in a speech did not necessarily make the speech a better speech, and some felt that the after-dinner speech had some ties to persuasion. Further, re-

spondents also indicated that the humor should not offend and should be in good taste. Judges indicated that a lively delivery was helpful and that they preferred that note cards not be used. With respect to the composition of the speech, judges perceived that the speech should contain a serious point; that the focus of the speech should be narrow and possess a relationship to the listeners; that the topic should have some social significance; that the topic be developed thematically; that the humor used as supporting material be dispersed throughout the speech; that alliteration and exaggeration were acceptable forms of humor; that the speech have some measure of originality; and that the speech should provide the humor—delivery should not be the source of humor but serve to complement the humor in the speech (1983, pp. 14-16). The standards suggested by Anderson and Martin exhibit a relative concurrence with those of the 2NCF.

One other source which may shed light on some of the operational criteria used to judge after-dinner speaking is the publication providing copies of the winning speeches and the critiques of those speeches. The initial publication of *1986 Championship Debates and Speeches* (1986) carried only two critiques of the after-dinner speeches which were winners at the AFA and NFA tournaments. Both critiques, however, underscored the importance of the traditional criteria regarding principles of composition, as well as commenting on the respective speaker's ability to relate that humor (pp. 113-114, p. 138). If the critiques of the final round speeches become more numerous in the subsequent issues of that publication, conducting a content analysis of those critiques may help theorists discover additional standards of evaluation.

In response to the overall question of the appropriateness of the 2NCF's standards of evaluation for the category of after-dinner speaking, one can say that they appear to be appropriate. The appropriateness of the 2NCF's criteria for evaluating after-dinner speaking seems to have gained some legitimacy through the process of endorsement. Pi Kappa Delta elected to field test the ballot criteria developed by the 2NCF by using those criteria in their 1985 national tournament. Following a review of the feedback on the use of those ballot criteria in the 1985 tournament, the National Council of Pi Kappa Delta reaffirmed the acceptability of those criteria by choosing to use those same criteria on the ballot for the 1987 tournament (Littlefield, 1988). The adoption of the 2NCF's set of criteria on the Pi Kappa Delta ballot should not be interpreted as meaning that those criteria are the only acceptable set of standards of evaluation. More accurately, the adoption of those standards by Pi Kappa Delta is probably more precisely a reflection

of that organization's commitment to be responsive to the recommendations contained in the report of the 2NCF.

One final issue to be addressed in this article is what, if anything, can or should the critic-evaluator add to the standards already available from the 2NCF's theorists? In addition to the standards of the 2NCF, critics might incorporate the suggestions provided by theorists and active judges. Principally, critic-evaluators should probably consider adding comments on the originality exhibited in the speech; the ability of the contestant to relate humor; the ability to use humor in an appropriate and tasteful manner; and, the ability of the speaker to manage the entertainment component of the speech.

Each of the additional standards of evaluation for after-dinner speaking has its own rationale. The standard of evaluation asking for the critic's response to the originality of the contestant's material may be one of the most timely. The ethical and pragmatic consequences of using non-original material without properly acknowledging the source of the material is just beginning to be realized by some current congressional and governmental leaders. Obviously, it is crucial for the communication profession to do what it can to underscore the importance of the ethical element of originality in speech materials. Additionally, feedback on the originality of the contestant's materials may also serve as a vehicle for encouraging the creative component in public communication.

The ability of the contestant to relate humor is a standard which would add useful feedback to the evaluation. The ability to make skillful use of the narrative process can be an important artistic component of public speaking. Most of the truly gifted speakers this writer has observed have also exhibited a tremendous talent for telling stories in a dramatistic fashion. Having specific feedback on one's ability to relate stories effectively would seem beneficial and afford an opportunity for growth for most speakers.

The ability to discover and use effective devices for creating humor in the speech is another standard which might be included in the evaluation of after-dinner speakers. Feedback on the means that the speaker chooses to employ in the process of entertaining would afford a growth opportunity for the speaker. Additionally, specific feedback on the devices used by the speakers to entertain might help theorists and coaches better define what is regarded as appropriate and inappropriate vehicles of humor.

Finally, feedback on managing the entertainment component of the speech is another standard which could function as a source of growth for the contestant. While somewhat broader in scope, critical comments related to the strategies employed to maximize

the entertainment factor for the situational audience would help reinforce the need to think of the disposition of the immediate audience when creating a speech of enjoyment. Each of the standards for evaluation suggested here would contribute to a stronger degree of correspondence between the speech given by the student and the speech being critiqued by the judge.

There is some merit to the cliche' that "if it isn't broken, don't fix it." In some ways, one might do more damage than good by encouraging judges to add extra items to the evaluation process. As Simon suggests in *Form and Genre: Shaping Rhetorical Action* (1976):

> The distinguishing features of a genre must not only be namable but operationalizeable: i.e., there must be clear rules by which two or more independent observers can concur in identifying predesignated characteristics of rhetorical practice when confronted with samples of rhetorical practice. . . . Independent observers must not only have clear rules or criteria for distinguishing characteristics of a genre, but must also be able consistently to assign items of rhetorical practice (e.g., whole speeches) to generic categories according to those rules. . . . If items of rhetorical practice are to be consistently identified as fitting within one genre or another, it follows that these items should be internally homogenous across salient characteristics and clearly distinguishable from items comprising an alternative genre (pp. 36-37).

The implications of Simon's remarks for the critic-evaluator of after-dinner speaking are that any items of evaluation added as standards should be clear and identifiable to all judges. Until particular attributes of the after-dinner speech recur on a regular basis, one should not use those attributes as a primary means of deciding a round. Rather, they ought to be, and certainly should be, considered acceptable areas of feedback for the contestant. For example, assessing the means used to interject humor into the speech is not an area where high agreement exists among critics. Some critics might enjoy and also encourage students to use puns, while other judges may dislike puns as a means of adding humor to a speech. Superimposing the acceptance or rejection of the use of the pun as a means of adding humor would seem inappropriate on the part of a judge, because there is not a conclusive response on the matter among theorists or practitioners.

The overall position offered in this article is that the standards generated by the 2NCF are applicable to the evaluation of after-dinner speeches. Additionally, this writer maintains that there are probably other items which are genre-specific to after-dinner

speaking which could be added to the standards already available from the 2NCF. New criteria for the evaluation of the after-dinner speech should not be added without some field testing and the concurrence of the critic-educators. To add a particular criteria to the evaluation process without testing presupposes its validity as an educational concern.

If one is to offer a direction for future research, this writer would recommend field testing some additional criteria for evaluating after-dinner speakers. As a means of field testing the standards suggested in this article, a criterion-referenced ballot should be created and employed in the process of evaluating after-dinner speeches in the contest setting. Obviously, any tournament director interested in using a ballot which asks for specific kinds of feedback could function as a case study for the instrument. Subsequent feedback could be elicited from contestants, coaches, and judges as to the adequacy of the feedback derived from the new ballot. If the feedback serves a positive end, those ballot standards could evolve as normative areas of feedback in subsequent contest speaking situations. The call for additional research is not meant to imply any deficiency in the standards set forth at the 2NCF. Rather, the call for added research is a call for exploring ways of channeling more constructive feedback to the student.

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The Function of the Introduction in Competitive Oral Interpretation

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Practices and styles have changed over the years in the field of oral interpretation to reflect current theories, but there has remained a consistent belief that the value of interpretation lies in its ability to communicate—to share meaning and insight.[1] This philosophy of interpretation places emphasis upon the literature itself rather than the performance. But this emphasis is not always what occurs in competitive forensics. Oral interpretation events often can be characterized by a stylized, technique-oriented approach that forces attention to the performance and away from the literature. Given these assumptions, oral interpretation competitors should be guided toward making performance choices that reflect techniques derived from the meaning and substance of the literature.

One of the performance choices confronting an oral interpreter is reflected in the question, "What is the function of the introduction?" Implicit within this question are a variety of philosophical underpinnings that demonstrate the complex nature of response. Consequently, this paper will 1) present some representative views on the functions of the introduction in oral interpretation, 2) discuss current styles of introductions used in competitive forensics and concerns stemming from these styles, and 3) offer a rationale and suggestions for re-directing the focus of competitive oral interpretation to the literature itself.

Functions of the Introduction

Regardless of the type of public communication, introductions generally serve some common purposes. Typically these purposes include getting attention, setting the mood, providing pertinent information, relating the material to the audience, and previewing the content that will follow.

An examination of oral interpretation texts reveals fairly consistent approaches to the introduction of literature in performance settings. Judy Yordon, for example, notes that the introduction serves three preparatory purposes:

  (1) it prepares the audience for the specific selection you are
       performing,

(2) it prepares you to perform for the audience, and

(3) it lets the audience see you as you are before you change to become the speaker in the text.[2]

Otis Aggertt and Elbert Bowen claim that the introduction "should reveal your relationship with the material you read, but may also deal with the author and his creation of the selection."[3] They further explain that the introduction should include any information necessary for audience understanding and appreciation of the literature.[4] An introduction, according to Wallace Bacon, "should look ahead to the reading and should set a tone that will prepare for it." [5] Charlotte Lee's concept of an introduction "gives you a chance to size up your audience. . . . helps you organize your thoughts. . . . helps you arrive at the mood you need for what you are going to do."[6] Finally, Beverly Whitaker Long and Mary Frances HopKins suggest that the interpreter should, "Develop an introduction that *sets up* the literary text."[7]

Based upon these principles, it seems clear that an introduction serves informational and rhetorical functions, in addition to the obvious aesthetic roles it plays. Both of these principal functions lead to the development of certain components in the format of the introduction.

Format of the Introduction

A preliminary, albeit cursory, audience analysis should establish exactly what the audience needs to know about the selection and author in order to make the sharing of literature a meaningful experience for all involved. Aggertt and Bowen pose the following question to guide the interpreter in fulfilling the informational function: "What needs to be said about the author, the literary form, any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities, or other significant matters to help your audience understand it?"[8]

In addition to the identification of the title and author, certain background information such as scene description, previous action, biographical data, and critical commentary,[9] may provide a clearer understanding of the literature and allows the audience to have a solid grasp of the who, what, when, where, and why of the literature. Thus, the informational function serves to increase audience comprehension and appreciation by isolating important and selective details.

Long and HopKins indicate the rhetorical or critical aspect of introductions by advising interpreters to discuss the appeal of the literature, "its relation to the audience, its genesis with the author."[10] This focus creates a direct relationship between the performer, the literature, and the audience. By identifying the signifi-

cance and appeal of the literature, the interpreter is able to translate analytical observations into performance choices. This process, according to Jay VerLinden, allows the interpreter to function in the role of a "critical thinker," advancing a "critical claim" about the literature that will be supported in the performance.[11] The argumentative perspective toward competitive oral interpretation would provide vital benefits to coaches, judges, and competitors. As Lewis Hershey explains, "An argumentative perspective towards forensic competition transcends practical versus aesthetic considerations in performance by inseparably linking them in the preparation, execution, and evaluation process."[12]

Styles and Concerns of Introductions

Competitive oral interpretation events are characterized by a variety of introductions, among which include the introduction that merely states title and author, the introduction that discusses *ad infinitum* every detail of the plot that time permits, the introduction that dictates how the audience should respond to the characters and themes of the literature, and the introduction that is commonly referred to as a "teaser." Each of these styles represents concerns that must be addressed if the focus of oral interpretation is to achieve not only artistic merit, but a substantive, thought-provoking influence.

First, if the introduction is to gain audience attention, set a mood, provide critical information, and establish a claim, then the statement of title and author is by no means sufficient in introducing literature. Such a performance choice not only prevents the establishment of an effective relationship between the literature, audience, and performer, but it signifies a lack of concern for the elements of understanding and appreciation in the performance of literature.

Second, at the opposite end of the spectrum is the full-blown description, which is just as detrimental to the interpretation experience. Too much information precludes the audience from feeling a sense of responsibility or actively participating in the sharing process. Consequently, what may result is a lack of attentiveness on the part of the audience who may feel estranged from the performer and the literature.

Third, motivation for audience involvement is also limited when the interpreter chooses to identify each emotion being conveyed by the characters in the literature. Although some indication of the feelings displayed in the literature may certainly be implicated in the introduction, the actual performance itself should manifest the significant emotions.

Fourth, teasers, in themselves, are fine. They may gain attention, set a mood, provide information, and set forth a claim. However, teasers, like rhetorical questions in public address, are often overworked, and the singular use of a teaser is not sufficient for three reasons: First, according to NFA guidelines, introductions used in interpretation are to be of an "original" nature. If a teaser is used as the only introduction, then this guideline cannot be fulfilled. Second, artistic merit is sacrificed if a teaser substitutes for the introduction. Instead, what often results in this instance is a technique-ridden, overdramatized, sensational approach that is certain to gain the attention of listeners. But the key issue here is whether or not that attention is derived from the literature itself, or from the emphasis on the staged performance. When used alone, teasers have a tendency to invoke mechanical and artificial performance choices. Moreover, the introduction, as VerLinden claims, "is often not distinguished from the literature."[13] This effect often results when a teaser is used. Third, this issue is even more critical when teasers are used that fail to establish vital background information, or the significance and purpose of the literature being performed. Instead of seeing the interpreter as a communicator with a message to share, based upon his or her insight and understanding of the literature, the audience sees the interpreter as a "performer" with a presentation directed more toward effect than meaning.

Rationale and Suggestions

It is generally accepted that oral interpretation is a communicative art form. What is not generally accepted is the appropriate style of performance for competitive forensics. It is in no way suggested herein that there is but one appropriate style of performance. Yet with most art forms, there needs to be some restraint exercised—restraint usually determined by source, receiver, and situational variables. Artistic merit and aesthetic pleasure can certainly co-exist with substantive merit; they do not need to be at opposite ends of the spectrum. In fact, substantive merit serves to increase the artistic merit and aesthetic pleasure of the literature and the interpretation process.

Implicit in this discussion of the introduction is the philosophy that the performance of literature should reflect not only a literary experience, but a rhetorical experience as well. Richard Murphy characterizes the nature of a rhetorical experience when he suggests, "Any discourse, oral or written, which is directed toward getting a response from an audience on some view or action is rhetorical; he continues, "Whenever the author tries to influence

people, he is striving for a rhetorical effect."[14] Audience appeal and understanding, key elements of any rhetorical experience, are fundamental to the art of oral interpretation as well. Consequently, the interpreter as artist *and* communicator should seek to advance an "interpretive" claim upon which the performance will be based, and the judge/audience can be engaged in the rhetorical experience.[15] To that end, VerLinden explains, "The introduction creates the basis for the decision by both telling the judge what to listen for, and by establishing why the literature was used."[16]

Essentially, what is being argued in this paper is that the oral interpretation of literature is, and should be, far more than a performance; thus, the introduction to the literature should likewise be more than a performance. During the introduction, the interpreter has an invaluable opportunity not only to establish vital descriptive data, but also to engage the audience in an active, dynamic thought encounter with the literature and the claims being advanced. If this philosophy were consistently exercised in competitive interpretation events, then each interpreter and audience member would be afforded the opportunity of greater enrichment, understanding, and appreciation of literature through performance.

Three suggestions about the development of an introduction stem from this perspective of the oral interpretation of literature: First, the interpreter must provide an explanation of any information essential to the effective presentation of the literature, and to audience comprehension of that literature.

Second, a claim must be established that delineates the focus of the interpreter's analysis of the literature and justifies the literature to be presented. Third, the interpreter should approach the development of these elements creatively and thoughtfully. Appeals to our curiosity and imagination, rhetorical questions, hypothetical illustrations, literal examples, humor, etc., may function to develop the rhetorical impact and direction of the message embedded in the literature, as well as create a specific mood.

One example of an introduction utilizing these suggestions that could be used in prose interpretation is the following:

> When confronted with a threat to physical harm, we generally respond quickly and directly. But what about the unseen threat—one that seeks to control the mind and the heart?

> In order for a short-story author to convey this vulnerability effectively, he or she must create a situation and characters that are characterized by strong subtlety and innuendo, yet cast sufficient doubt and suspicion to alert the reader or lis-

tener to important clues that will eventually lead to a clear understanding of the events and characters involved.

Author James Clavell achieves these goals in his "chilling" tale, *The Children's Story.*

This introduction provides an attention-getter in the form of a rhetorical question, and establishes a claim that provides a directional focus for the interpretation of the literature. No particular background information is necessary, since that information will be part of the material being presented.

The following is an example of an introduction incorporating the suggestions offered herein that could be used in poetry interpretation:

What happens to a man when he discovers that all he thought he was, and had hoped to be, is nothing more than a tainted illusion conjured up in his own mind that is fogging his vision? When that fog finally lifts, is that man left with any conception of who he really is?

T.S. Eliot offers us his answer to these questions in, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock."

This introduction establishes an attention-getter by arousing audience curiosity and referring to emotions and experiences that are universal. The claim, although overtly established, is also handled in a subtler fashion by implying that the audience will "see" exactly what happens to a man who experiences the situations referred to in the introduction. Again, all pertinent background details will be provided within the literature.

Finally, the following example is an introduction using the suggestions that have been established which could be used in duo interpretation:

Deviant sexual behavior is not easily understood by the majority of us, yet we certainly recognize its existence. In the case of Lawrence and Joanna, we witness how their incestuous relationship has shrouded them from the outside world and precipitated the creation of illusions, particularly their imaginary children, Edna and Claypone—who insulate them against the fragile nature of their lives.

Imprisoned in a world of self-deceit, extreme vulnerability, and the confines of their apartment, Lawrence and Joanna confront the painful consequences of their existence in *Home Free* by Lanford Wilson.

This introduction immediately provides a startling attention-getter, offers important details that must be included to provide an under-

standing of the scene within the literature, and sets forth a clear claim.

Concluding Remarks

This article has argued for a renewed emphasis of the principles upon which the oral interpretation of literature is predicated. It seems crucial that each of us recognize interpretation as a communicative art that offers both literary and rhetorical influence. Based on this assumption, the interpretation of literature in performance should reflect a primary emphasis upon the meaning and value of the literature, while the performance should serve to enliven that meaning.

The introduction should establish this argumentative perspective clearly in the minds of audience members by serving informational, rhetorical, and aesthetic functions. There is much to be gained from the oral interpretation experience when the goals are substantively oriented, and the components of the performance reflect that substantive orientation. When a total communication experience is the goal of interpretation, then such concerns as why *this* literature has been chosen, why it is worth sharing, and what the interpreter hopes to accomplish by the presentation of the literature, can be established in the minds of the audience.

Endnotes

[1]Judy E. Yordon, *Roles in Interpretation* (Dubuque, Iowa: W. C. Brown Company Publishers, 1982), 12.

[2]Yordon, 83.

[3]Otis J. Aggertt and Elbert R. Bowen, *Communicative Reading,* 2nd ed. (Toronto, Ontario, Canada: The Macmillan Company, 1963), 42-43.

[4]Aggertt and Bowen, 43.

[5]Wallace A. Bacon, *The Art of Interpretation,* 3rd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979), 183.

[6]Charlotte Lee, *Speaking of. . . Interpretation* (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman & Company, 1975), 19.

[7]Beverly Whitaker Long and Mary Frances Hopkins, *Performing Literature: An Introduction to Oral Interpretation* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1982), 131.

[8]Aggertt and Bowen, 41.

[9]Yordon, 83.

[10]Long and Hopkins, 131.

[11]Jay G. VerLinden, The Judge as Metacritic: A Model for Judging Interpretation Events, Unpublished paper presented at the Speech Communication Association Convention, November 12, 1983, 5.

[12]Lewis Hershey, "Arguing Literature: Some Suggestions for the Coaching and Judging of the Performance of Literature in Individual Events Competition," *The Forensic,* No. 1 (Oct. 1987), 15. Hershey, p. 14, further argues: "For coaches, the concept of arguing literature provides a clear contextual framework for the competitive situation. Coaching becomes an increasingly strategic position of considering the internal consistency of performances as arguments for the interpretation of literature from a stated theoretical perspective. For judges, the competitive situation need not be an arena of affective evaluation. Rather, judges may reflect as to whether a particular affective response is accounted for by the competitors stated application of a chosen literary theory as it explicates a given literary text. Competitors benefit by an opportunity for increased rigor in the performance process. Specifically, performance preparation for arguing literature requires careful, in-depth analysis of the literature performed, intensive understanding of at least one school of literary criticism, and the synthesis of feeling and thought into performances that reveal human growth, not simply competitive desire."

[13]VerLinden, 7.

[14]Richard Murphy, "On Teaching Rhetorical Appreciation," in *Essays on Teaching Speech in the High Schook,* ed. J. Jeffrey Auer and Edward B. Jenkinson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971), 156. Also see Hellmut Geissner, "On Rhetoricity and Literarity," *Communication Education* 32 (July 1983), 275-284. Geissner's perspective establishes oral interpretation within the field of rhetoric.

[15]See VerLinden, 5. He argues, "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."

[16]VerLinden, 7-8.

INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

Improving the Educational Value of Extemporaneous Speaking: Refocusing the Question

Roger C. Aden and Jack Kay*

Extemporaneous speaking, according to one prominent National Forensic Association dignitary, is the event for "real men and women." Reflected in this statement is a widespread belief in the educational value of the extemporaneous speech contest. After all, success in this event requires contestants to understand complicated subjects of worldly importance, to analyze and synthesize, and to display their intellectual wares by powerfully and persuasively presenting their judgments to a myriad of critical listeners. Given the intellectual and persuasive prowess required of the extemporaneous speaker, it is little wonder that many regard extemporaneous speaking as perhaps the most valuable educational individual event.[1]

Despite the alleged value of extemporaneous speaking, the event is generally one of the least popular individual events.[2] Students often view the event with disdain, claiming that extemporaneous speaking consumes too much time and is difficult as well as boring. Alternately, coaches often express groans when forced to judge the event and dismay after the round at the inability of students to "answer the question."

Clearly, based upon contemporary practice, the value assigned to extemporaneous speaking by members of the forensics community is substantially lower than the theoretical value accorded the activity. The preceding statement is not meant to deride the intentions of coaches or competitors, or to suggest that forensics coaches merely offer lip-service to the event. Rather, the statement should be viewed as an illustration that somehow the true value of extemporaneous speaking, as practiced today, is not being fulfilled.

The forensics community has offered numerous suggestions for enhancing the extemporaneous speaking experience—suggestions ranging from revamping the format of contests to better coaching methods. John E. Crawford suggests a multifaceted solution, proposing standardization of topics and contests, requiring questions

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to feature a persuasive orientation, and encouraging contestants to adopt a uniform preparation model.[3] Although many of the proposed solutions have merit, we argue that the crux of the problem lies not with the competitors, organizational speech patterns, or coaching methods. Rather, improving extemporaneous speaking requires surgery on the heart of extemporaneous speaking—the extemporaneous question. As George W. Ziegelmueller and Charles A. Dause note in the argumentation context, "the prerequisite for adequate analysis of any question is the careful phrasing of a statement expressing the basis of the controversy."[4] Steps must be taken to upgrade the quality of extemporaneous questions, for a speech can be no better than the question it answers.

The problem with extemporaneous questions is that they are often not written from an argumentative perspective. Instead, the questions posed often dictate a descriptive rather than argumentative approach. Descriptive questions circumvent the true value of extemporaneous speaking in particular and forensics in general. As the first National Developmental Conference on Forensics concludes, **"Forensics is an educational activity primarily concerned with using an argumentative perspective in examining problems and communicating with people."[5]** In this essay we assume an argumentative perspective to mean the following: the student is forced by the working of the question to employ skills of analysis and synthesis. Furthermore, the question should be worded in a manner which requires the student to answer the question specifically (in other words, to make a claim) and to provide support or "good reasons" to convince others to accept the claim.

Refocusing extemporaneous questions toward an argumentative perspective requires two problem areas within the realm of question writing to be addressed. First, many questions are written too broadly to be sufficiently and thoroughly answered in a seven-minute speech. Second, and most important, the forensics community must orient itself toward writing only evaluative and closed-ended, predictive questions. Such questions are best for forcing students to adopt an argumentative perspective in their speech-making. Before focusing on the two problem areas, a brief discussion of the types of extemporaneous questions and the educational goals of the event and activity is necessary.

James A. Benson identifies two broad categories of extemporaneous questions: information and speculative. "Information topics ask *what* or *why.* . . . Speculative questions, on the other hand, ask the speaker to *predict* or to *evaluate* and to offer a basis for determining the reasonableness of the prediction or evaluation. . . ."[6] Benson's two categories are more appropriately divided

into three specific types of questions—information, prediction, and evaluation—for a speech asking for a prediction requires a much different approach than does a question demanding an evaluation.

Answering these types of questions, ideally, should teach students to think quickly and creatively about issues in current affairs, to organize the knowledge into a cogent presentation in just a short time, and to develop speaking skills that depend less on memorization and more on the speedy retrieval, arrangement, and analysis of information.[7]

Among the values ideally gained from extemporaneous speaking, then, are the abilities "to organize information and ideas logically" and "to analyze questions and topics" in a short period of time.[8]

If we are to approach extemporaneous speaking from an argumentative perspective, we also need to examine the goals of argumentation. As Ziegelmueller and Dause note:

> the study of argumentation is concerned both with inquiry and advocacy. As an investigative study, argumentation is concerned with discovering what is probably true in any controversy. In directing the student to such discovery, the inquiry phase of the study of argumentation includes consideration of research methods, the nature and evaluation of data, the nature and testing of argument, and the synthesis of ideas. As a study of advocacy, argumentation is concerned with the individual's ability to convince others of the validity of the conclusion which he has discovered.[9]

Thus, extemporaneous questions should be written so that they require analysis and synthesis, in addition to inquiry and advocacy. In short, a question should force a student to break down an issue, pull together the relevant information, and then advocate his or her answer as the best answer to the question.

Unfortunately, however, many extemporaneous questions suffer from phrasing that is too broad to allow thorough analysis, given the limits of preparation and speaking times. As Faules, Rieke, and Rhodes write, extemporaneous questions "should not be frivolous, outdated, vague, or unreasonably obscure."[10] Such questions detract from the educational value of the event by forcing a student to attempt to answer a question thoroughly that, for all purposes, is impossible to answer within the time constraints. The student, then, becomes frustrated with the event and, consequently, may find it less enjoyable or abandon it entirely.

Many of the problems of extemporaneous speaking can often be traced to broadly-written questions. Dunham, for example,

cautions coaches that "too often students are prone to present overly-simplified and shallow material."[11] Faules, Rieke, and Rhodes urge that a good extemporaneous speech "should answer the question as directly as possible."[12] Benson writes of the tendency to provide "information which is relevant to the topic area but not necessarily germane to the specific question asked."[13] And Buys notes as a common fault of extemporaneous speakers the failure "to speak on the *exact subject matter* stated or implied in the topic selected."[14]

When questions are broadly worded, it is impossible to fashion a speech which eliminates the criticisms raised by these commentators. Broad questions inherently raise in a judge's mind the issue of "why didn't you address this aspect of the question?" Consequently, the speaker is either downgraded for an incomplete speech or for choosing a poor question. The judge may counter that a speaker should have chosen a different question. Such a criticism, however, begs a larger issue: the tournament director should not have *any* poor questions from which to choose.

Identifying the reason behind broadly-written questions is a difficult task, but the fact remains that many questions which appear specific on the surface are actually quite broad. For examples of these types of questions, we turn to sample questions offered by Benson:

> What lies ahead for Anita Bryant and the "Save Our Children" Movement?
> What are the most pressing domestic problems facing President Carter?
> Can peace be achieved in the Middle East in the near future?[15]

While the preceding questions do indeed ask for specific information, they seek *too much* information. In the first question, "What lies ahead . . . " is specific, yet could encompass many different aspects of the movement. The student could treat as many aspects as possible, but still be considered shallow. Or, the student could isolate a few aspects of the issue and be accused of incomplete analysis. Attempting to isolate the most pressing domestic problems in the second question presents the same dilemma. The third question's concern with peace in the Middle East is also overly broad, since there is more than one conflict in that region.

These dilemmas for the student can be eliminated by more careful consideration during the writing of extemporaneous questions. The person writing the questions should, at the least, be deeply familiar with the event. When wording the questions, one should assume the role of the competitor. Question authors should

attempt to answer the question themselves before placing it in the tournament pool. Only when question authors take the time to compose clear, manageable questions can students enjoy the true educational value of extemporaneous speaking.

More vital for improving the educational value of extemporaneous speaking, however, is the need for the forensics community to offer only evaluative and closed-ended, predictive questions to extemporaneous speakers. Presently, tournaments usually offer a variety of question types—only a few of them ask for an evaluation or prediction with a closed-ended answer. Employing evaluative and closed-ended, predictive questions provides the student with several educational benefits not found in other types of questions. Closed-ended, predictive questions subsume the purpose of information questions, encourage and more strongly develop student critical thinking skills, and are fairer to all students competing in the event.

Extemporaneous questions asking for an evaluation or closed-ended prediction inherently incorporate the task of providing information because before an evaluation or prediction can be articulated, one must provide a basis for that answer—information about the situation. As Ziegelmueller and Dause aptly point out:

> Before you can begin to apply analytical formulas you must have an understanding of the context in which the controversy exists. A study of the background of the controversy can provide the definitional and historical perspectives which are the necessary starting points for the discovery of issues.[16]

Thus, students are faced with a suffer challenge—they are forced to provide both information *and* an evaluation or prediction.

A question phrased for information can usually be rephrased for evaluation. For example, the information question posed by Benson, "Why did President Carter oppose the B-l bomber?"[17] can be changed to "Was President Carter's decision to oppose the B-l bomber a wise choice?" and thereby challenge the student to answer the first question as a foundation for the evaluation demanded in the second question. The student cannot evaluate Carter's decision without first explaining why he made his decision. Similarly, the predictive question, "Will President Carter's decision to oppose the B-l bomber return to haunt him?" requires the student to first examine Carter's decision before offering a prediction.

Crucial to the phrasing of predictive questions is closed-ended wording. Closed-ended questions are more straightforward and provide the student with a focused area in which to compose a speech. For example, "Will the ERA be adopted?"[18] is preferable

to "What lies ahead for the ERA?" Both versions deal with the same topic area, but the former is more answerable and eliminates possible conflicting interpretations between student and judge. Question interpretation has no place in extemporaneous speaking; closed-ended, predictive questions prevent differing interpretations and preserve the educational value of the activity.

When writing extemporaneous questions, the following guidelines may be helpful. First, avoid questions that begin with present or past tense interrogatives such as "what" and "how." Such words are not amenable to questions which call for closed-ended prediction or evaluation. Instead, questions should begin with future tense interrogatives: "will" (prediction), "should" (evaluation), and/or "can" (either prediction or evaluation). Second, evaluative questions can also begin with past tense verbs such as "did" or "was" if the question writer includes a value-laden adjective that modifies the question's subject (e.g., "good," "bad," "wise," "responsible"). Examples of weak questions and their stronger revisions can be found in Table 1.

TABLE 1
Sample Extemporaneous Speaking Questions

Weak Wording	*Better Wording*
How will the cutoff of military aid affect the Contras?	*Will* the cutoff of military aid result in the end of Contra resistance?
What should the United States do about Israeli action on the West Bank?	*Should* the United States pressure Israel to ease up on the West Bank protesters?
What did the United States gain from the INF treaty?	*Was* the INF treaty *good* for the United States' defense posture?

Phrasing questions according to these guidelines produces several advantages. First, when students answer evaluative or closed-ended, predictive questions, their critical thinking skills are developed more than they would be with other types of questions. Evaluative and closed-ended, predictive questions are more chal-

lenging because they require students to do more than simply re-gurgitate information. When faced with these types of questions, students are forced to analyze the information as background for a judgment of their own. Students must examine all the existing per-spectives, weigh each carefully, and then make a judgment about the situation.

In addition to analysis and judgment, synthesis and argumenta-tion skills are developed through the answering of closed-ended, predictive questions and evaluative questions. Making a judgment requires the student to synthesize the information available in or-der to determine the best answer. Structuring that information into a clear position statement on the situation in the question demands argumentative skills. The student, in essence, prepares a persua-sive speech supporting his or her answer to the question. Questions which do not force the student to analyze, synthesize, and argue are clearly not as educationally beneficial as those which do force such critical thinking.

A final advantage of evaluative and closed-ended, predictive questions is more pragmatic—such questions make extemporane-ous speaking more enjoyable for both students and judges. Extem-poraneous speaking devoid of broad, unanswerable questions and rich with challenging, focused questions allows students to prepare speeches which do indeed answer the question. Extemporaneous speaking thus can become more intellectually stimulating for both the students who prepare the speeches and the judges who listen to the speeches. The event can then become less of a contest of who came closest to answering the question, but one where decisions are rendered on the basis of who answered the question *best*.

At this point two cautions are in order. First, evaluative and closed-ended, predictive questions must be phrased carefully in order to ensure a tight focus on the question. Second, the ques-tions must be fair in both topic area and distribution of difficulty within the round. And, repeating a previous suggestion, the author of the extemporaneous questions should place himself or herself in the place of the speaker when deciding upon the topic area or wording of the question.

Faules, Rieke, and Rhodes may well be correct when they claim that "Extemporaneous speaking may well be the most valu-able educational event offered in forensics."[19] But members of the forensics community must remember that the foundation of the event is the question. Writing the extemporaneous question in ar-gumentative form will not only make the event more educational for students, it will also make the event more enjoyable for both competitors and judges. By following the suggestions for extempo-

raneous speaking outlined in this essay, judges can produce an event as realistically valuable as it is theoretically valuable.

Endnotes

[1]Don F. Faules, Richard D. Rieke, and Jack Rhodes, *Directing Forensics: Debate and Contest Speaking,* 2nd ed. (Denver CO: Morton Publishing Co., 1976), 209.

[2]Extemporaneous speaking, along with rhetorical criticism and after-dinner speaking, are consistently the smallest events at the NFA National Individual Events Tournament, according to the tournament booklets.

[3]John E. Crawford, "Toward Standardized Extemporaneous Speech Competition: Tournament Design," *National Forensic Journal,* 2 (1984), 41-55.

[4]George W. Ziegelmueller and Charles A. Dause, *Argumentation: Inquiry and Advocacy* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1975), 13.

[5]National Developmental Conference on Forensics, *Forensics as Communication: The Argumentative Perspective,* ed. James H. McBath (Skokie: National Textbook, 1975), 163.

[6]James A. Benson, "Extemporaneous Speaking: Organization Which Inheres," *Journal of the American Forensic Association,* 14 (1978), 150. Italics are Benson's.

[7]Faules, Rieke, and Rhodes, 209.

[8]William E. Buys, "Extemporaneous Speaking in Interscholastic Contests," in *Contest Speaking Manual,* eds. William E. Buys, Martin Cobin, Paul Hunsinger, Melvin Miller, and Robert Scott (Lincolnwood IL: National Textbook Corporation, 1964), 67.

[9]Ziegelmueller and Dause, 4.

[10]Faules, Rieke, and Rhodes, 210.

[11]Robert E. Dunham, "Coaching Individual Events," in *Directing Forensics: Debate and Contest Speaking,* eds. Don F. Faules and Richard D. Rieke, 1st Ed. (Scranton PA: International Textbook Co., 1968), 245.

[12]Faules, Rieke, and Rhodes, 212.

[13]Benson, 155.

[14]Buys, 72. Italics in original.

[15]Benson, 150, 151, 154.

[16]Ziegelmueller and Dause, 30.

[17]Benson, 150.

[18]Benson, 150.

[19]Don F. Faules, Richard D. Rieke, and Jack Rhodes, *Directing Forensics: Debate and Contest Speaking,* 2nd Ed. (Denver CO: Morton Publishing Co., 1976), 209.

The Role of the Artistic Proof in
Contemporary Debate

David L. Worthington*

Concern over the direction and practice of CEDA debate has been a consistent topic in recent years of both journal articles and convention papers. The yearly CEDA publication typically focuses on the continuing debate over the introduction of NDT practices into CEDA rounds,[1] various judging paradigms,[2] and strategies for debating specific forms of affirmative or negative positions.[3] However, rarely do the authors of articles, convention papers, or books devote attention to the construction of argument. This paper focuses on the notion that affirmative case construction suffers from a lack of explicit analysis, that which is presented in the debate round.

This essay will discuss: 1) an examination of Aristotle's notion of artistic and inartistic proofs, 2) an analysis of first affirmative constructive speeches, and 3) a discussion of how the artistic proof can be introduced into affirmative case building.

The Artistic Proof

Forbes Hill interpreted Aristotle's division between artistic and inartistic proof thus:

> Since Aristotle considers rhetoric to be an art, he clearly delineates what lies within the scope of the art and what lies outside of it. Proofs lying within the art are "artistic," those outside are "inartistic." This distinction constitutes the first attempt to separate argument from evidence. The latter term refers to the facts that the speaker must find, the former to the interpretations he [she] must create by reasoning from the facts. Aristotle lists five inartistic proofs: laws, contracts, witnesses, tortures, and oaths. Had he made this distinction today, he would have eliminated tortures and included photographs, statistical surveys, experiments and various kinds of government documents.[4]

An analogy may be drawn to the painter who has a pallet of paints. The potential for art exists; an artistic product may be produced, such as a seascape or a portrait. But until the colors are combined and a picture is produced, they remain inartistic. Similarly, after a debater culls the library for the best evidence avail-

able on a debate topic, he or she is left with a pile of quotations that have been *decontextualized,* removed from their artistic setting (that of the original author), and need to be reconstructed in a different context. This process calls for the debater to use the quotations as his or her pallet of paint, to create with, not to use as artistic creations in and of themselves. More specific to debate rounds, as Billy Hill notes:

> Many CEDA debaters seem unable to use productively the evidence they introduce. Many CEDA debaters seem to assume that the knowledge and information contained in their index cards or briefs is somehow magically beamed to the judge who is both an expert on the topic area and a humanoid computer capable of processing, applying and evaluating their evidence for them.[5]

In other words, the debater has failed to explain the new context within which the quotation is being used. Rather, it is expected that the critic will be able to divine the debater's intention from the evidence without an artistic evaluation (analysis) of that evidence.

Forbes Hill expands on this limitation of inartistic proofs:

> None of these kinds of documentation speak for themselves. They all require interpretation before they can be applied to the particular case in hand. The arguments that interpret the facts are the substance of rhetoric: they alone belong to the art.[6]

Arguments are thus developed initially through the dialectical process of discovering information, considering refutation, and understanding the issues involved in a proposition. The rhetorical aspect of debate is advocating those positions which a team finds most plausible and coherent. Evidence is the backing of credible experts to support those positions developed during the analysis of the topic.

Within this artistic and inartistic framework we can assess the format of affirmative case structure commonly found in debate rounds and suggest methods for affirmative teams to avoid building cases based primarily on the inartistic mode of proof.

The first inference one might form is that debate rounds might be dominated by inartistic affirmative case construction. If this were the case, coaches and critics would be limiting students to the technical function of researching evidence and merely arranging it in a coherent manner. However, debate should be a form of rhetorical practice for students which prepares them for real-world situations in their careers, social activities, and political lives. As Wilbur Samuel Howell notes:

> Rhetorical education has always rested upon the assumption
> that practice in communication is necessary for the develop-
> ment of proficiency, and that practice must involve experience
> with the typical patterns of communication in civilized life.[7]

One way that we can contribute to this education is to insist that
both those teams which we coach and those which we judge are
developing their analytical skills.

Before going further, it should be noted that I do not advocate
nor sanction debate cases constructed solely out of analysis. The
use of evidence is crucial backing for any argument. Indeed,
"CEDA recognizes that careful, systematic analysis and reasoning
blend with evidence to form the persuasive weapons of the
debater's arsenal."[8] However, "deficiencies in analysis and reason-
ing decrease the quality of debate and represent a disregard for
responsible advocacy."[9]
The major criticism of many affirmative teams is the use of
evidence to represent arguments, as opposed to constituting the
backing. David Thomas defines argument in *Advanced Debate:*

> There are two senses of this term important to debaters. In the
> first sense, an argument is a message consisting of a conclusion
> supported by a reason documented by evidence. The emphasis
> is on credible proof and logical structure. In the second sense,
> an argument is a confrontation between two parties in dis-
> agreement over a claim.[10]

This definition of argument varies little from Aristotle's description
of the artistic proof. However, debaters seem to believe that
arguments are inherent in quotations. Again, turning to Billy Hill:

> Perhaps the biggest culprit is the debater who is misguided by
> the assumption that reading a 4 x 6 card and making an argu-
> ment are synonymous. "Why explain the card?" this debater
> asks. "If I do that, I only waste time, and the judge knows
> what it means anyway." Cross-examination frequently makes
> this problem painfully obvious when our debaters are asked to
> explain what a piece of evidence says and can merely respond
> by re-reading the card.[11]

Now, let us turn to a more detailed examination of the inartis-
tic affirmative as it tends to appear in debate rounds.

The Inartistic Affirmative

What follows is an outline and explanation of the inartistic na-
ture of most debate cases. Most affirmative teams breeze through
definitions, criteria, and "observations" to get to the substance of
their case, the affirmative contention(s). Typically, a contention

heading is read, followed by a series of "tag lines" meant to support the contention; each of these "tag lines is followed by two and sometimes three quotations. Outlined, it appears as follows:

I.   Contention Name (The United States currently has the capability to deter a Soviet first strike.)

    A.   Tag Line (The United States has enough nuclear weapons to deter the Soviets.)

        1.   Evidence

        2.   Evidence

    B.   Tag Line (The United States can deter a conventional at tack.)

        1.   Evidence

        2.   Evidence

This process is then repeated for all succeeding sub-points and contentions. Analysis of the contention name (what the affirmative is claiming it will prove) is not simply lacking, but is often nonexistent. Without this analysis it is extremely difficult to know what the affirmative team intends the contention to mean. (A counter-force or a counter-value strike? Under what circumstances? Is it the quantity or the quality of the weapons? Does capability mean that the Soviets *will* be deterred, or that it is *possible* that they will be deterred?) By failing to explain clearly their contention, the affirmative team has sown the seeds of confusion which inevitably take root at the evidentiary and "tag-line" levels.

Inartistic case construction also falters at the level of causal analysis, the "links" for which debaters so often cry out.[12] This is further complicated when the affirmative team, either because they do not know how or are not willing to take the time to analyze clearly their evidence, take a key phrase from their evidence to serve as a tag line. When that phrase it put into the affirmative case, it simply serves as a preview of what the evidence already (presumably) says. The danger is that, since the evidence is not interpreted, the argument is lost. What effectively happens is that the affirmative team is doing little more than the much-criticized negative "spread." An assertion is made, evidence is read, and the rationale of the argument is not developed.

This type of case obscures the debate from the outset, since few warrants are then offered for adoption of the resolution. The critic is then faced with the unenviable task of sorting out evidence and trying to create a coherent argument out of it simply so a ballot can be awarded.[13]

The Artistic Affirmative

The artistic affirmative differs from the inartistic affirmative in one specific way: the artistic affirmative places an emphasis on the element of **explanation**[14] which, as I pointed out earlier, is absent from the inartistic components. The explanation step allows for development of causal links (when possible) and also clarifies the entire argument in a single, clear paragraph.

An example of the artistic affirmative follows:

I.   Media coverage of terrorist activities perpetuates terrorist action

Terrorist action is undertaken by individuals with specific political objectives. One of these objectives is publicizing their cause. By allowing media coverage of terrorist activities, we are allowing terrorists to propagate their ideas. Inversely, if the media did not have access to terrorist activities, the very acts themselves would lose much of their impact.

  A. Terrorists want media coverage
      1. (evidence)
      2. (evidence)
  B. Media coverage exacerbates the problem of terrorism.
      1. (evidence)
      2. (evidence)
  C. Limiting media coverage would reduce the likelihood of terrorists taking hostages to propagate their beliefs.
      1. (evidence)
  D. Due to the necessity of media coverage to the objectives of terrorists, limitations on media coverage would reduce the likelihood of terrorist activities taking place.

This structure has several advantages. First and most obvious is the inclusion of the "explanation" step. The explanation allows the affirmative team to link an argument together without backing up each statement as it is presented. For the critic, this approach allows an assessment of the validity and reasoning of the affirmative position without having to string together a series of unlinked statements. Second, the affirmative team should, when possible, include causal statements, such as "because" and "therefore" in the affirmative case; this should require the negative team to refrain from attacking the affirmative merely on the evidentiary level. Third, the affirmative team can limit its evidence to those statements in the explanation which clearly need to be supported. Some statements will be made which will be accepted by both the negative team and the critic without further support. However, for those statements which will clearly need support, the "tag line"

may be drawn directly from the explanation, therefore supporting the entire affirmative contention. Fourth, the extension of the affirmative case, both in second affirmative constructive and in rebuttals, should become simplified, since affirmative speakers can encompass the substance of the contention and remind the critic of the holistic nature of the contention. A single negative position on one subpoint of the contention would probably not constitute a voting issue for the negative team without encouraging an explanation of the impact of that argument in terms of the entire contention.

Conclusion

This essay has attempted to introduce the Aristotelian notion of the artistic proof into affirmative case construction. It should not, however, be limited to the affirmative case. This same analysis can go into the preparation of all affirmative and negative briefs, including value objections.

The central philosophy of this essay has been one of communicative clarity. Debaters should be able to articulate their position beyond what their evidence says. The artistic affirmative offers a model of case construction that exploits their knowledge and understanding of the topic and provides them with a means to articulate that analysis.

Aristotle described the division between artistic and inartistic proofs 2300 years ago. This division remains a fundamental form of argument whether the argument is in the form of a term paper, editorial, thesis or dissertation. Within intercollegiate debate (which many view as a rhetorical activity), there are good reasons to maintain and adapt the artistic proof as a primary mode of argument.

Notes

[1]For example, see Jack Howe, "CEDA's Objectives: Lest We Forget," *Contributions on the Philosophy & Practice of CEDA,* ed. Don Brownlee (Cross Examination Debate Association, 1981), 1-3; Jack Howe, "It's Time For Open Season on Squirrels!" *CEDA Yearbook,* ed. Don Brownlee (Cross Examination Debate Association, 1985), 14-20; Bertram Gross, "A Case for Debating Propositions of Policy," *CEDA Yearbook,* ed. Don Brownlee (Cross Examination Debate Association, 1984), 7-10; M. Anway Jones and Stephen Crawford, "Justification of Values in Terms of Action: Rationale for a Modified Policy-Making Paradigm in Value Debate," *CEDA Yearbook,* ed. Don Brownlee (Cross Examination Debate Association, 1984), 11-15.

[2]For example, see David Zarefsky, "Criteria for Evaluating Non-Policy Argument," *Perspectives on Non-Policy Argument,* ed. Don Brownlee (Cross Examination Debate Association, 1980), 9-16; Michael Gotcher and Thompson Biggers, "An Alternative Approach to Negative Speaker Duties in CEDA Debate," *CEDA Yearbook,* ed. Don Brownlee (Cross Examination Debate Association, 1984), 40-47; James R. Hallmark, "Towards a Paradigm for CEDA," *CEDA Yearbook,* ed. Don Brownlee (Cross Examination Debate Association, 1984), 89-92; Walter Ulrich, "Eliminating the Abuses of CEDA Debate: The Debate Judge as a Referee," *CEDA Yearbook,* ed., Don Brownlee (Cross Examination Debate Association, 1985), 39-42.

[3]For example, see Don Brownlee, "In Search of Topicality: Definitions and Contexts," *CEDA Yearbook,* ed. Don Brownlee (Cross Examination Debate Association, 1981), 32-34; David Berube, "Debating Hasty Generalization," *CEDA Yearbook,* ed. Don Brownlee (Cross Examination Debate Association, 1984), 54-59; Thompson Biggers, "A Single Swallow and Other Leaps of Faith," *CEDA Yearbook* ed. Don Brownlee (Cross Examination Debate Association, 1985), 32-38.

[4]Forbes I. Hill, "The Rhetoric of Aristotle," in *A Synoptic History of Classical Rhetoric,* ed. James J. Murphy (Davis: Hermagoras Press, 1983), 26.

[5]Billy J. Hill, Jr., "Improving the Quality of CEDA Debate," *National Forensic Journal,* Fall 1986, 107.

[6]Forbes Hill, 26.

[7]Wilbur Samuel Howell, "English Backgrounds of Rhetoric," in the *History of Speech Education in America,* ed. Darl R. Wallace (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1954), 23.

[8]Billy Hill, 111.

[9]Billy Hill, 111.

[10]David A. Thomas, "Glossary of DebateTerms, in *Advanced Debate,* 3rd Ed., ed. David A. Thomas and Jack Hart (Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Co., 1987), 547.

[11]Billy Hill, 107.

[12]It is recognized that not all arguments are causal arguments. My position here is that most debaters argue that harms have occurred in the status quo. These harms generally imply causal relationships. The inartistic affirmative does not provide a clear picture of those relationships.

[13]This is not suggesting that critics should have to piece together evidence, rather, that all too often our notes contain little else.

[14]The reader may note that the terms "name," "explanation," "evidence," and "analysis" are similar to Toulmin's use of "claim," "warrant," and "data." The reader may, if he or she chooses to, use these terms synonymously. I have chosen the language which I believe is most descriptive of the concepts being discussed.

Instructional Videos for Forensics: The National Federation Speech Series

Jane Zimmerman Nott*

In this era of the instructional video, it is not surprising that entries to that market are increasing in the area of forensics. Today a number of videotapes related to forensics are available, ranging from model speeches taped during the final rounds of the National Forensic Association I.E. Nationals and the National Forensic League Tournament to complete instructional videotape packages developed by leading publishing houses.

This review examines a series of instructional videotape packages produced by the National Federation of State High School Associations. These tapes offer quality material which can be useful to students and coaches of contest individual events. The tapes are 30 minutes in length and are suitable for classroom, small group, as well as individual instruction. Although geared to the high school audience, the tapes have been used successfully by both high school and college instructors. The instructional packages reviewed in this article include serious prose interpretation, dramatic interpretation, extemporaneous speaking, and oratory. In addition, the National Federation of State High School Associations produces videotape instructional packages for Lincoln-Douglas and policy debate.

Serious Prose Interpretation

This instructional videotape package concentrates on the analytical and presentational skills involved in oral interpretation of narrative prose. Dr. Marion Kleinau of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale is the commentator on the videotape. Taking the position that narration as opposed to dialogue is frequently considered the "dead spot" of a prose selection, Kleinau explains how the interpreter can successfully give characterization to the narrator and improve the interpretation of the selection. Both first and third person narrators are considered. Two students each read a selection as examples, and Kleinau critiques each and instructs from the demonstrations.

The videotape does not provide basic instruction for the beginning interpreter. Such topics as use of voice and gesture, accepted oral interpretation technique, and style are not covered. The tape offers insightful advice to the student beyond the basic "how to." Students ready for more advanced analysis of the prose selection would benefit from this instruction. The performances by the students on the tape serve as models of both "do" and "don't" for the event of serious prose. Coaches may also benefit from the style and substance of Kleinau's critique.

Dramatic Interpretation

This instructional videotape package features Dr. Frank Tourangeau of the College of DuPage as commentator. The focus of the videotape is the literary genre of drama and its interpretation. Tourangeau instructs the beginning interpretation student in the basics of the event. He moves the student through steps of preparation to performance: choice of material, analysis of material, and actual interpretation performance techniques. Two sample performances by college students (one dramatic, one humorous) serve as examples of performance technique.

Tourangeau's comments are concise and instructive. He allows for variations in accepted performance styles, but he does not make the distinction between acting and interpretation. Beginning students would find this tape very helpful as would the coach new to the event.

Extemporaneous Speaking

This tape features an introduction to the contest event of extemporaneous speaking. Matthew Sobnosky of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln directs his comments primarily to the beginning student. The information and instruction is basic and useful. The overview of the event includes a description of the event and its rules. Also included is practical instruction of how a student prepares for competition in the event. Included is advice on such topics as what to read, how to file, tournament procedures for topic choice, preparation, speech structure, and composition. A sample speech is presented by a college student. In the dialogue-critique following the sample speech, Sobnosky reviews his instruction by questioning the student about her preparation for and composition of the speech.

The tape is a valuable instructional tool for students starting out in extemporaneous speaking. Advice is practical and clearly presented.

Oratory

The commentator on this instructional videotape package is Roger Aden of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Aden defines the event as "persuasive speaking." He develops three topic areas. Under the heading of types of persuasive speeches, Aden submits two: praise or blame and problem-solution. Claiming that most orations are the latter, he gives a brief overview of the development of such a speech and then submits Monroe's Motivated Sequence as an appropriate organizational pattern. Each step of the sequence is described and explained. Aden lists ways for a persuasive speaker to be more credible: showing concern, providing support in the form of evidence, and appearing confident. Aden suggests the student avoid "value oriented" topics like abortion and look for "up-to-date" topics which will deliver new information to the audience.

A sample oration is presented followed by a dialogue-critique with the student. The student is questioned about speech preparation and composition.

The tape offers a good overview of one type and style of persuasive speech. The approach is traditional and reflects the problem-solution approach to the event. Coaches in agreement with that particular style of oratory will find the tape useful. The videotape serves as a good introduction and guide for beginning orators.

The videotapes reviewed in this article are available for purchase from the National Federation of State High School Associations, P.O. Box 20626, Kansas City, Missouri 64195.

Editor's Forum: The Use of Original Materials in Interpretive Forensics Events—Point/Counterpoint

The Performance of Literature at Forensics Tournaments: A Case for the Use of Original Material**

Todd V. Lewis

The primary commitment of forensics educators who coach the performance of literature should always be to the analysis of literary intent and the integrity of a text. Proponents and opponents of the use of original material in interpretive events find they are in agreement on that issue. I believe coaches and participants should first seek to perform works of literary merit, designated as "meritorious" by virtue of critical acclaim, legacy of greatness, publication, or broadcast. But I also believe that "original literary material" should not be excluded from competition merely because it is original or unpublished.

To present a position which endorses the allowance of original literary materials in competition, I would like to counter-argue many of the charges leveled at original literature performance and subsequently offer supportive consideration for the use of original oral interpretation material at forensic tournaments.

Many opponents argue that the *analysis* of literature which is an essential preparatory factor in the performance of a literary text suffers or is excluded when the literature presented is original. Endres contends that a simultaneous creative and analytical process "shortcut(s) the pedagogical experience."[1] There is, however, no real evidence to suggest that original material cannot also be analyzed in the same systematic manner as published literature. The "twenty questions" of literary analysis espoused by professors K. B. and D. E. Valentine are equally applicable to all literature.[2] These questions generate the basis for virtually all critical commentary expressed by forensics judges on ballots and would not change much (if at all) with published or unpublished material. Neither the Valentines nor Lee and Gura,[3] Skinner,[4] Yordon[5] categorically state that original interpretive material is outside the purview of

**Webmaster's note: This version of the article incorporates the correction noted in the Fall 1998 edition (adding the second author to endnote #11).

performance or literary analysis. To argue that original literature cannot undergo the same rigorous literary analysis is, at best, an argument from silence.

Mary Frances HopKins, noted performance of literature author and professor, has indicated that the use of original material can be an integral part of the study of literary performance as long as the text itself is made available to the critic.[6] In the Spring Semester of 1988, Louisiana State University offered a guest lecture series on the use of original material in the performance of literature, taught by Dr. James VanOosting of Southern Illinois University. Many performance of literature specialists find fault with the forensic tournament format for the presentation of literature, but the primary criticisms rest with the unavailability of texts for critics, not the issue of original or published material.

Opponents of the use of original material in oral interpretive events have also argued that critics seem hampered in making commentary about the author of a text. This argument becomes moot if critics will take heed to the principles of hermeneutics and oral interpretation as discussed by Deborah M. Geisler.[7] Geisler mentions her own experience with the presentation of original poetry at a tournament and builds a case for applying an understanding of hermeneutic text to forensic critics' evaluations. She suggests that "what a given author/speaker intended is not as important as what the text itself says."[8] I would echo Geisler's premise and amplify it. Questions of author's intent should be more appropriately focused on the presented text. Critics need to generate commentary by asking the question, "What does the literary selection say, and what can it mean?"[9]

A related issue concerns the use of pseudonyms or "pen names" for an author. Endres argues that the use of pseudonyms by student competitors is unethical.[10] I choose to differ with that opinion. I do not think that competition with original material, introduced with a pen name, is an issue of integrity at all. No code of ethics specifically prohibits the presentation of material by a concealed author. How could it? Oral interpreters have for years presented the works of Mark Twain, Richard Bachman, John LeCarre, George Sand, and others who have chosen to compose literary pieces under these pseudonyms. Since critics may ignore the hermeneutic challenge to focus on the text, a performer should feel no remorse or guilt over using a pseudonym to provide an opportunity for an unbiased critical evaluation of the text and the performance. No one criticizes the integrity of Stephen King for occasionally writing as Richard Bachman. The minimum expectation in forensic competition for a performer of literature is to state

a title and author. Claims that an interpreter lacks integrity or is deceptive because he/she does not provide the identical amount of source citation as a debater or persuader seem unreasonable. Forensic literary performers do not have to state qualifications of an author, the date of publication, and the page numbers, because literature is not being *argued,* but rather is being *performed.*

The argument that original material is more successful in interpretive competition assumes that a student or coach knows how to write so as to win trophies, and that all regions of the country vote for only one kind of literary performance. Forensics is such a subjective activity that no student or coach could write the one piece of literature guaranteed to win every round of every tournament. No evidence or research suggests that original material fares better in competition. Green's survey of forensic coach perceptions leans toward the opinion that coaches disagree that a student using original material has a competitive advantage.[11] At best, Green's survey shows coaches average a "no opinion" response on the matter.

One final argument offered is that if original material is to find a place in interpretive events, it should be in a separate category labeled as "original." I find this suggestion appealing, if you grant the same criticism of literary analysis, author commentary, pseudonyms, "writing for trophies," and competitive advantage, a separate event would not solve the alleged infractions; it seems an inconsistent substitute. Also, how would a tournament host police interpretive events to prevent the use of original material? I am not sure how a tournament director would go about proving that a particular piece was original and unpublished during the course of a tournament.

I believe the national forensic organizations such as NFA and AFA have appropriately addressed the issue of original oral interpretive material; they neither endorse nor decry its use. National organizations do not question the integrity or ethics of a competitor who chooses to present original material in the performance of literature.

I also believe oral interpretation events utilize audience adaptation in performance at every tournament. It is not a violation of the principles of audience adaptation to avoid hand gestures and body movement for a conservative critic. It is not a violation of audience adaptation to "cut" or edit scenes after a critic's commentary. (Wholesale rewrites of a published author's text would certainly be an unethical "adaptative" measure, however.) Writing for an audience or critic happens in the prepared events; I see no

inconsistency in allowing original literature to undergo the same adaptability if the original author chooses to do re-writes.

Writing original literary material for performance can enhance the education and insights of our students. Pedagogically, the criticism and commentary from judges will benefit our students on two levels: writing and performing. I still believe that critics should decide placings with a sensitivity to "depth and quality of literature." Noteworthy writers such as Robert Frost, John Steinbeck, Emily Dickinson, and Arthur Miller have demonstrated stronger literary skills than the average college sophomore. If the "successful" material at tournaments periodically tends to be salacious, pulpish, or juvenile, the judge/critic may need further training to gain deeper analytical skills. I argue that as coaches and critics we need to be fostering opportunities to transform our gifted performer/writers into the next generation of literary giants.

I have established a working relationship with a company that has published several of my own original dramatic pieces. These "pieces" were first "tested" in competition by my students. But were they any less "meritorious" in their pre-publication state? They are in print form in precisely the same format they appeared at forensic competitions. Were the students "unethical" because they introduced the piece by my pen name? No, they were not. As I have done, I believe all students should have the opportunity to "test" their own works of literature, modifying them with useful critical commentary and experience.

Should "original material" be composed *first* to the exclusion of researching and performing acclaimed literature? No. But neither should such creativity be discouraged. The performance of literature is broad enough to encompass published as well as original material. A Mark Twain, J. R. R. Tolkien, or Sam Shepherd reading his own "original" work is just as much a *performer* of literature as he is an *author* of literature. I believe we need to let our students know that integrity is not exclusively assigned to those who read published works. There can be an uplifting and valuable feeling of pride in the performance of one's own literary work as well.

Endnotes

[1]Thomas G. Endres, "Maintaining Integrity in Forensics Interpretation: Arguments Against Original Literature." Unpublished paper given at the Speech Communication Association, November 8, 1987: 3.

[2]K. B. Valentine and D. E. Valentine, *Interlocking Pieces: Twenty Questions for Understanding Literature.* 2nd Ed. (Dubuque, IA: Kendell-Hunt Publishing Company, 1980).

[3]Charlotte I. Lee and Timothy Gura, *Oral Interpretation.* 7th Ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1987).

[4]John F. Skinner, "Performing and Judging Contest Oral Interpretation Events: Freedoms and Constraints," *National Forensic Journal* 4 (1986): 54-60.

[5]Judy E. Yordon, *Roles In Interpretation.* (Dubuque, IA: William C. Brown Publishers, 1982).

[6]Interview with Mary Frances Hopkins, Louisiana State University, February 25, 1988.

[7]Deborah M. Geisler, "Modem Interpretation Theory and Competitive Forensics: Underestanding Hermeneutic Text," *National Forensic Journal* 3 (1985): 71-79.

[8]Geisler 73.

[9]Geisler 76.

[10]Endres 9.

[11]Keith D. Green and S.D. Ford, "Perceived Attitudes Toward the Use of Original Material In Forensics Oral Interpretation: A Survey." Unpublished paper presented at the Speech Communication Association Convention, November 8, 1987.

Original Material in Forensics Oral Interpretation: A Violation of Integrity

Keith D. Green*

A recurring question in intercollegiate forensics is the use of original material in interpretation events. In April, 1984, the American Forensic Association National Individual Events Tournament (AFA-NIET) agreed to allow original material in the established AFA-NIET interpretation categories. Outside of the AFA-NIET, none of the national forensic organizations has a specific policy on the use of original material. Establishing of such a policy is not a decision to be taken lightly. We must seriously consider the impact of allowing original material in the established interpretation categories.

The purpose of this essay is to argue that using original works of literature written by or for a student competitor, specifically for competition, is detrimental to forensics oral interpretation. I believe there are three major reasons for our keeping original literature out of the established categories: violation of the purpose of the event, the disparity of judging criteria, and the ethical concerns raised by allowing this material to be used.

To put these arguments in sharper focus, some parameters are needed. The first question that is always raised when discussing this controversy is, "What is original material?" For my perspective, I propose the definition used by Scott Ford and myself in our paper presented at the 1987 Speech Communication Association National Convention: "Any work of prose, poetry or dramatic literature written by a student competitor or for a student competitor specifically for use in competition" (1987, p. 1). I want to make special note that this definition does not rest on the questions of publication or literary merit that are often used. The core of the problem lies, I believe, not in the literature itself, but in the problems associated with its use. Thus, any questions of literary merit really become moot points. The key phrase of this definition is "specifically for use in competition." When original material is produced with the ultimate aim being success in competition, problems arise.

A second parameter to establish is that I am against the use of original material in the nationally-established interpretation events. I am not including any events for which original material is

considered acceptable material, such as experimental events established specifically for the interpretation of original literature. Also, Reader's Theatre, a unique form of group performance, falls outside of this controversy. As found by Scott Ford and myself, "In all events [prose, poetry, dramatic interpretation, dramatic duo], with the exception of Reader's Theatre, there is a tendency to disagree that original material is acceptable" (1987, p. 7). Thus, my arguments are specifically limited to prose interpretation, poetry interpretation, dramatic interpretation, and dramatic duo.

The first reason for my dislike of original material in the interpretive events is that I feel its presence violates the pedagogical integrity of the event. The purpose of competitive oral interpretation is twofold: to teach students how to analyze a piece of literature for theme, mood, images, emotion, plot and other factors; and to learn how to control and utilize nonverbal communication behaviors in the suggestion of these underlying factors. Using original material does not require the student to undertake the first of the two processes. A student who has written his/her own work will be working from a different perspective than a student using an outside work of literature. Instead of analyzing the work to extrapolate what needs to be communicated to the audience, the student will be determining how the piece must be written or rewritten to work successfully for the audience. Initially, this sounds acceptable. However, let us keep in mind that the purpose of oral interpretation is to engage in the analysis of literature. While a student writing his/her own material is in the realm of a writing workshop, it is not our purpose as educators in forensics.

The interpreter is meant to serve as the intermediary between the work and the audience within the confines of the piece itself, communicating the intent of the author. However, the author as interpreter, becomes the one in control. There cannot be any question of author intent as a restraining factor, as the student is the author; he/she can adapt as he/she sees fit. Thus, oral interpretation becomes a literary reading—two communication situations with very different expectations for the performer. Since oral interpretation is defined as a two-step process, to remove one or both of these steps is to change the very integrity of the activity. Unless we wish to alter the educational function of oral interpretation, original material should be kept out of the established interpretation categories.

A second reason for keeping original material out of the current interpretive events is its negative impact on judging criteria. Currently, a judge looks at two primary areas when judging interpretation: the student's analysis of the work of literature, and the

student's translation of his/her analysis into appropriate nonverbal behaviors. Comments generally revolve around specific vocal or physical actions and their appropriateness for the work being presented. In other words, the effect interaction of analysis and expression is primary. However, if we allow original material into the event, we have negated the first area of evaluation. While we may express via the ballot that what we interpret from an original work is not the same as that being communicated by the reading, we cannot argue author intent. Since the student is the author, his/her decision of the intent of the work must take precedence. This holds true for students using material written for them in competition, as the interpreters have not been required to engage in analysis. Instead, in a worst-case scenario (but not unrealistic one), the author tells them "what it's all about." Again, the first purpose of oral interpretation has been violated, and one major judging criteria has been circumvented.

Not only does the use of original material remove a judging criteria, it also turns speech judges into literary critics. Many feel uncomfortable in this role. I am not a literary expert, nor are most coaches and judges in forensics specifically educated in literary expertise. While we are able to teach analytical tools, this does not necessarily make us qualified to evaluate a new piece of literature for its literary merit. When judging original material, we are forced to evaluate two different forms of communication: written and spoken. Our job and training is in teaching and evaluating the success of the oral expression of literature, not its creation. We must confine our efforts to that which we know best—oral communication.

The last reason for excluding original material from the established interpretation categories is one of ethics. I feel it is unethical for a student to use original material in the same round as students using non-original material. My concern is that students will write original material to fit the conventions of the event. For example, while I cannot speak for all parts of the country, in the Upper Midwest, very prosaic poetry seems to have more success than more figurative poetry. Conceivably, a student with some writing skills, or a friend who is talented, could create poetry to fit the conventions. While I grant that this argument is based largely on propensity, it nonetheless points out a potential disparity over using original material: should material specifically written for competition be allowed to compete against material not written with the conventions of forensics competition in mind? It is an unfair advantage for those able to write material to fit those conventions. To extend on this potential hazard, it is then conceivable that instead of the interpreter altering his/her interpretation, the piece simply

gets rewritten to fit within the skills of the interpreter. Instead of the student evaluating and developing the interpretation to a finer degree (certainly an important goal of education-oriented oral interpretation), the piece itself can be altered, removing the bothersome section; words can be changed, lines can be changed, the entire piece can be changed. Is it ethical to allow this advantage to some students while not allowing that same flexibility to those using non-original material? I think not. By allowing original material in the established oral interpretation categories, we are entering some ethically questionable ground.

Clearly, the use of original material in the established interpretation events is neither advisable nor warranted. The violation of integrity, the judging disparity, and the ethical questions all argue for keeping original material out of these events. While I have no argument with original material-specific events, they must be kept separate, with clearly defined and understood criteria.

Moreover, as Scott Ford and I found in our 1987 survey, coaches want the national forensic organizations to establish some policy on this issue in order to "aid in coaching and judging consistency" (p. 12). I firmly believe that NFA, AFA-NIET, Phi Rho Pi, Pi Kappa Delta, and Delta Sigma Rho-Tau Kappa Alpha must establish a specific policy banning the use of original material from the established interpretation events.

We have a lot of good students competing in forensics. A lot of those students are good writers, and that talent should be carefully cultivated. However, it must be encouraged in the appropriate forum, such as a writers' workshop, where experts in literature and literary form can give proper and constructive assistance.

Reference

Ford, S. D. & Green, K. D. (1987, November). *Perceived Attitudes Toward the Use of Original Material in Forensics Oral Interpretation: A Survey.* Paper presented at the meeting of the Speech Communication Association, Boston, MA.