

Evaluating Oral Interpretation Events: A Contest and Festival Perspectives Symposium

TODD V. LEWIS, DAVID A. WILLIAMS,
MADELINE M. KEAVENEY, AND MICHAEL G. LEIGH*

There is an important word missing from the title of this symposium: "versus". Rather than forcing prospective interpretation students to choose one format to the exclusion of the other, all of us teach in departments where both contest and festival perspectives are supported and encouraged. The discussion divides at the point of which format we perceive to be the more preferable or valuable to the growth and development of the art of oral interpretation in our students.

I side most confidently with the contest perspective. In my ten years as a forensic coach I've noticed four major values emerging for those students dedicated to preparing and presenting oral interpretation events at tournaments. Before discussing these values, though, I must admit that these values are much like the "Good Side" of "The Force" in the *Star Wars* movies. My colleagues articulate fairly the "Dark Side" of forensic values, but like Luke Skywalker, Obi-Wan Kenobe, and Yoda I believe the "Good Side" is stronger.

One of the most attractive values for the contest perspective in interpreting literature is the stress on *rhetorical statements* in theme and presentation. I love hearing literature that enables one to evaluate overt, inherent, or implied persuasive statements in literature. Many of my own personal attitudes and beliefs have been formulated, strengthened, or altered through the years by my expo-

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TODD V. LEWIS is Director of Forensics and Associate Professor of Communication at Biola University; La Mirada, California 90638.

DAVID A. WILLIAMS is Associate Professor of Speech Communication at the University of Arizona; Tucson, Arizona 85721.

MADELINE M. KEAVENEY is Associate Professor of Speech Communication at California State University, Chico; Chico, California 95929.

MICHAEL G. LEIGH is Associate Professor of Speech/English at Orange Coast College; Costa Mesa, California 92626.

sure to fictional and non-fictional efforts in contest oral interpretation/readers' theatre events. To make this *rhetorical statement* a fair and accurate interpretation of an author's intent, I stress research into the author's life/experiences as well as critical evaluation of the work itself. I ask my students and those I judge to demonstrate a link in theme when juxtaposing various pieces of literature. Alas, the temptations of the "Dark Side" sometimes result in programs "Forced" into non-aligned themes, distorted editing of material, and "out-of-context" wrenchings that bear little impression to the author's original work. I cannot deny that some participants in forensics yield to this flagrant literary distortion, but literary rhetoric can thrive at tournaments and be true to an author's intent. Seeking that intent may be elusive and difficult, but the conscientious interpreter should seek it.

Competition need not be a devil word among interpretation enthusiasts. I believe competition creates the situation where the best possible performances will occur. Trophys are nice to win when you excel in forensic tournaments, but they grow old, tarnished, and forgotten. The value for interpretation students is not the pursuit of the trophy, but the pursuit of excellence in comparison to other individuals or teams. My student competitors agree that their best performances in solo or group interpretation formats occur when they hear that a fine program will compete against them next round or they must follow in outstanding presentation in the current round. The festival situation does not always generate this sort of adrenalin-driven performance. Ah, but the "Dark Side" can creep in and consume this value too. "Give in to your hate. I can feel the anger in you swelling" as you yield to *competitiveness*. Irrational competitiveness that seeks to destroy the concentration, flow, and interpretive artfulness of a fellow interpreter on the way to the Almighty Trophy is unethical and must be dealt with accordingly. Competition does not need to lead to competitiveness.

I enjoy attending festivals when I can. I enjoy the opportunities in a relatively non-structured setting to discuss literature and performance techniques. But the opportunities to grow as an interpretive artist are severely limited if you only endorse the festival perspective. I value the *frequency of presentations* at tournaments because growth as an artist is quicker and more pronounced. We attend 18-20 tournaments during the academic year and ten of those tournaments offer readers' theatre as a forensic event. At each tournament a competitor may perform the interpretive program three to five times. This frequency of presentation, coupled with oral and written evaluations, enhances presentation skills and depth of literary interpretation above festival levels. Concerned coaches must

stand vigil against the "Imperial" influences of stale, rote, "canned" technique and gestures and continually seek ways to interpret material in a "fresh" manner.

My three previous values have stressed academic and aesthetic concerns. I've noticed also a pragmatic value to the contest perspective for interpretation. *Team work*, fostered in practice and group presentations, teaches healthy interpersonal communication skills, conflict-resolution, and mutual dependancy and trust. Contest involvement by team and solo oral interpretation students also has indirectly benefited our communication department major. Many of our forensic students have switched majors. (We have the third largest major on our campus currently.) Team work also stimulates further involvement in communication pursuits. Our graduates use their interpretive skills in such divergent vocations as voice-overs for radio/TV commercial advertising or church-related readers' theatre worship service formats. To run my analogy aground, I suppose a forensic coach must take the responsibility to insure that the "Dark Side" does not turn *team work* into *team disunity*.

I end my discussion with an unabashed note of envy. I envy the level and depth of evaluation and constructive criticism that occur at most interpretation festivals. I wish more forensic critics were as knowledgeable and as perceptive as most festival critics. I do not claim to have the sole criteria for constructively evaluating oral interpretation events, but I'd like to offer the following as stimuli for my forensics colleagues who merely write on ballots, "Good job" or "I didn't like it.":

Introduction/Transitions: Is a clear theme/main idea/rhetorical premise presented? Do you tell about context, characters, omitted scene information required to understand the selection? *Literary Selection:* Does the literature seem "fresh" (not just "new," but "revitalized" literature)? Do the literary pieces fit the theme (not forced to a theme)? How difficult is the literature (in terms of *language, characters, complexity*) compared to other presentations in this round? Is this "pulp" (gratuitously emotional) literature or literature of "merit"?

Personae Delineation: Does each selection and character have a unique *persona*? Does the monologic *persona* grow/change/evolve in the reading?

Subtextual Sensitivity: Does the interpreter use paralinguistic clues to share the interpretation of the author's intent? Does the reader rely on *overt* displays of emotionality...or is *subtlety* used to *underplay* the reality? Is the reading believable?

Delivery Techniques: Do volume, pitch, tempo changes, use of script, and body language enhance or detract from the presentation?

A forensic critic can become as effective and helpful as a festival critic by writing ballots to performers that answer these and so many other questions used to enhance evaluations.

The four of us writers are fortunate to reside in a part of the United States where both festivals and tournaments co-exist. Though I prefer the contest format, I hope that my national colleagues will not drift to one format to the exclusion of the other. Oral interpretation events flourish where festival and contest formats are equally promoted and supported.

- Todd V. Lewis

After spending ten years on the forensic circuit and directing and attending festivals for the last thirteen years, I think there is a place for both contest and festival interpretation. As with most experiences, the crucial question is one of expectation and attitude. It seems to me that any problems with time constraints, number of participants, quality of judging, and too much stress on competition in the contest can be policed and modified by those who support the contest. These problems are no longer substantive in my mind. I want to argue that literature is the most adult conversation we create today and that it requires a special atmosphere and a special posture of both performer and critic.

Interestingly, I see the difference between the interpretation contest and festival as paralleling the difference between rhetoric and poetic, discursive and imaginative language, and efferent versus an aesthetic posture. Ever since Plato kicked poetry out of his "ideal society," scholars, beginning with Aristotle, have articulated the difference, place, and function between rhetoric and poetic. I feel these differences emanate out of the two forums of contest and festival interpretation today.

The speech informs, stimulates, convinces, and entertains. The speaker plans the speech to have a desired effect on the audience. The speaker has a specific in mind and can compare this effect with an audience or judge. In every other contest event speakers write their speeches and should have an idea of what they mean - not so with oral interpretation. The oral interpreter can never be sure what the author really meant. I am suggesting that inherent differences exist between rhetoric and literature and that because of these differences the contest forum best serves rhetoric and the festival forum is the more authentic place to present literature. I am delighted that oral interpretation is so popular in the contest context, and if I were still in forensics I would support this activity

because I believe in students and I believe in literature as a strong communicative and aesthetic force in our society. With these baseline statements in mind, I would now like to elaborate my position and explain why the festival is a better climate for literature.

In the beginning was the word, invented by some "missing link," a creature in the chain somewhere between the gibbon and man. At some time, as many as a million years ago, that man first repeated noise for the joy of the sound. Poetry came before prose. Next to dance, our use of language as an art form is one of the oldest recreations. Because we use language as an artistic expression and as a vehicle for carrying out meaning in pedestrian affairs, language has taken on a dualistic purpose. This basic dualism of function and purpose has become a basic issue of rhetoric, literature, and communication that has spawned discussion, debate, denunciation, and definition. Literature has become one of the most profound ways to study humans. Fiction is an organized look at human behavior. Poetry is an organized universal cry or a distilled declaration concerning perception of human essence. Rhetoric contains both discursive and aesthetic language, but it is primarily discursive. Literature contains both but is primarily aesthetic. Indeed, prose is more discursive than poetry. The key difference is how the language functions: we come to rhetoric for information; we come to literature for the experience. The language of literature is pregnant with possibility, ambiguity, symbol, smell, sound, taste, temperature, and tension. Where lucidity is crucial in discursive discourse, the colors of literature run from vibrantly clear to sluggishly opaque, from stylishly simple to a regal richness. Where rhetoric serves practical matters, literature serves play.

In *The Reader, The Text, The Poem* Louise M. Rosenblatt explains that "efferent" implies a carrying away from. When we need information or need to know how to do something we read efferently. This would include magazines, newspapers, technical material, directions. The information is decoded, reduced, and paraphrased into that which we want to remember. "In aesthetic reading, the reader's attention is centered directly on what he is living through *during* his relationship with that particular text."¹ Efferent reading is the summary of information and effects carried away from reading primarily discursive language. In aesthetic reading the focus is now, current, the second-by-second sound, taste, and feelings rendered *during* the living with the imaginative experience.

Because I feel there is a difference between the function of speak-

¹Louise M. Rosenblatt, *The Reader, the Text, the Poem* (Carbondale, 111.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978), pp. 24-5.

ing in contests and performing literature, I think separate forums are needed. The festival climate best serves literature from a critic's point of view. I need time to talk with the performers; real communication takes time. Rather than listening for cogency, efficacy, and support, as I would in listening to a speech, in hearing literature I shift to the other side of my brain and become a child instead of a parent. My set is one of freedom, curiosity, wonder. I want to be arrested. Indeed, as a critic one of the things I discuss with the cast is how caught up, how transported to a meta-world of a different experience was I, why not?, etc. I need to inquire and transact with the performers.

I see performance of literature as a translation from the literary experience into a dramatic experience and I need time to talk with the cast concerning their translation and "trade-offs." Something is gained and lost in such a translation. We discuss these debits and credits to determine whether the medium of solo oral interpretation or readers' theatre have been advantageous for this text. Inherent in such a translation is a series of choices. We talk about the choices employed in the selection, cutting, props, and accouterments for emphasis and interest. I try to compare how the literature is saying itself with how I hear the cast saying the literature. This notion allows for necessary variance in perception and a chance for critic and cast to discuss their comparisons. Indeed, I may hear the literature differently. If there is variance in our perception, we try to account for it. Once we establish what choices were made, why the choices were made, and how effective these choices were, we can discuss whether these were the best choices, the most economical choices, and whether the text contains other potential performances.

I believe "economy" is still a hallmark of art and that interpretation is based on the magic of illusion, a seeming, a facile economy of getting the most for the least. Just mentioning economy usually triggers other terms I use such as strength, change, energy, ease, *synechdoche*, flexibility, harmony, repetition, intensity, flow, sense of scene, and verisimilitude. All of these terms are relative. I have adopted Monroe Beardsley's trinity of terms-unity, complexity, and intensity - because I find them useful, teachable, memorable, but also relative. One person's unity becomes someone else's cacophony. I use these terms because I think it is important for casts and critics to get beyond "it worked," or "it didn't work." Vocabulary precipitates and facilitates dialogue. Readers' theatre utilizes the bases of dramatic and aesthetic theory balanced by a theory of literature and large amounts of inspiration. It has no single theory or grammar and cannot be fixed in form or style just as any dramatic production cannot be fixed. The basic dues come

from the text, and texts are different as people are different. Perceptions are different and differences can be good. The driving impulse of all great art is freedom. Freedom does not mean you do whatever you want. Limits come through discovery and play. The only limits to our medium are inherent in literature and talent. Evaluation is a time to share and compare in a climate of give and take for the delight of the literature.

Because logistics dictate the time frames used in contests, the critic must quickly fill out the ballot and run to the next event. There is not time for critic and cast to share perceptions. The contest critic is asked to make a choice between a good interpretation of a delightful story by Dorothy Parker and a rich excerpt from Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables*. The point is simple. Shakespeare is more demanding than Ogden Nash and Victor Hugo is more demanding than Dorothy Parker. Indeed, if both performances were outstanding why not issue certificates of merit to both?

The demands of speeches are different from poems and prose. The demands of literature vary almost as much. In too many cases when one is asked to judge a final round of interpretation its like judging between bulldozers and bathing suits. Let's keep the contest as a forum for speech. Because literature is a special type of human discourse, however, I think it should be celebrated rather than contested.

- David A. Williams

I am here to represent the festival perspective and to suggest why I and many of my colleagues prefer festivals to forensics as the setting for the evaluation of performed literature. As a specialist in oral interpretation, I am interested in performance as a mode of experience, as a means by which performers comes to understand a text and communicate their understanding to an audience. The festival setting allows for a kind of exploration of performance and performed literary materials that is often absent from the forensic setting. Forensic performances occur in a rules-based context - rules related to theme, genre concerns, length and mode of delivery of introductory and transition materials, and time limits, as well as rules related to the handling of the text and the use of physical and gestural expression. Festivals, on the other hand, are not without rules, but the rules are kept to a minimum, often with only a general time limit, to encourage rather than discourage the exploration of unique literary materials in a performance calculated to feature individual performers and their literary materials.

Because a forensic performance must catch the eye and ear of a judge in order to score well, it seems that many forensic programs arbitrarily yoke together literary selections to fit a theme. In so doing, there is often a lack of integrity in cutting selections to fit themes and time limits; bits and pieces of literary selections are made subservient to time and thematic considerations often greatly distorting the message of the intact literary selection(s). In contrast the festival setting allows both thematic programs and single selection performances, thereby increasing the chance that the literature as performed will resemble the literature as written.

At festivals there are no ballots, no winners or losers. Rather, there is an emphasis on performance and the sharing of performed literature. In the festival setting the critic for each performance round is trained in oral interpretation. Performances are often followed by extensive critiques that orally explore, with the participation of audience members as well as the performer, the strengths and weaknesses of the performance possibilities. In this setting the possible subjectivity of the critic becomes an opportunity for learning, for seeing the performance from another perspective. The oral critique and discussion expand upon and fill out the written critique providing an opportunity for audience feedback as well. This festival mode contrasts sharply with the typical forensic performance where there is little contact between performer and critic/judge. The judge may be trained in oral interpretation or may be a reluctant draftee with idiosyncratic notions about what oral interpretation is or what an oral interpretation performance should be. Because forensics is a competitive situation, the judge must rank performances; this means that several excellent performances must be rank ordered, or, more seriously, mediocre performances must be ranked so that, at the end of the tournament, prizes can be awarded. When such is the case, it seems that the value of the individual performance of literature becomes relativized. In the tournament setting, a performer competes against other performers for the rankings of the judge; in the festival setting the performers are answerable to themselves and the literature they have chosen to perform.

What I and many of my colleagues most like about festivals are those phenomena that occur at them that separate the festivals from grade-based classroom performances as well as brass-based forensic performances. At festivals there can be experimentation, a degree of risk-taking, that is exciting and stimulating to both performers and critics. Not all experiments, of course, are successful, but having the opportunity to try something different in a supportive setting may perhaps be one of the most important functions served by festivals. Secondly, because festivals tend to be less restrictive than

forensic tournaments, aspiring writers have the opportunity to perform their own original materials and get feedback on both the materials and the performance. Finally, most festivals feature guest critics, eminent oral interpretation teachers, and performers who interact with performers and other critics in a relaxed, non-competitive setting. Coaches and critics alike benefit from seeing other professionals perform as well as critique performances. Student performers benefit from exposure to critical perspectives other than those found on the home campus and from interaction, both performance-wise and socially, with other performers. The relaxed, noncompetitive atmosphere of festivals lends itself to the sharing of new ideas and perspectives.

I and many of my colleagues thus prefer the festival setting to the forensic setting for the evaluation of performed literature.

- Madeline M. Keaveney

Forensics is often viewed, by those who practice interpretation, exclusively in the festival or the classroom as a sort of "black sheep" of the family. It lacks the necessary refinement and spoils the family picnic by introducing aggressive, rather than appreciative values.

The first prerequisite for the preservation of any craft is that it be practiced sufficiently often by enough people to give it the consistency it needs to carry on the tradition, as well as the variety, it needs to keep that tradition flexible and alive. I believe that forensics strikes the best balance between these two values.

Aggression is valuable for keeping a tradition flexible and alive. The flint and steel of adversary positions, when we discuss argumentation and persuasion, are generally believed to form the crucible of truth. Why should we think differently when we look at forensic interpretation? Not only does it practice good argumentation in the development of themes, for which the literature read acts as supporting evidence (forcing students to grapple with discussion of literature), but also the competitive nature of forensics provides a continuing challenge to invention.

Although I wouldn't compare a tournament to a war (a speech tournament can be just as friendly and interpersonally stimulating as any festival), some results are similar. In a war we are forced to continuous challenge and change to preserve a culture. Interpretation, too, has been forced to come out of the classroom in new ways, excited by the conflict of tournaments. Perhaps more important to the preservation of the tradition is that cultures at war in-

fluence each other. It isn't always the culture that "wins" which has the strongest influence. Did Rome ever really defeat Greek culture? They tell me we won World War II, but whose business prospers? So, to those who argue that forensics took the interpretive tradition over and somehow changed it for the worse, they might reconsider. It is actually interpretation that has taken over forensics and changed it for the better.

In Phi Ro Pi this is especially true. This national community college tournament features sixteen events, six of which are interpretive. These interpretive events consistently host the largest entries in our tournaments. In fact, our bigger tournaments may boast the largest gatherings of interpreters anywhere. Almost fifty readers' theatre groups, with three to fourteen people in each, attended one recent national tournament. Such large numbers will tend to continue as long as Phi Ro Pi exists because we are now financially dependent on that entry. Such other national tournaments as the ones hosted by the NFA, AFA, and DSR-TKA also seem weighted in interpretive events. Not only do we foster a larger audience for the tradition than most festivals, I believe the audience is a broader one. We have a greater age mixture. Community colleges, for example, attract students from eighteen to eighty and a greater mixture of types of people as we mix students of literature with debaters and orators, as well as communication analysts and "after dinner" speakers. Forensics has become an enormous language arts circus, and interpretation is in the center ring. How can that be bad for interpretation if the sheer numbers of those practicing it are important to preserving the tradition? Even those preeminently involved with festivals admit that we provide more opportunities to interpret. Mel White recently said that of California speech competition. Is it, however, really *good* interpretation? Or, do the festivals somehow do reading and instruction that is truer to the tradition?

To do full justice to both forensics and festivals, each of which does some things better than the other, let's borrow Wallace Bacon's metaphor of "the dangerous shores."² In steering between the dangerous shores of the eighties, I think forensics builds more beautiful ships. The best of our readers' theatre work, which I consider to be the pinnacle of interpretive art, is better than the best of the festivals. Yet, when it comes to navigation, the critics who keep the ships off the rocks, I am often envious of festivals. I might even say that the average forensic navigator should be "keel-hauled."

There are several continuums along which we may establish a

²Wallace A. Bacon, "The Dangerous Shores: From Elocution to Interpretation," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* (April 1960), pp. 148-52.

comparison: the use of entertaining vs. enlightening literature; performance grounded in traditions vs. creative exploration; good ensemble vs. including everybody; and a host of others too numerous to explore here.

ENTERTAINMENT VS. ENLIGHTENMENT: The ideal is a balance, but, due to the superior preparation and education of critics at festivals, festivals tend to be more hospitable to literature which enlightens. Forensic interpreters have to concentrate more on what entertains. The average forensic judge is drawn by random lot, rather than by qualification, because the effort is to distribute all possibilities of prejudice across the judging population. If you only used the best-qualified in interpretation to judge interpretation, you would tend to reinforce the prejudices of the few, as well as reduce the democratic advantages of reaching a broader audience. Unfortunately this procedure also lowers the common denominator of literary taste and interpretive expertise. Precisely because we do offer so many opportunities to compete, the scheduling of tournaments is more exacting on the energies of even well-qualified judges. By the end of three days of hearing an incredible barrage of serious social problems, ranting and raving young advocates, persuasive prophecies of doom and gloom, you'd better believe entertainment is needed to perk up the fatigued and foggy judge.

The limits placed on definitions of entertainment, however, are too narrow for an expansively creative person, and those limits are denned, not on textual readings in the field or even a self-consistent standard of judging (unless you have the good fortune of encountering a judge like Todd Lewis, as rare as the California Condor), but rather on personal prejudice in literature. The forensic judge typically has these as his or her foremost criteria:

- 1) Pathetic effect - Does it make me feel all warm and gooey in response? Does it entertain by my tastes?
- 2) Ethical consistency with one's own views - Can I view this literature as representative of my values?
- 3) Logos last: If I get similar reactions to pieces according to #1 and #2, what acceptable, repeated critical phrases can I use to rubber-stamp my coin toss?

I'm not saying these are conscious criteria, but unconsciously that is what evolves. If a judging body doesn't read in the field, what few, logos-based criteria appear on the ballot tend to be those continually repeated by custom and mere habituation. If you read the mass of ballots, you learn what you need to be entertaining. First and foremost are humor and variety: variety to be represented by three pieces of literature of different genre, humor by at least one comic piece. The order of the program should be like a speech with

a theme developed through literature (as evidence). Don't, however, get into anything too heavy or difficult, and don't repeat themes this particular judge has heard in his fifty some years of judging. Be sure the dynamics are the central consideration in choosing a piece, over character, depth, or theme. Be episodic, doing only quick bits, so you don't strain the judge's attention span.

If I seem harsh, it is only because I believe many judges are unwittingly harsh in responding to the creativity of students who want to explore more difficult literature. Such judges view themselves as a general public to be entertained rather than as a professional consultant there to aid students in exploring their tastes and abilities. Without self-consistent criteria, supported by continual reading in the field, forensic critics will not be efficient at saying "Given what you've tried to do with this literature, let's see how you can do it better." Instead, they will be inclined to say "I don't like that literature - get something better." Forensics is founded on the idea that free speech is a good thing to develop. I don't know why that should stop with selection of material in interpretation.

PERFORMANCE GROUNDED IN TRADITION VS. CREATIVITY: Both forensics and festivals have contributions for maintaining a balance between these two values. In forensics I think we have more opportunity and challenges to be creative because we have to steer around so many prejudices which are the interpretive traditions within our world. Festivals are less creative in that their best works are not as finely developed as ours. One of the advantages of forensics is that we do several performances of a program over the course of the year. We go in and try something, get feedback, go away, and come back again and again in a continually evolving and adaptive theatrical style. Festivals are more tolerant of variety of effects, singing, broader movement, but, ironically, as most presentations tend to be designed for one performance only, they have little time to develop what would be tolerated in festival but ill-endorsed in forensics. I can recall getting a comment that the singing in one of my forensic theatres was "too good." I don't think I'd be as likely to get that comment in a festival, but in a festival I'm less likely to see fully developed, complex integrations of complimentary craft. Festival people are encouraged to be creative by exploring classics, while we are encouraged to be creative in exploring newer literature to avoid the boredom of an overexposed audience.

One more note indicates an advantage of festivals that forensics could easily have if it more carefully read the writings in the field. At a festival a student would seldom be criticized for "acting" in an interpretive event, while we seem to spend an extraordinary amount of time worrying about it. Judges with a cursory knowledge

of a Charlotte Lee text will misinterpret her and try to restrain a student to "X" amount of movement because any more if it would be acting. This reflects deep misunderstandings about what acting is as well as what interpretation should be allowed to do. A festival person says "Do whatever the literature requires for full expression." A forensics person worries about distinguishing speech from drama in general rather than seeking the best expression available for a particular piece of literature.

If the end products of forensics are more efficient, as well as creative to a polished degree, much of the credit is due the forensic student who continually presses against the borders of prejudice, as a sonnet presses against the constraints of its meter, creating the best art. At the festival the hang-loose atmosphere encourages freedom, albeit slackness, because almost anything will be tolerated as "good" to encourage participation and warm feelings about sharing literature. If someone says of your forensic performance "You guys are terrific," you can be a little more confident than you could at a festival that you've done something truly creative and you aren't just getting stroked. Freedom isn't enough to foster creativity - you need limits and goals as well.

ENSEMBLE VS. INCLUDING EVERYBODY: Festivals are more democratic. They reward everybody for trying. That is a wonderful educational goal, and a short trip to some fairly abysmal presentations. How many times have I seen a group of six or seven people, ranging in abilities from poor to really very good, standing in a line, reading unevenly at a festival? How many times have I watched the disappointment of an enthusiastic group of novices in a speech tournament, doing their own work, directing themselves, only to be trounced by some clockwork precise, faculty-created, baroque structure? It is less humane, I suppose. It is also realistic. It's good to be encouraged and allowed to try things you're not good at. It's also useful to have a clear perception of your weaknesses and limits, and I think forensics pays attention to the difficult, even heart-breaking work. It prepares people to face disappointment and grow from it. And let us not kid ourselves that we don't rank our students in other ways, outside of tournament contexts. No teacher who has given low grades in an interpretation class can really criticize forensics too much for creating stars and failures.

Forensic presentations force students to learn to work with other people. The ensemble work in our readers' theatres is crisp and clean at its best because we show people how to do a show better over a period of time by pulling together, by learning to grow together through failure toward success, and by learning how to keep art alive in the eye of the public, not merely in the private experi-

ences of the reader.

CONCLUSION: If we think about each of these continuums as the plank of a see-saw, with forensics sitting on one end and festivals on the other, where we place the fulcrum will reveal our individual prejudice. Yet to place the fulcrum so that it favors the ride of one party on the see-saw more than the other is an absurdity. The point to be made is that both festivals and forensics do things well and poorly, and what we need is a body of people who experience both and integrate the advantages and disadvantages of each. We need festival critics at speech tournaments. Believe me, we are hungry for judges and would welcome your attendance. Likewise, festivals will benefit from examples of forensic-forged interpretation which can inspire people by showing what a little time and dedication can do.

At the 1983 Western Speech Communication Association Convention, Mary Maher said that the "interdisciplinary was necessary." How about the mfra-disciplinary? It's no use taking pot-shots at interpretive events of the other type if you don't attend them. Pauline Nelson also said, "Elitism is something we can no longer afford." I think that is ample encouragement for greater interaction between the two parties at either end of the see-saw, for the better enjoyment of both on the ride.

- Michael G. Leigh