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## UNITY IN DIVERSITY

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TO offer recommendations for the solution of problems of the Association is a major responsibility of the president. During the year I have directed attention to challenges threatening five aspects of the speech profession today: our independence, our importance, our usefulness, our unity, and our integrity as free citizens and teachers. The first three and the last I shall review summarily here in order that I may dwell chiefly upon a plan for insuring our unity.

### I

Although the concept of speech as an independent field of scientific and humanistic study is generally accepted today, some reputable institutions still subordinate it to other fields or disregard it entirely. Some schools and colleges have so little realization of the scope and development of our field that they think of speech as three small segments of the field of English. Physical, biological, and linguistic aspects of speech they treat as a division of Eng-

lish philology. Unmindful of the long history of rhetoric and public address, they regard oral discourse as a mere adjunct of written discourse. To them the theatre is just an offshoot of the study of dramatic literature. Radio is frequently too modern to be included. Happily, the number of institutions still holding this narrow outmoded view of speech is comparatively small, but among the number are a few of our most renowned universities. Excellent scholars in language and literature, whom I respect highly and number among my close friends, cannot understand why teachers of speech should not confine their training to English scholarship and be content to do their work as a small division of a department of English.

Some historians, political scientists, and sociologists either think we are poaching upon their territory without being qualified to do so or refuse to take us seriously. They lack understanding of our traditions, our objectives, and our development. In certain instances they may be right in saying that we are not prepared to do the job we have laid out for ourselves, but such studies as *The History and Criticism of American Public Address* have demon-

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strated that some of us are competent to make significant contributions both in our own field and in the social sciences. The growing tendency toward close cooperation in the two areas of scholarship is most encouraging.

Physical and biological scientists burying themselves in laboratory research may be pardoned for looking upon some of us as upstarts. We may not yet have the thorough training necessary for all we want to do, but we are learning fast. Largely because of the diligent efforts of the American Speech and Hearing Association fewer of us today can be justly accused of incompetence, inaccuracy, or superficiality in the scientific areas.

Likewise scholars and practitioners in the fine arts may think some of us lack esthetic standards. Perhaps our work in interpretation still has traces of self-conscious display carried over from the days of the mechanical elocutionists. The passage from Edward Dowden quoted by Professor Parrish may still be pertinent:

Few persons nowadays seem to feel how powerful an instrument of culture may be found in modest, intelligent, and sympathetic reading aloud. . . . [But] the reciter and the elocutionist . . . have done much to rob us of . . . one of the finest of the fine arts. A mongrel something . . . neither good reading nor yet veritable acting . . . which sets agape the half-educated with the wonder of its airs and attitudinising, its pseudo-heroics and pseudo-pathos, has usurped the place of the true art of reading aloud, and has made the word 'recitation' a terror to 'quiet folk who are content with intelligence and refinement.

If the work of some directors of dramatics lacks creative imagination and artistic merit, I suspect that it has not yet had the benefit of the progressive efforts of the American Educational Theatre Association. Through its conferences, its committees, its journal, and the finished productions of its members,

AETA has steadily raised standards in educational theatre.

The best attack on the challengers of our independence will result from thorough scholarship and sound teaching backed by good public relations sponsored by our associations. Such a program will also help to meet the second challenge, offered mainly by educational administrators, to the importance of speech in the curriculum.

## II

Probably you know a college dean, a state commissioner, or a county or city superintendent who does not appreciate what speech can contribute to the curriculum. He may think that speech is just "the gargling of sweet sounds" or a performance skill for the few, instead of recognizing it as an indispensable tool of all social activity. Is it not a strange world where some institutions provide all kinds of opportunities in speech to all kinds of students at all stages of their development, whereas other institutions offer nothing at all? Frequently lack of funds is not the reason. Lethargy, ignorance, or hostility is the real explanation.

Some state departments of education assume that speech is adequately provided for in the English curriculum. In fact some county and city superintendents expect English teachers to be qualified to teach whatever speech is necessary. Actually very few teachers have either the interest or the training to teach both subjects satisfactorily. Those of us who have tried to teach both have soon realized that either subject demands all the scholarship, energy, and skill one person can command.

These days we hear much about integration. It is a wonderful ideal, but the usual difficulty is that we endeavor to integrate the work for the students without integrating the preparation of the teachers. The wise teacher realizes that

his professional advancement depends upon his specialized knowledge and scholarly publications in a single field. When speech is integrated, usually much lip-service is paid to its basic importance, but in the end those who teach the integrated course have so little interest in speech that they give it scant attention. The training in rhetoric a speech teacher receives should enable him to do a better job of organization and adaptation for an integrated course than that of other specialized teachers who are not specifically trained to consider the needs of an audience, but I suspect that he too will emphasize what he knows best.

To what extent are we ourselves responsible for the lack of attention to speech at the secondary-school level? Many state associations have taken a very active interest in the objectives, standards, and curricula of the secondary schools. On the other hand some states have no curricula or syllabi in speech, and other states have curricula badly in need of revision. The regional associations have been trying to survey the status of the curricula in their areas. Administrators and teachers who need guidance look to us for leadership. Too often college departments have been so much absorbed in their own problems that they have failed to meet the needs of elementary and secondary teachers. Our new journal, *The Speech Teacher*, should give an impetus to the study and solution of curricular problems.

Only last year a committee of the Speech Association of America did pioneering work in informing the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools of our objectives, standards, and curricula. The report and recommendations of Dean McBurney's committee are a landmark in speech education.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *QJS*, XXXVII (October 1951), 347-358.

### III

The third challenge comes from business, industry, and the professions. Can we meet their needs? Whereas the educational administrators are sometimes skeptical about what we have to offer because it is not academic enough, the business world is eager for our teaching, provided it is not too academic. The rapid growth of courses in speech in adult education has resulted from a steadily increasing clientele from business and industry. A majority of the great industrial firms in this country now have speech training programs. Unfortunately we have had to be prodded to give our help. We have been so tardy in studying the special speech problems of business and the professions that many institutions have worked out their own methods by trial and error.

Professional schools vary widely in their policies on speech training: whereas some either require speech for entrance or offer it in their own programs, others leave to chance whether their students know how to speak well. Engineering and architecture faculties have been among those most concerned to see that public speaking is included in their requirements. The National Education Committee of the Controllers Institute recommended to some two hundred college-level schools of business that more emphasis be placed upon communication of ideas because inability to speak and write clearly is the greatest lack among the students of these schools. The Committee says:

No matter how well trained and competent a student may be with figures and accounting concepts, his value to us will be severely limited unless he can tell, in speaking and writing, what he did, why he did it, and what the significance of the findings may be.

Speech correctionists cite impressive statistics to show how far short they are today of meeting needs of the commun-

ity. In fact they tell us that they have only begun to attack the problem.

Similarly specialists in theatre and broadcasting tell us that as leisure time increases, the need for more and better drama becomes steadily more urgent. The future task for our teachers of theatre, radio, and television is enormous.

Certainly we have tremendous opportunities for greater usefulness in our several areas of specialization. Both in teaching and in research we can make important contributions to better living in the future.

#### IV

Totalitarian forces inside and outside our country today challenge us to fight for the preservation of our freedom of speech. Who should be more vitally interested in the freedom of speech than teachers of speech? If we do our job well from day to day, we can make a substantial and essential contribution to the goal of free speech in our democratic society. Through the techniques of discussion and conference we must teach thoughtful analysis of problems, systematic evaluation of evidence, and clear presentation of ideas. Through the techniques of debate and public address we must teach intelligent advocacy of the policies which investigation convinces us are for the public good.

As citizens and as teachers we should strive to increase confidence in freedom of speech as the American democratic way. We certainly should not have less faith in free speech than did Aristotle, who taught his public speaking students that the art of rhetoric has its value because truth and justice are by nature more powerful than their opposites; so that, when decisions are not made as they should be, the speakers with the right on their side have only themselves to blame for the outcome.

If we have any doubts about what

freedom of speech means to our profession, let us keep in mind that if a totalitarian state should be forced upon us, our services would be commandeered for the support of the dictators in power. The techniques we teach our citizens to use for understanding and improving our democracy we would be directed to employ for feeding their minds with poisonous doctrine in support of tyranny, as were the teachers in Nazi Germany and as are the teachers behind the iron curtain. We would become fully aware of the truth of Aristotle's observation: rightly employed, rhetoric works the greatest blessings; wrongly employed, it works the utmost harm.

These four challenges to our independence and prestige, to the importance of our subject in the curriculum, to our usefulness in our complex society, and to our responsibility for upholding freedom of speech as an American right, privilege, and method, force upon us the realization that we have much vital work ahead of us. To achieve our goals our profession should be in the strongest possible position: in numbers, in finances, and in organization. Actually we are in a period of uncertainty about all three. If we are to hold and increase our numbers, if we are to build up our financial resources, and if we are to re-enforce our organization, we must be sure that our Association is geared to meet the pressing needs of the future.

#### V

More and more as we pursue our scholarly and professional ends, we need to investigate all cognate fields, to know more about them, and to relate our interests. Phoneticians need to study other aspects of linguistics; speech scientists need as much technical understanding as possible about physical and biological sciences; speech therapists should know as much as they can about medical

science; oral interpreters must keep in close touch with the scholarship in literature and aesthetics; theatre directors must depend heavily upon developments in the other fine arts; radio and television directors should relate their activities to the developments in motion pictures and in other mass media; teachers of discussion, conference, and debate need to familiarize themselves with the problems in industry and politics; rhetoricians cannot do their best work without a good understanding of history and philosophy; speech educationists necessarily depend upon psychology and sociology.

With the increasing diversification of our interests, can we preserve our unity and function as a team? The American Speech and Hearing Association finds itself more and more drawn toward such areas as mathematics, physics, anatomy, physiology, psychology, and medicine. Certainly the development of these interests will increase the knowledge and usefulness of our specialists in speech and hearing. The American Educational Theatre Association finds itself drawn toward such other areas as physics, architecture, painting, music, the dance, and creative writing. There can be no doubt that the development of these interests is essential to strengthen and broaden the academic program in theatre. The National Society for the Study of Communication promotes relations with such fields as English, psychology, sociology, government, and labor and industrial relations. No one questions that the furthering of these contacts will be invaluable both for scholarship and for practical applications. So long as the basic objective in speech correction is helping the handicapped to be more articulate; so long as the basic objective in theatre is communication of meaning through intelligent line-reading and characterization; so long as the basic

objective in conference speaking is the direct communication of ideas, we shall have a common goal that will keep us together and fortify our whole program.

Fortunately, in spite of the increasing financial burden, many in our profession keep up membership in two or more national associations in addition to membership in regional and state associations. Most of our leaders are members of the Speech Association of America, even though their specializations make them keenly interested and especially active in one of the other organizations.

Critics among us talk about fragmentation in our profession. Thus far I am not worried, but the serious question is: how far we can go in forming new organizations for specialized study and still keep our resources and our attention focused?

The Speech Association of America, as the largest and oldest of the national speech organizations, faces two major responsibilities in meeting this challenge to the unity of our profession. First, our policies must encourage cooperation and coordination so that the speech teachers of the country will be able to utilize the research and to attain the professional standards of all of these educational bodies. Second, we must focus attention continuously upon primary objectives lest they be lost in the maze of specializations. These two courses of action are vital if we are to ensure public understanding and appreciation of the field of speech. We must prevent the confusion which the multiplicity of organizations may create, and we must keep each other constantly informed to prevent duplication of efforts. In my judgment our future welfare makes united action imperative.

The newly adopted article of our constitution stating the purposes of the Association is as follows:

The Association is dedicated to the study of speech as an instrument of thought and of social cooperation, to the promotion of high standards in the teaching of speech, to the encouragement of research in the arts and sciences involved in improving the techniques of speech and communication, and to the publication of information about speech.

These purposes will require an intelligently planned unified program. As Isocrates said around 400 B.C.: "We stand in need of some durable plan which will forever put an end to our hostilities, and unite us by the lasting ties of mutual affection and fidelity." Professor Winans, our second president, said recently: "My hope was that the associations would help us by improving us. And I believe they have improved us." We must now make sure that they will go on improving us. Diversification of interests is good for us, but certainly we do not need more separate organizations to assure our members the opportunity to pursue their interests and to meet their needs. We should hold fast to the concept that the speech profession includes the whole body of teachers and scholars at all levels engaged in the study and teaching of speech as the communication of ideas for both social and artistic ends.

If we study the structure of other organizations uniting diversified interests, such as the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the National Education Association, and the Modern Language Association, we find that the basic concept for the representation of specific interests is one of departmentalization. Such a concept is feasible and now seems to be necessary for the Speech Association of America. Since our organization has not been substantially changed in structure since it was founded in 1914, the fact that the great expansion in our size, scope, and interests makes some changes desirable is not surprising. Not only are the American

Speech and Hearing Association and the American Educational Theatre Association finding that the present arrangements make close cooperation difficult, but groups within the Speech Association of America find the present structure no longer suited to their needs. The recent formation of the Society for the Study of Communication and of the American Forensic Association shows the trend. The Discussion Foundation, predecessor of the Committee on Discussion and Group Methods, entertained thoughts of an independent society. Very recently the Association Committee on Problems in Interpretation gave serious consideration to the possibility of a separate organization. The Committees on Problems in Radio and Television from time to time have indicated that the Association is not completely meeting their needs. The Committees on Problems in the Elementary and Secondary Schools have told us frequently that the Association does not give enough attention to their interests.

Why not change our basic structure sufficiently to enable us to function well in each of the areas we represent? For two major reasons we ought to do so promptly: (1) SAA seeks to serve our scholarly and professional needs in speech at all levels. At the elementary and secondary levels and in the small colleges there is no high degree of specialization. The same person must be qualified in two or more of the areas which our Association covers. (2) If we scatter our forces, we lose our strength for publications, for negotiation with accrediting agencies, and for the best public relations. We can do much more as a single organization of 6000 or more members than we can as separate groups of a few hundred members each. Since it is possible for the structure of SAA to be modified to meet the needs of all the

groups within it, and since the reasons for focusing upon our essential unity are most compelling, both from the scholarly point of view and from the practical professional point of view, let us take immediate steps to reorganize the Association.

To initiate the plan of departmentalization those interests which are most firmly established ought to be recognized. If separate associations have been formed to promote specific interests, the plan should be flexible enough to permit those associations to function both as departments within the Speech Association of America and as separate organizations, with such minor changes in their constitutions as may be necessary. If existing organizations do not wish to become departments of SAA, then the Association will need to create the departments for those areas in the same way that the other departments are organized. After the first group of departments is set up, a provision should be adopted permitting any group of fifty members representing all regions of the country, with perhaps a minimum of ten from each region, who wish to establish a new department to apply to the Executive Council of the Association for departmental status. Presumably the Executive Council would not set up an additional department unless the case presented demonstrated an urgent need.

The following departments are suggested as adequate for present requirements, but they are not presented as a final list. The Committee to Study the Structure of the Association, authorized by the Executive Council, plans to hold an open hearing on the proposal for departmentalization at the convention in Cincinnati next December. I suggest, therefore, that we study the advantages of organizing the following twelve departments:

1. *Rhetoric and Public Address* (Public Speaking; History and Principles of Rhetoric; Rhetorical Criticism: Ancient, Mediaeval, British, American, Contemporary; Public Opinion)

2. *Communication* (Fundamentals Courses; Relations of Speech to Government, Business, and Industry; Relations of Speech to English, Psychology, and Sociology; Listening)

3. *Forensics* (Argumentation and Debate; Interscholastic, Intercollegiate, and International Debating; Relations of Debate to Law, Politics, and Government; Parliamentary Procedure)

4. *Discussion and Group Methods* (Principles and Types of Discussion; Conferences; Committees; Forums)

5. *Speech Science, Pathology, and Therapy* (Voice; Articulation; Experimental Phonetics; Speech Science; Psychology of Speech; Speech Pathology; Speech Correction; Clinical Methods; Audiology; Teaching Speech to Those With Impaired Hearing; Speech for the Deaf)

6. *Linguistic Science and Phonetics* (Historical, Descriptive, and Comparative Phonetics; Linguistic Geography; Semantics)

7. *Interpretive Reading* (Oral Reading; Oral Interpretation of Literature; Choral Reading; Literature for Oral Interpretation; Background Studies for Interpretive Reading)

8. *Theatre, Motion Pictures, and Television* (Dramatic Literature; Acting; Directing; Stagecraft; Scene Design; Costuming; Dramatic Production; Theatre Architecture; History of the Theatre; Motion Pictures; Television; Playwriting; Dramatic Criticism; Children's Theatre; Puppetry; Creative Dramatics)

9. *Broadcasting* (Broadcasting Skills: Announcing, Speaking, Producing, Directing, Acting, Script Writing, Studio

Techniques; Educational Radio and Television; The Radio and Television Industries; Social Aspects of Broadcasting; Programming; Radio and Television Criticism)

10. *Elementary and Secondary Speech Education* (Nursery School; Elementary School; Junior High School; Senior High School; Vocational School; Curricula; Methods; Teacher Training; License Requirements; Tests and Measurements; In-Service Training)

11. *College and University Speech Education* (Junior College; Liberal Arts College; University; Graduate School; Professional Schools; Teachers Colleges; Coordination of High School and College Training; Administrative Problems; Basic Courses; The Speech Major; Visual and Auditory Aids; History of Speech Education)

12. *Adult Speech Education* (Extension Courses in Schools and Colleges; Non-Credit Adult Education Courses; Speech Programs in Industrial and Business Organizations; The Lecture Platform; Preaching; Teaching Speech to the Foreign-Born Adult; Speech in Human Relations)

The proposed duties and functions of these twelve departments would be as follows:

1. *Organization.* Each department would be conducted by an Executive Committee consisting of a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, and a Secretary. Each year the members of a department, either in an open meeting at the convention or through a nominating committee chosen at the convention, would nominate three candidates for Secretary. The names of these candidates would be sent to the Nominating Committee of the Association for their use in selecting a Secretary for election at the next annual meeting. Upon election the Secretary would serve one year to keep the

records of the Department and to carry on any business authorized by the Department. The following year he would become the Vice-Chairman and would plan the convention program, to consist of one meeting devoted to the area covered by the Department and such sectional meetings devoted to the special interests within the area as he and the First Vice-President of the Association determine to be necessary and feasible within the time and space limits of the convention. The third year the Vice-Chairman would become Chairman and would be the presiding officer of the Department at the area program meeting and at the business meeting of the Department. The Secretary, the Vice-Chairman, and the Chairman would be members of the Executive Council of the SAA. Very large departments might be granted additional representatives. Three years on the Council should make departmental representatives fully aware of the problems of the Association and of the relation of their Departments to the Association and to the other Departments. The Chairman would report to the Council on the activities of his Department, and would present recommendations for Council action. For the first year all three members of the Department Executive Committee would be elected.

2. *Dues and Assessments.* Each Department would be entitled to a small sum from the budget of the Association (perhaps \$25 to \$100) to be determined by the Finance Committee of the Association according to the size and needs of the Department. This sum should be sufficient for the ordinary business of the Department. If additional funds were needed for special projects, the Department could ask the Finance Committee for additional funds, and if such funds were not available, the Depart-



ment could raise money by special contributions, dues, or assessments, or in some other way, subject to the approval of the Executive Council of the Association.

3. *Committee Structure.* Each Department would be permitted to set up committees as needed. For example, committees on standards, curriculum, coordination, research, and publications might be desirable. These committees would report annually to the Department, and the Department Chairman would present to the Executive Council of the Association those recommendations of these committees approved in the business session of the Department.

4. *Convention Program.* As indicated in the duties of the Vice-Chairman, each Department would be responsible for programming its own area at the annual convention. The Vice-Chairman would plan the single area program at which the Chairman of the Department would preside, to be followed by the business meeting of the Department. He would also arrange as many sectional meetings as he and the First Vice-President of the Association agreed to provide. For example, in the Department of Rhetoric and Public Address, the Vice-Chairman and the First Vice-President might agree that six sectional meetings would be needed: one each in ancient and mediæval rhetoric and public address, in British rhetoric and public address, in American rhetoric and public address, in contemporary rhetoric and public address, in public speaking, and in public opinion.

The First Vice-President of the Association would still have charge of general sessions, of the Associations Luncheon, and of such special sectional meetings not provided by Departments as he thought necessary. Final decisions on allotment of time and space would be

made by the First Vice-President. If the morning time, for example, were devoted to three general sessions and twelve area meetings, it would be possible to have four area meetings of the twelve Departments running concurrently each of the three days. A member of the Association would be eligible to belong to any Department and could take an interest in several Departments. The First Vice-President of the Association would certainly try to schedule Department meetings to permit the most probable combinations, for example: Rhetoric and Public Address on the first day, Forensics on the second, and Discussion and Group Methods on the third. Sectional meetings open to any interested members of the Association could be scheduled each afternoon of the convention to the limit of time and space available. By staggering Department meetings concurrently with sectional meetings of other Departments the First Vice-President might make it possible for members to attend six or eight Department meetings at the same convention.

From the point of view of the Association the advantages in programming would seem to be quite important: (a) The First Vice-President would be relieved of a great deal of burdensome correspondence, and would therefore have more time for overall planning. (b) With the distribution of responsibility for program planning among twelve Department Vice-Chairmen, the program ought to be strengthened by a more representative participation, since the twelve Vice-Chairmen would have a wider acquaintance with the specializations in their own areas. (c) The First Vice-President could exercise greater control over such matters as dual participation in the program and broader representation from institutions and

geographical areas. (d) The general membership ought to feel that the more democratic procedure would give them better opportunities for participation in the program and for making their influence in the Association felt through their Departments. Each Department would have its own business meeting for formulating plans and policies.

Representation of each of the twelve Departments on the Executive Council of the Association by its three officers would substantially increase the size of the Council and would introduce a new principle of representation. The present membership of the Council, including past and present officers, past and present editors, members of the Finance Committee, and twelve members-at-large, should insure the presence of experienced representatives of the Association as a whole, but, like United States Senators, Department representatives should feel a responsibility to the whole as well as to the part. The addition of thirty-six members to the Executive Council at this time does not seem undesirable, since the attendance at Council meetings is far from one hundred percent, and since the Council would profit if the membership of the Association were more fully represented. Some of our members have commented that the Council is now too small for the size of the Association; others think that the Association has been controlled by too

limited a group of members. Officers of the twelve Departments should gain experience to develop them as potential Association officers, and departmental representation should provide a more diversified membership on the Council.

This plan of organization could lead to a larger membership and to a stronger financial structure, particularly if a policy for publications could be worked out to prevent the creation of more new journals to compete for the subscriptions of members of the profession and for advertising from publishers and schools. For our most interested members who wish to receive all publications, perhaps a single fee could be arranged to include membership in all of the existing national speech associations.

Probably the most important advantages of this plan for departmentalizing the Association would be the solidarity we would achieve, the better grasp we would have of our whole field for scholarship, teaching, and practice, and the greater recognition we would receive from administrators and colleagues through the increased importance we would gain as a large and unified professional organization. Even more than now our annual directory would become the complete *Who's Who* of our profession. Surely these probable advantages outweigh the possible disadvantages of a more complex structure for our Association.

## COMMENTARIES

### RESEARCH AS AN INTEGRATOR

We are split up into all sorts of schools of belief. To a certain extent that is desirable, but we fail to agree on the most fundamental matters. We have of course made spotty progress; but if we are to make rapid progress and deserve fully the recognition we demand, we must have the services of investigators; we must encourage young men to take up research in our field.—J. A. Winans, "The Need for Research," *QJS*, I (April 1915), 17.