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Speech- The Magnificent Gift

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SPEECH-- THE MAGNIFICENT GIFT

By DR. MARIE J. ROBINSON



**THE CENTURY CLUB
ILLINOIS WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY
Bloomington, Illinois**

*Address by Professor Marie J. Robinson
on the occasion of the
Century Club Dinner
held on May 16, 1967
Bloomington Country Club*

*Dr. Robinson had been chosen by the faculty
as recipient of the
Century Club Award for 1967*

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By DR. MARIE J. ROBINSON

In expressing our gratitude for all of our many blessings—home, family and friends, the material comforts of food, clothing and shelter, the spiritual blessings of mind and soul—we are prone to overlook one of the greatest gifts of all, that of speech. It is a gift we receive at such an early age that we become so accustomed to it by the age of reason that we rarely stop to appreciate it; yet it is the gift we use more often than almost any other bestowed upon us or acquired by us. From infancy we utilize sound for communication, and as adults seventy percent of our communication is oral, for we use an average of 4800 words a day in normal conversation. Granted that baby sounds are certainly not the most refined means of communication, we should also realize that they are a most effective method of making known our needs and desires. What mother cannot distinguish from the quality and duration of the cry whether it is hunger, pain, or temper which motivates the outbreak? What parent cannot translate the babbling of his child into coherent descriptions and requests? Although clear verbalization does not occur until a child is approximately two years old, how many of you will concede that your child did not talk long before that numerical time? Certainly no knowledgeable speech person would argue the point with any proud father or mother, for a child does communicate vocally from the day he is born.

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That oral communication should be included in our appreciation of gifts is even more imperative when we consider the further point that speech is an overlaid function. There is no part of the vocal mechanism which was intended primarily for speech. We borrow what is needed from the digestive and breathing mechanisms. From the digestive organs we utilize the tongue, teeth, lips, jaw, cheeks and hard and soft palates to form specific sounds. From the breathing mechanism we obtain the motor force, the expelled breath, the diaphragmatic control, the resonance chambers essential for sound. Even the vocal folds, or cords as they are more commonly called, are a protective device for our breathing mechanism. The thin, cellophane-thick edge of them, which help to make a tight closure to prevent foreign objects or liquids from going into the lungs, are the "cords" which vibrate with the expulsion of air past them, and so give us our voice. If you have never thought of speech as an overlaid function before, consider it for a moment now. In times of stress our organs revert to their primary function. Have you choked on a bit of food or a drink of water? That was because you were taking a breath of air at the same time and the food was being sucked into the trachea instead of going into the esophagus tube. The vocal cords immediately clamped together to expel the foreign matter injurious to the lungs, and you coughed the windpipe clear. Have you ever been too scared to speak? Your body was reserving the energy and thought speech would demand in preparation for protection or escape. Have you tried to talk too long on one breath? Try to ignore the bodily demand for oxygen and your voice fades while the lungs take what is essential for your continued existence. Speech, obviously, is an overlaid function.

Even these aspects of speech, however, would hardly give me substantial grounds for calling speech the "Magnificent Gift." I hope you will agree that they make it possible to title it a gift, but why describe it as "Magnificent?" The utilization of such an adjective is the purpose of my lecture.

Too often, because speech *is* such a familiar thing, we overlook its many-sided aspect. Most people think of speech as public speaking, or public address. While speech making is one of the important areas of the speech field, it is by no means all of it. The field stretches all the way from conversation at one end to drama at the other. In between are all the varied possibilities of oral communi-

cation—group discussion, debate, radio and television broadcasting, speech rehabilitation, and oral interpretation. In covering these aspects speech touches every academic discipline.

Conversation is the simplest mode of speech and may well be the most revealing of one's knowledge and character. In casual exchange with friends and colleagues one naturally draws from all experiences and studies that are encountered. The wider the background the more stimulating the conversationalist.

Public address cannot be adequately covered without a knowledge of history, philosophy, religion, logic, ethics and sociology, for any list of great speakers past or present is a Who's Who of thinkers, doers, statesmen, political and spiritual leaders, and molders of human society. Cicero, Peter the Hermit, Hitler, Gladstone, Jefferson, Wesley, Churchill, Christ—choose from any time, any country, any profession, and you will find that the leaders were effective and able public speakers.

The aspects of discussion and debate take us into business, economics, government, teaching, and law. What business or social group functions today without committees and meetings, conferences and reports? A lawyer exists on briefs and the ability to analyze, interpret, apply and talk. New machines and aids will help but cannot eliminate the need for a teacher's vocalization. Our local, state and national governments cannot function without free speech in all forms of communication. Our entire political and economic and social structure are founded and continued on the individual's ability to express his needs, wants and aspirations clearly and effectively. Eugene and Ruth Hartley, in their book on communication, extend the importance of effective message exchange beyond the individual to the group. They see it performing as does "cement, mortar, glue," and as being similar to "the charges of a magnetic field."¹ They stress the need for easy and facile communication in "every formal organization . . . industrial unit . . . (and) governmental body" as well as "small informal organizations."² Agreeing with the Hartleys that communication is "the basic tool" that relates the individual to his social environment, is Dr. Charles S. Steinberg in his book **MASS MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION**.³ He defines language as "the accumulation of symbolized human experiences."⁴ Language naturally includes written as well as spoken symbols, but reflect a moment on how much more fre-

quently we speak rather than write. Just in the past week how much writing have you done, and how much speaking? How much of your business and professional progress as well as your social enjoyment is dependent on oral communication? It was Professor Norbert Wiener in his work on CYBERNETICS AND SOCIETY who presented the thesis that the only way to understand society is to study its "messages and (its) communication facilities."⁵

Radio and television, of course, utilize all the vocal modes of communication—public speech, discussions, debates, conversation, drama, interpretation—in bringing to our society news, politics, entertainment, education, problems, solutions, international concerns and merchandising. Radio and TV have merely increased the size of the audience that can be reached at any one time, and have made even more important in our one world of today the necessity for effective speaking. Since they have lessened to a measurable extent the amount of reading that is done today, it becomes imperative to improve the other aspect of communication, speaking. Most colleges and universities have recognized this fact by requiring courses in speech as they have always required courses in English. Dr. Karin Dovring, Swedish author and Visiting Professor at the International University for Social Studies at the Vatican, has emphasized the increased importance of the spoken word in an article on global communication. In it she points out that what the "opinion leaders and their opponents" say is often overlooked or considered too late to be of help in revealing "their purpose and the community's character."⁶ Consider in this respect the lack of attention given by other nations to Hitler's speeches and the lack of interest in de Gaulle's speeches which foretold his recent actions.

Perhaps the point I am trying to make about speech is most simply revealed in psychiatrist Paul Tournier's statement that we are fully conscious only of that which we can express to another person.⁷

Sometimes the lack of communication is not due to inattention but to physical and mental difficulties. With speech rehabilitation we move into the field of science and medicine, psychology and surgery. Here one deals with simple articulation problems, which may be due merely to imitation of faulty and careless speech or to hearing inadequacies, or with serious structural difficulties due to developmental failure or organic disintegration such as uranoschisis,

deviated septum or defects of the rima glottidis. Again the problem may be one of gland deficiency causing too rapid or too sluggish speech, or of psychological complexity appearing in such guises as improper pitch or stuttering. The difficulty may be part of cerebral palsy or of calcification of the joints. Whatever the problem, whatever the cause, training in this area of speech strives to find the cure and alleviate the trouble, to the end that no one shall be deprived of his power of oral communication.

Drama is another part of the speech spectrum with which people are familiar. Even the backstage and production work are known due to program credits, and to pictures and plays depicting the work of property, lighting, scenery, costuming, makeup and stage crews, as well as box office and promotion work. The plays themselves are a continuing source of entertainment and of knowledge, of broadening one's understanding of eras past and present, and of man's awareness and sensitivity to the people around him and to the society in which he moves.

I have purposely left one part of the multi-faceted speech prism until the last, because it is the aspect which I enjoy the most—oral interpretation. Here all the literature we know, all the plays and poetry and prose, all the essays and letters and speeches, all the sermons and lectures and philosophies, all that is contained in the books which are the foundations of our education, are the core upon which interpretation is based.

Quite simply interpretation is the art of re-creating the author's intention by use of voice and body. More explicitly it is, as Charlotte Lee has defined it in her excellent and scholarly text on ORAL

INTERPRETATION,

"the art of communicating to an audience, from the printed page, a work of literary art in its intellectual, emotional and aesthetic entirety."⁸

Although that does not sound too complicated, implementing the words requires a minimum of a year's concentrated work. Why? Well, the task of the interpreter is threefold. It involves the selection of the material, the understanding of the material, and the presentation of the material.

When we come to selection of what is to be presented, we have available the whole range of literature and writing already men-

tioned. The possibilities are endless, the restrictions are few. One must consider the audience which is always a factor in speech, analyzing its makeup, interests, cohesive elements, age, education, the occasion which has assembled the group, and the time limit. Obviously, presenting Mother Goose rhymes to an adult college audience would be an unwise choice, although the use of *THE SPACE CHILD'S MOTHER GOOSE* by Frederick Winsor might be lightly entertaining. For example, instead of the black hen laying eggs for gentlemen of the original rhyme, the space child's version has the eggs laid "in the Relative When," explaining that this is all the hen can do "Because she's unable to Postulate How." Little Jack Horner no longer eats a fattening Christmas pie in his corner. Now Jack is put to work "Extracting cube roots to infinity." The value of this exercise is also indicated in that it "will minimize noise" establishing a "more peaceful vicinity." However, such material is too limited in challenge and in content to be truly appropriate. It also lacks another requirement, that of the sound element, the excellence in writing, which should be present to make interpretation rewarding and worthwhile for both reader and hearer. It is frustrating to expend the needed time and effort on shoddy material. One needs to evaluate in terms of the extrinsic factors of universality, individuality and associational values, so that the material stimulates the taste and imagination of both performer and recipient. In this respect one can never stop adding to his knowledge of literature, whether it be in English, French, German, Spanish, or any language.

Once the material is selected, the interpreter must begin his preparation of it by a thorough analysis of the thought and feeling, of the logical and emotional meanings of the selection. In order to do this he has a number of steps to follow.

After reading the total selection silently for the main impression, and reading it orally for the possibility of projecting that main idea to others, the reader needs to check his grasp of the material by an extensive study of the author and the selection itself. The character, philosophy and motivation of the author may give the interpreter greater understanding of the literary work. Consider in this respect Stanza 113 from Lord Byron's *CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE*:

"I have not loved the World, nor the World me;
I have not flattered its rank breath, nor bowed

To its idolatries a patient knee,
Nor coined my cheek to smiles, nor cried aloud
In worship of an echo; in the crowd
They could not deem me one of such—I stood
Among them, but not of them—in a shroud
Of thoughts which were not their thoughts, and still could,

Had I not filed my mind, which thus itself subdued.”

An awareness of this 19th century poet as a man of struggle and revolt, a knowledge of his bitterness over his physical deformity and the home life he had with a mentally disturbed mother, a realization of his unhappy personal experiences helps the reader understand the defiance and skepticism of much of his writing.

How much is added to the reading of Edwin Markham's *THE MAN WITH THE HOE*, when one realizes it was written after seeing Millet's painting, and has examined that painting? With the painting in mind, with Markham's feeling that the working man was being exploited by mechanization, one can read with much more sympathy such lines as "Bowed by the weight of centuries," and "gazes on the ground," and "the burden of the world." He can color much more vividly for his listeners the brutal jaw, the slanted brow, the dumb and hopeless look of the man, "a brother to the ox." He can really challenge the men who have done this to others in defiance of God's plan.

Rudyard Kipling's *WHEN EARTH'S LAST PICTURE IS PAINTED* may present problems in understanding and in effective reading unless one knows that it was written to console a friend of his, the father of a young painter. The son was so discouraged by the critical reaction to the first showing of his work that he committed suicide. To help assuage some of the grief the father felt, Kipling wrote about the time to come *WHEN EARTH'S LAST PICTURE IS PAINTED* and all the colors are gone and "the youngest critic has died." He pictured brushes made of comets' hair, models who would be the real saints, and a joy in working not for money or for fame, but in simply painting what the artist saw "for the God of Things as They are!" Much of Kipling's work is directly related to his life—his experiences in India, his eye trouble, his schooling in England—all of which are expressed in his writings, a knowledge of which adds meaning and feeling to the oral word. The *RECES-*

SIONAL, however, needs to be evaluated in terms of Kipling's fear that England was so happy over Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee that it was forgetting the eternal presence of God. He reminds the people that

"The captains and the kings depart" and
"Farcalled, our navies melt away."

He pleads for understanding and forgiveness with
"Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget."

Robert Browning's PROSPICE is another work which gains impact and meaning from a knowledge that this is the poem Browning wrote after his wife's death. Elizabeth Barrett Browning needs no finer testimonial to the happiness these two poets shared than:

"Fear death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of the storm,
The post of the foe;
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,
Yet the strong man must go:
For the journey is done and the summit attained,
And the barriers fall,
Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,
The reward of it all.
I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,
And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers
The heroes of old,
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay life's glad arrears
Of pain, darkness and cold.
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
The black minute's at end,
And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,

Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest!"

Now, having discovered what we can from the author's life and philosophy, having checked the literary form the author has used—the unity and harmony, the variety and contrast, the balance and proportion and rhythm of the prose or poetry or play form the author employed—the interpreter needs to check the logical and emotional meaning of the material. The connotative as well as the denotative meaning of words, word and phrase relationships in the writing, the use of imagery and tone color and figures of speech, the punctuation marks—all these are essential to a complete grasp of the material.

To cover these in detail would far exceed the time allotted me. Instead, let me illustrate the importance of these aspects by arbitrarily selecting two of them, imagery and tone color.

Imagery is a kind of emotional meaning. It is the identifying imagination by which the child or the primitive man or the author transfers his own "I" into unorganic or organic world. Whitman has succinctly stated it for us in

"There was a child went forth each day

And the first object he looked upon, that object he became."
Imagery is dependent on the senses, and therefore images are named visual, auditory, tactile, gustatory, olfactory, motor and thermic. There are no images of feeling itself. You cannot feel loveliness or hatred; the only effective way of arousing any feeling that is more than physical sensitivity is to call upon the images you associate with that feeling. Therefore, imagery is dependent on the senses, on the imagination, and on one's ability to recall past experiences. Professor Fred Brian, of the IWU Art School, prefaced one of his shows at Memorial Center by commenting that his paintings were his images, and added:

"An image is what is left when experience is past. They say that the northern lights are caused by atoms from the sun hitting our magnetic field. As the atom is invisible, so may an image be invisible, yet we know it is there. Images like these are the tracks of experiences

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passing through us and around us. They are the ghosts of action. It is also said that the northern lights are the ghosts of dead warriors. I like this explanation better than the other one.

"These images of mine have little practical use; they are not photographs or ikons, nor do they tell any stories. We cannot cook and eat an image. We cannot split wood with it. Images are memories. Like trees, we might miss them if we lost them."

Not only would we miss them, we might have difficulty understanding and recreating the author's intent and mood if we did not have them, and bring them out in our reading of his material.

Shakespeare was particularly adept at using images to create the mood and to clarify the intent of his characters. Consider how much one gains from such lines as:

"... look, love, what envious streaks
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east,
Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain top."

Without imagery we would be told that the night is over and day is coming. Lady Macbeth's intent is effectively underlined by such words as:

"Look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under it."
Take the imagery from Macbeth's last soliloquy and you lose the great lesson his unbridled ambition taught him:

"Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing."

T. S. Eliot's imagery is unforgettable, too. In his RHAPSODY ON A WINDY NIGHT his street lamps beating "like a fatalistic drum," and the picture of a "madman" shaking "a dead geranium" stimulate images that add immeasurably to the thought.

Carl Sandburg is a past master at imagery, vividly apparent in his WILDERNESS. His description of the wolf with "fangs pointed for tearing gashes," for example, or that of the fox circling and looping and doublecrossing, or that of the hog as a machine that eats and grunts, etc., all these are such strong, vital images that you immediately see and sense these animals moving in the wilderness clearly and unforgettably.

Think of Coleridge's "And ice, mast-high, came floating by, as green as emerald," or Dylan Thomas' "Do not go gentle into that good night," or any one of your favorite authors. The better they are, the more effective their images.

Let us turn now for a short look at the other point on preparation I mentioned, tone color. Tone color is the sound hue, the individual complexion, the design in sound that adds to the literature in which it is used and strengthens the impression desired by the author. It is based on the fact that various sounds have dramatic value, and are used by writers deliberately to convey the mood and emotion. Long vowel sounds give horror, awe, solemnity, greatness, as can be easily noted in this excerpt from Milton's L'ALLEGRO:

"Hence, loathed Melancholy,
Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born
In Stygian cave forlorn,
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy."

The same selection illustrates the joy, lightness, delicacy, brightness of the short vowel sounds:

"Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee
Jest, and youthful Jollity.
Quips and Cranks and wanton Wiles,
Nods and Becks and wreathed Smiles."

Consonants are equally helpful in conveying emotion and mood. Perhaps the most obvious use of consonants is in alliteration, though this is but a small part of their contribution in the hands of a skillful artist. The vowel-like consonants such as *w*, *r*, and *l* give a smoothness, a flowing, soothing quality to a word, as *mellow*, *hills*, and *liquid*. Stop-plosives add precision, finality, even abruptness. Consider the difference in the use of *go* and *leave*, *stop* and *cease*. Warmth, sympathy, richness are evoked by lip-rounded sounds, as one finds in *moon*, and *blue*. In addition to the individual vowel and consonant sounds one must be aware of the figures of speech—

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simile, metaphor, alliteration, assonance, consonance, onomatopoeia, hyperbole, synecdoche—all are used intentionally by writers, and their contribution cannot be overlooked by the effective interpreter.

Some examples may help to clarify the point more readily.

Consider the idea reinforcement given by the actual sound of the words in such a line as Longfellow's

"The day is cold and dark and dreary."

Notice the length of the sounds which add to the concept of Psalm 24's

"The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof;
the world, and they that dwell therein."

Listen to the onomatopoeia in Shakespeare's

"Double, double, toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble."

Vachel Lindsay's *THE CONGO* utilizes almost every sound device. For instance, there is assonance in the repetition of short vowel sounds as "fat, black, barrel, sagged," and long vowel sounds as "room, broom, boom." There is alliteration in "black, bucks, barrel, beat, broom." There is onomatopoeia in "pounded, boomlay, boom." All of these are apparent in the first ten lines!

Without attention to the sound value of words Edgar Allen Poe's *THE BELLS* is almost meaningless. In the first stanza all the sounds are small and silvery:

"Hear the sledges with the bells—
Silver bells!

What a world of merriment their melody foretells!

How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,

In the icy air of night!

While the stars, that oversprinkle

All the heavens, seem to twinkle

With a crystalline delight; . . ."

The next stanza shifts to a softer, richer sound with

"Hear the mellow wedding bells,
Golden bells!

What a world of happiness their harmony foretells!

Through the balmy air of night

How they ring out their delight!—

From the molten-golden notes,

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And all in tune, . . .”
Next we have the harsh sounds with
“Hear the loud alarum bells,
Brazen bells!
What a tale of terror now their turbulency tells!
In the startled ear of night
How they scream out their affright!
Too much horrified to speak,
They can only shriek, shriek,
Out of tune, . . .”
It ends with the heavy and monotonous
“Hear the tolling of the bells—
Iron bells!
What a world of solemn thought their monody compels!
In the silence of the night
How we shiver with affright
At the melancholy menace of their tone! . . . “

A word of warning should be included. It is possible to become so enamored with the sounds of the words that the meaning is distorted or lost. The sound and imagery, the technical devices, are merely tools which help the author convey his meaning and feeling—they are not the end in themselves. While a change in sound may alter the meaning, a superabundance of sound may obscure the meaning. Hopefully, in working on the third aspect of interpretation, the presentation of the material, this difficulty will be resolved.

When we come to the presentation of material we again have a number of steps to follow. Bodily movement and expression, vocal quality and force and tempo and pitch must be decided upon in keeping with the author's words. Pauses, climaxes, phrasing, tones—all these must be considered—and practiced. There will be decisions which must be made by the individual interpreter, dependent upon his taste and imagination and ability. The task now is to make the words which the preparation have made clear and vivid, come alive. If the interpreter gives only a sensible, logical reading, an intellectual meaning without the emotional value coexisting with the denotation, the listener would do better to read the material himself. Then he can add as the author did the needed syncopation to Langston Hughes' THE WEARY BLUES:

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"Droning a drowsy syncopated tune, . . ."
He can hear the dancing insistence of the hill-billy fiddler in Stephen Vincent Benet's **THE MOUNTAIN WHIPPOORWILL**:

"Swing yore partners—up an' down the middle!"
He can relish the childlike quality of the pre-Civil War slavery story, **FREEDOM'S A HARD-BOUGHT THING**, as Benet wrote it:

"A long time ago, in times gone by, in slavery times, . . ."
He can find the whispering sibilance that critic Leslie Paul suggests is the key to understanding T. S. Eliot in such material as **THE HOLLOW MEN**:

"the stuffed men," "headpiece filled with straw . . ."
He can have fun with the Irish lilt in Charlotte Arthur's **THE WAY OF A STAR**:

"A strange thing in a star . . ."
or with the Italian in T. A. Daly's **MIA CARLOTTA**:

"Giuseppe, da barber, ees greata for 'mash,' . . ."
He can delight in the restraint of E. A. Robinson's **RICHARD CORY** who "one calm summer night" put the fatal bullet "through his head."

He can revel with Shakespeare's three witches in **MACBETH**:

1: Where hast thou been, sister?

2: Killing swine.

3: Sister, where thou?

1: A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,
And munch'd and munch'd, and munch'd.

'Give me,' quoth I.

'Aroint thee, witch!' the rump-fed runyon cried.
Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' the Tiger;
But in a sieve I'll thither sail,
And like a rat without a tail,
I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do.

2: I'll give thee a wind.

1: Thou'rt kind.

3: And I another.

1: I myself have all the other,
And the very ports they blow,
All the quarters that they know
I' the shipman's card.

I'll drain him dry as hay.
Sleep shall neither night nor day
Hang upon his pent-house lid;
He shall live a man forbid.
Weary se'nights nine times nine
Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine;
Though his bark cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be tempest-tost.
Look what I have.

2: Show me, show me.

1: Here I have a pilot's thumb,
Wreck'd as homeward he did come.

3: A drum, a drum!
Macbeth doth come.

ALL: The weird sisters, hand in hand,
Posters of the sea and land,
Thus do go about, about;
Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
And thrice again, to make up nine.
Peace! The charm's wound up."

Unless the vocalization stimulates the senses as well as satisfies the mind, the interpreter is not doing justice to the author's intentions; he is not presenting the work in its entirety—intellectual, emotional and aesthetic; he is not interpreting the material, but merely reading it aloud.

Although I have elaborated on the interpretative aspect of speech, I would not have you forget the other phases previously mentioned—conversation, public address, debate, discussion, radio, television, speech rehabilitation, and drama. It is only when we view the entire spectrum that we can realize speech touches human relationships at every point, both personal and social. It is the most nearly universal of all social phenomena, and it is at the same time the essential integrating factor between academic education and life, between man and his fellow men, between the individual and the group. It is the most common form of communication, and it is at one and the same time the simplest and the most complex of the communicative devices. I hope that after this, when someone mentions speech to you, you will no longer look at it as *only* public

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speaking, but will see it in all its aspects and varied possibilities and responsibilities. As one of the most basic skills of the social process, it becomes the bridge of understanding between individual and individual, between group and group.

Because speech, the overlaid function of civilized man, holds within it such tremendous possibilities, because it offers to those who are willing to expend the time on it such exciting opportunities for service and reward, because it is one of the yardsticks of evolution and one of the humanizing elements of man, speech is truly a Magnificent Gift.

In bringing you these comments I trust I have fulfilled to some extent Goethe's recommendation:

"One ought at least to hear a little melody every day,
read a fine poem, see a good picture, and, if possible,
make a few sensible remarks."

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- 8 Lee, Charlotte I., Ph.D., ORAL INTERPRETATION, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 3rd edition, 1965, p. 7

This lecture is the eighth in a series prepared by Illinois Wesleyan University faculty members for presentation at the annual Century Club dinner. Mr. Gene Paxton, president of the Club, was Master of Ceremonies.

Mr. Robert Donalson of the Music School faculty and Miss Linda Wilson, voice major, sang several duets.

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