

Department of Speech and Theatre

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A few months ago Bruce Catton wrote an article describing the origin, growth and significance of the enormous "Oral History" library collections of taped, candid interviews with people in public life, who molded or observed at first hand the making of contemporary history. After speaking of the richness of the manuscript collections available to him and to other historians working in the Civil War period, he observed that "There will be no such reservoir on the 1940's, '50's, and '60's. We talk on the phone nowadays, or face to face, instead of writing. As for diarists, the pace of life has outstripped all but the most resolute."

The oral orientation of our society has become so predominant in the last century that today's historians are foresightedly preserving oral reminiscences and observations as source materials for tomorrow's scholars. In such an orally oriented society the staff of the Department of Speech and Theatre at Hunter, like others throughout the country, seeks to foster in its students an understanding of the processes and principles of re-

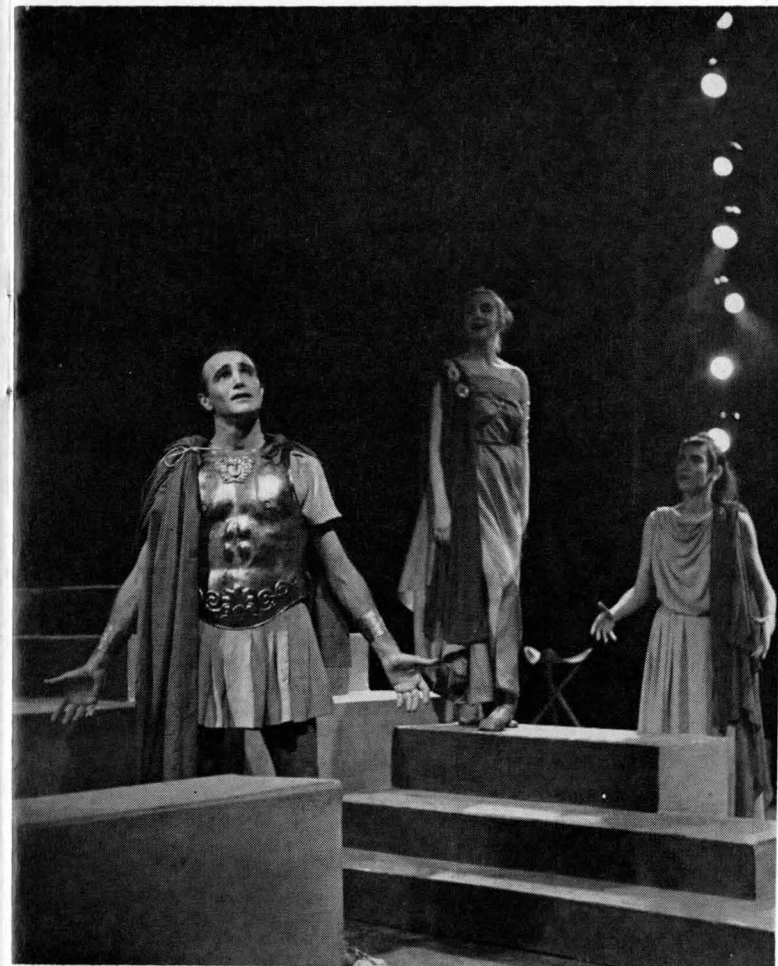
sponsible oral communication and to develop skill in its practical application.

The Greeks, who also lived in an oral society, were vitally concerned with rhetoric, theatre, and their sister art of oral interpretation. These disciplines remain basic in our curriculum today. Rhetoric to the Greeks referred to the art of persuasion; contemporary rhetoric is broader in scope, being concerned with all forms of the practical art of discourse.

Since it is essential that graduates communicate effectively and responsibly in all of their endeavors, the Department requires of all its students, except those who demonstrate proficiency (either through examination or prior training), a course in the fundamentals of speaking. Elective courses in argumentation, group discussion, parliamentary procedures, the psychology of speech, language of communication, and persuasive speaking provide undergraduates with the opportunity to deepen their insights into the nature and impact of speech behavior and to develop these skills through practice.

Theatre Workshop production of Truman Capote's The Grass Harp





Theatre Workshop production of Giraudoux' *Electra*

On an extracurricular basis, the Hunter College Debate Forum was founded in 1960 to promote and sustain interest in forensic activities. Sponsored by the Department of Speech and Theatre, the program is designed to provide training in responsible advocacy for all interested students. During the past year varsity and novice debaters "clashed" with students from colleges throughout the country in well over one hundred debates. In tournaments from Boston to Baltimore, Hunter's name was carried proudly by undergraduates interested in grappling with current complex problems.

The Department sponsors as well an annual college-wide public speaking competition. Often the winners are students who first become involved in public address while taking our beginning course.

Our growing graduate program includes courses in theory, criticism, history, and experimental research in rhetoric and public address. Students completing the M.A. with such an emphasis help to meet the urgent and seemingly endless demand for specialists in this area.

In theatre, the undergraduate courses include basic

courses in acting, directing, history, stagecraft, and theatre workshop. The latter is an active performing program which, when combined with the graduate performance activity, results in a major production schedule on both campuses. Four full-length plays and approximately thirty to forty short plays (of which twenty-five percent are original scripts from playwriting classes) are presented each year. The full-length plays are carefully selected to provide a valuable contribution to the students' liberal and humane education. The Workshop's repertoire has included Brecht's *The Good Woman of Setzuan*, Lorca's *Yerma*, Saroyan's *The Cave Dwellers*, and Romain's *Dr. Knock*. The theatre area of the Department has markedly enlarged its curriculum and productivity as a result of the development of the M.A. program. This program is unusual among the nation's educational theatre centers because of its emphasis on the interrelation between playwright and director.

In Oral Interpretation the Department offers a series of courses both at the undergraduate and graduate levels, including interpretation of prose, poetry and drama. Students from the Department participate regularly in the Metropolitan and Eastern Oral Interpretation Festivals. This year, in a national, tape-recorded competition in interpretation among college students, sponsored by the University of Denver, a Hunter student was selected as one of six winners.

In addition to the traditional oral disciplines, the Department now includes study in the vital areas of communication of modern origin. Only recently has it been realized how desperately handicapped are those individuals who cannot communicate orally with even minimal competence. This realization has created widespread interest in communication disorders and has stimulated the growth of the Speech Pathology and Audiology programs. While the Department insists on a broad-based liberal arts education, a sufficient number of professional foundation courses are available at the undergraduate level to qualify students as teachers of the handicapped in speech and hearing, or as speech pathologists and audiologists in hospital clinics.

Since it is essential for all speech pathologists and audiologists to obtain a Master's degree, most professional courses are given at the graduate level. The Master's degree in Teacher Education serves best the student who wishes to continue in the public schools, while the Master's degree in the Arts and Sciences is most appropriate for those interested in clinical work and research. The many liberal traineeship grants in this field supported by the Veterans Rehabilitation Administration have made it possible for qualified students in the Arts and Sciences program to attend on a full time basis and thus to hasten the earning of the degree.

The Speech and Hearing Center serves as a laboratory for both graduate and undergraduate students and as a resource for the community. Although the Center has been in operation only since 1958, the demand for its services has necessitated the acquisition of an annex at 790 Madison Avenue, which was made possible by a generous grant from the New York State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Great numbers of individuals referred by physicians and social agencies come to the Center for evaluation and therapy. The Center, therefore, provides a training ground where students observe and practice the application of textbook principles.

In the area of Speech and Hearing Science the Department offers a number of courses, mainly at the graduate level, involving the study of the structure and functioning of the vocal and auditory mechanics in relation to their physiological, acoustic, and phonological characteristics.

In the fall of 1965, a Doctoral program in Speech and Hearing Science, Speech Pathology and Audiology will be inaugurated by the City University. Professor Moe Bergman of the Department of Speech and Theatre at Hunter is Executive Officer for the program.

The advent of radio, television and films has also added a new and significant discipline to the work of the department. The theories and practice of the older disciplines must be modified to be effective in the mass media; and the study of the interaction of mass communication with cultural values now assumes great importance. A series of courses reflecting these concerns have been introduced at undergraduate and graduate levels. Radio studios on both campuses permit students the opportunity for realistic practice in applying the principles.

Great as is the range of specialized interests within the Department, all majors are required to have a broadly based orientation in the entire field of oral communication.

Department personnel includes the following members: Professors—Moe Bergman (D.Ed., Columbia University); Jennie W. Callahan (Ph.D., University of Berlin); Charles Elson (M.F.A., Yale University); Arthur L. Woehl (Ph.D., Cornell University); Associate Professors—Dorothy Doob (D.Ed., New York University); Doris T. Leberfeld (D.Ed., New York University); Domis E. Plugge (Ph.D., Columbia University); Ota T. Reynolds (Ph.D., State University of Iowa); Vera M. Roberts (Ph.D., University of Pittsburgh); Marvin L. Seiger (Ph.D., Indiana University), Chairman of the Department; Cj Stevens (Ph.D., Louisiana State University); Assistant Professors—Joseph Green (Ph.D., Indiana University); Jere S. Veilleux (Ph.D., University of Minnesota); Instructors—Allen Bogarad (Ph.D., Ohio State University); Margaret L. Clark (Ph.D., Uni-

versity of Wisconsin); Joseph DeVito (Ph.D., University of Illinois); Fulton Ross (D.Ed., Columbia University); Michael Rutenberg (D.F.A., Yale University); Norma Stegmaier (Ph.D., University of Illinois); Adjunct Professors—Frederich S. Brodnitz (M.D., University of Berlin); J. Donald Harris (Ph.D., University of Rochester); Adjunct Associate Professors—Katherine S. Harris (Ph.D., Radcliffe-Harvard); Jacques P. Penn (Ph.D., New York University). This membership is augmented by a group of devoted and competent lecturers.

Like other departments in the College, members of our faculty are engaged in scholarly research and creative activities within their own specialized areas. They have authored books, published scores of articles in scholarly journals, and have been active as editors, officers and committee members in national and regional professional organizations in the field. Members of our theatre staff have achieved distinction as playwrights, actors, designers, and directors.

The Department views with pardonable pride the number of fine graduate schools whose scholarly products are represented on our staff. We gain thus a diversity of viewpoints and approaches which add strength to our departmental deliberations and constant challenges to the student body.

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