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A Thesis of the Psychology of Persuasion

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A Thesis on
The Psychology of Persuasion.
Presented
to
The College of William and Mary
as
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement
for
The Degree of Master of Arts
by
George E. Brooks
1930.

Thesis.

Persuasion should involve not only the basic principles of rhetoric, but also the "dynamic" as exemplified in drama.

1. The principles of rhetoric, established by ancient authorities, are unassailable and still prevail.
2. Persuasion involves also the "dynamic," the creative control of speaker over audience and the situation. Such creative control is most easily recognized in the drama.
3. The "dynamic" operates in accordance with well established and recognized principles of psychology.
 - a. A speaker engaged in public persuasion is simply using an outlet for self-expression.
 - b. The functioning of the "dynamic" is in accordance with principles of group psychology.

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I.

In order to present a new theory, it is best first to review the old in order to be familiar with the principles that have been established. Consequently, a review of the principles of rhetoric established by ancient authorities is prerequisite to an attempt to emphasize an element which has hitherto been neglected in discussions of the principles involved in oratorical success before the public. The fundamental principles of rhetoric are unassailable and still prevail against the attacks of time and logic. Therefore, a review of those principles will provide a basis upon which new ideas may be established.

The creator of rhetoric was Aristotle, whose definition of it was, "a faculty of discovering all the possible means of persuasion on any subject."¹ In his works, Aristotle stresses the value of rhetoric, since rhetoric seeks truth and justice, which, in themselves, are inherently superior to their opposites, and since rhetoric must be added to pure knowledge to persuade audiences that will not be convinced by truth in cold, logical form, alone?²

As to the general construction of the speech (which is simply the physical manifestation of rhetorical principles), Aristotle holds that, in general, there are two parts, the stating of the case and the proving of it. "But if more parts are added, they must not exceed four, viz, exordium, exposition, proof, and peroration!"³

1. J. E. C. Welldon, Rhetoric of Aristotle, Translated, Macmillan and Company, New York, 1886, p. 31.

2. Ibid., p. 31.

3. Ibid., p. 279.

Quintilian, however, holds that there are three general stages of progress in a speech, "a beginning, an increase, and a completion!"⁴ And whereas Aristotle divides a speech into only four parts (exordium, exposition, proof, and peroration), Quintilian contends thus: "in every judicial cause there are five parts; that the judge is to be conciliated in the exordium; that the cause is set forth in the statement of facts, supported by evidence, and overthrown by refutation, and that the memory is to be refreshed, or the feelings excited, in the peroration!"⁵

Let us now proceed to a brief examination of the functions and characteristics of these various parts of an oratorical composition.

In the first part, the exordium, the fundamental object is to make clear the purpose, object, or end of the speech and to attract attention to the speaker. Quintilian believes that it is in the exordium that we are interested in securing the good will and attention of the audience and of making the audience desirous of further information.⁶ Moreover, an aim of the exordium is to interest the audience to such an extent that it will listen to a speaker with greater interest in the parts of the speech that follow. One is more inclined to believe if one is inclined to listen. In the exordium there should be at least a hint of what is to come, and such intimation should be of a nature to make it attractive and worthy of attention. These three elements, then, of conciliating the good will of the audience, of raising (and increasing) the attention of the

4. John Selby Watson, Quintilian's Institutes of Oratory, Translated, George Bell and Sons, London, 1903, p. 349, Volume I.

5. Ibid., Volume II, pp. 42, 73.

6. Ibid., Volume I, p. 254.

hearers, and of rendering the hearers submissive to the possibilities of persuasion, these three are the motives underlying the preparation and execution of an exordium. First impressions do count, and sometimes remain fixed after speakers have entered upon ground less smooth and easy to traverse.

As to the length or size of an exordium, there should be a direct relationship between its magnitude and the scope of what follows. Cicero's analogy between the exordium and the rest of the speech and the relation of the vestibule to the house is well established. Common sense should direct the architecture.

The second part of a speech, as established by authorities, is called the partition or the exposition. Either name refers simply to; "the enumeration according to their order, of our own propositions...because, by its aid, the cause is rendered clearer, and the judge more observant and attentive if he knows exactly on what point we are speaking and on what points we intend to speak afterwards!"⁷ It is reasonable to suppose that a partition contributes the quality of clarity to a speech and gives the listener a better appreciation of the few main ideas about which the rest of the speech will be organized.

Aristotle's third division, the proof, which might be called the confirmation, is divided by Quintilian into evidence and refutation. The difference in terminology is simply one of analysis, born of Quintilian's legal attitude toward the twofold process involved in pleading a case. Dis-proof has long been considered a method of

7. Ibid., p. 308.

proof, however, and for Quintilian to say that there are two elements in proof, evidence and refutation, is simply for him to say that one phase of proving a case is the necessity of disproving the other side.

This third step, irrespective of its name, deals with the body of the speech. Needless to say, the body of the speech should be connected with the partition by a smooth and finished transition. Much of the value of a clear and lucid partition can be wasted by a crude transition.

It is common practice among laymen to present strong arguments at the beginning and end of the proof with weak arguments filling in the middle. A better arrangement would probably be to begin with a strong argument and to finish with the strongest argument, putting the less strong ones in the middle. No place at all should be given to weak arguments since their weakness puts strong arguments into disreputable company. With the exception of a strong argument at the beginning, the proper arrangement of arguments should be in the order of climax. This third step, or confirmation, has the responsibility of establishing what has been contended, for proof is essential to argument.

The fourth division of a speech is known as the peroration. There seems to be no disagreement among authorities as to the use of this term for the final stage of a speech. In this section, the speaker reassembles the various arguments, indicating the particular steps by which he has approached the end of his case, and recapitulating,

through a summary, the main heads of his complete argument. In the peroration, the speaker should not only refresh the minds of the audience as to the points of logic he was to establish, but he should also contribute appropriate sentiment to his logic, since people are motivated by the dictates of the heart as often as by the reason of the mind.

Moving the emotions of others depends first of all upon a speaker's ability to stimulate his own emotions, since the chief prerequisite for moving the feelings of people is that the speaker, himself, be moved. Moreover, there is a direct relationship between the extent to which a speaker is moved and the extent to which an audience is moved. A stream cannot rise above its source.

In brief, then, the foregoing are the basic principles of rhetoric, established by ancient authorities. Those principles are unassailable and still prevail. They have to do with the meaning of rhetoric as an element of persuasion and its extension into the parts of a speech under the guise of the exordium, exposition, proof, and peroration. Now that the fundamental principles have been sketched, let us see what must be added to them to lead to successful persuasion.

II.

The second contention of this thesis is that persuasion involves also the "dynamic," the creative control of speaker over audience and over the situation. Such creative control is most easily recognized in the drama.

Drama is purposive speaking. It must accomplish something or else die. Therefore, if we can discover the thing which makes for success of the drama and then identify it in oratory, we shall find the secret of successful speaking. It is, therefore, with considerable interest that we turn to examine drama in order to find out what it is that can be called the secret of successful audience control.

According to the theories of present day writers on the subject of speech, persuasion requires the combination of a speech constructed in accordance with admitted principles of rhetoric together with a speaker who is alive to his responsibilities. It is the contention of this thesis that such a combination will fall far short of success in many instances unless there is also present the element that may be termed the "dynamic".

As evidence of the necessity for the presence of the "dynamic" is submitted the thought that no such powerful result or effect follows the reading of a great speech of history compared with the effect that the speech produced upon the occasion of its original delivery. While it is true that the circumstances cannot be reproduced, it is equally true that even with the use of the imagination, it is often difficult to discover the reason for greatness on the grounds of rhetoric alone. The conclusion follows that there must have been something in the speech that could not be put on paper.

Great actors and great orators have much in common. Probably the most important factor in the work of each is the "dynamic," which is, in part, composed of the dramatic element. Cicero was convinced that actors and orators were close of kin when he wrote: "I would have you first of all...persuade yourself of this, that, when I speak of an orator, I speak not much otherwise than I should do if I had to speak of an actor..."⁸

The methods of both actor and orator are well stated by Quintilian in these words: "Where there is occasion for moving compassion, too, we must endeavor to believe, and to feel convinced that the evils of which we complain have actually happened to ourselves. We must imagine ourselves to be those very persons for whom we lament as having suffered grievous, undeserved, and pitiable treatment; we must not plead their cause as that of another, but we must endeavor to feel for a time their sufferings; and thus we shall say for them what we should in similar circumstances say for ourselves. I have often seen actors, both in tragedy and comedy, when they laid aside their mask after going through some distressing scene, quit the theatre weeping.

"We assume the character of an orphan, of a person that has been shipwrecked, or one that is in danger of losing his life; but to what purpose is it to assume their characters, if we do not adopt their feelings? This art I thought should not be concealed from the reader, the art by which I myself...conceive that I have attained at least some reputation for ability; and I have often been

8. J. S. Watson, Cicero on Oratory and Orators, Translated, David McKay, Publisher, 610 South Washington Square, Philadelphia, p. 235.

so affected, that not only tears but paleness and sorrow, similar to real sorrow, have betrayed my emotions!"⁹

Since both orator and actor depend for their success upon the same elements, and since the "dynamic" has been used already as the term to cover these elements in toto, an analysis of the "dynamic" ought to provide a clearer conception of the mode of success. The principles of rhetoric are assumed to be prerequisite to the "dynamic"; that is, the very best methods and means of organization and arrangement of material should first be utilized.

The essence of the word, "dynamic," is the idea of the dynamo which is a device or method of converting power into energy in the form of current through the agency of electromagnetic induction. The "dynamic" also pertains to motion as the result of activity or action in terms of force or energy. Hence the atmosphere sometimes created by a speaker or actor is the result of power radiated through the individual's personality by the creation of energy. The origin of such energy is in the dramatic elements of a speech; and the source of success in a speaker, as well as in an actor, is in his dramatic qualities and possibilities.

The "dynamic" was born, originally, of the desire of people to express themselves. Its origin was coincident with the origin of the drama. The "dynamic" urge, -- the desire to find an outlet for energy stored within individuals, -- was responsible for the people's using and usurping the drama as a mode of expression.

The "dynamic" exists in places and things other than drama.

9. John Selby Watson, Quintilian's Institutes of Oratory, Translated,
George Bell and Sons, London, 1903, p. 429.

But it is present to so evident an extent in drama that it can be easily recognized there by anyone who simply remembers to identify it when in its grasp. One has only to go to see a play (any play that holds the attention of the auditor), and the "dynamic" is sure to be present. The greater the workmanship, the more intensified is the "dynamic." And, unless the play sags, the "dynamic" ought to be present from the beginning to the end of the play.

The "dynamic" is most easily recognized in a drama in its process of being enacted. Yet it is also present to as great a degree at the moment of delivery of a great speech. It is most apparent in a speaker in his moments of greatest success. It is present in every phase of his work if the observer can only see it. It is an inherent element in all successful accomplishment.

The "dynamic" is born of generated energy; yet, once created, it helps establish its own energy through magnification. It is not life alone so much as the potentiality, process, and consummation of the life-creating process. It is more than "a soul on fire in a great cause"; it is the process of combustion as the interaction takes place. The "dynamic" is neither speaker nor audience, neither speech nor rhetoric. It is a condition and a process. The "dynamic" is born of the emotions; yet it is no single emotion; -- rather it is the combination. It is not attention alone; it is the consequence of attention. It is dependent, not upon the effort or stimulus of the speaker, but upon the result or success of the effort upon the response. The "dynamic" is born of the action and reaction of speaker and listener.

It is the product--not of the speaker who believes that a rhetorically composed speech and studied delivery are ninety per cent of success--but of the speaker who believes that all preparation previous to one's first moment before an audience is merely ten per cent of the total effort required, and that the remaining ninety per cent deals with the problem of the "dynamic".

The "dynamic" is composed of life; yet it is not life alone. The "dynamic" is a condition, a relationship, a dramatization of creative ideas. It is a process involving the speaker and his audience plus the unnumbered and unknown factors which may enter. It is the quality of holding the attention of the audience; yet it is not merely the process of attention. In oratory, it includes the creative control exerted by a speaker over an audience at the moment of contact and during the process which varies from moment to moment.

Again, it is the personality of a speaker in combination with the personality of an audience--all in public form. It is personality and soul in action unaware of public display. It is a mind thinking aloud in accordance with, and in combination with, other minds which react to such a stimulus. It is most apparent in moments of greatest climax; yet it can be present in a smile or whisper or even a gesture.

The "dynamic," then, is by all odds the greatest factor in successful speech, whether it is the actor or the orator that is before the audience. Moreover, the things that make for great drama on the stage are also the very elements that make for great oratory.

Such creative control as has been indicated in the foregoing is most easily recognized in the drama.

In order to be on common ground, we must first come to some common understanding as to what is meant by the term, "drama." When one uses the term, "drama," or the term, "dramatic," one thinks of a theatre. It is unfortunate that the kind of response to the stimulus of the word, "drama," is a concept of a building full of sham rather than that of one dedicated to the true expression of the instincts and emotions of the human being. As a consequence, people have come to confuse the term "dramatic" with the term "theatric." When men in the profession of teaching, or in other vocations, recoil with disgust at the thought of a speech as "dramatic," it is "theatric" they have in mind as marking a speech that is repugnant.

The difference between "theatric" and "dramatic" implies everything except the emotional expression of the artist. The building, the costumes, wigs, grease paint, footlights, drops, scenery, and so forth are all elements of the "theatric." They are all artificial. They represent the sham of what is called "showmanship," and there is nothing real about them. But drama, even though it may be (and often is) surrounded by the artificiality of the "theatric," is not sham or artificiality. Drama is genuine and pure. It is just as certain and enduring as human beings themselves. It is because of this confusing of the true with the false, the genuine with the imitation, that drama must establish itself among people who should make finer discriminations.

In this discussion, the "dramatic" is not the "theatric" which many people call to mind. Drama is the expression of the instincts and emotions generated in the minds and souls of human beings and is expressed in a form which is known as "acting". The essence of drama is emotion. Saintsbury said that drama was "that great hybrid between poetry and prose". The Greeks emphasized action in their interpretation of the drama. Professor George Baker, of Yale, emphasizes character. In Dryden's Essay of Dramatic Poesy, Crites says that the play is a "just and lively image of human nature representing its passions and humours and the changes of fortune to which it is subject, for the delight and instruction of mankind". Brunetiere maintained that drama was essentially a mental struggle. But our position is that drama is not drama unless it grips and holds the audience and leads it to some definite frame of mind as a conclusion. Further, it is necessary that the principal means of expression in drama be the human element of its actors.

The dramatic can best be understood if we base ideas of drama upon this definition: "Drama deals through the material medium of actor and stage with a conflict, struggle, or crisis in the life of an individual, or in the lives of individuals, so as to arouse in the audience, individually and compositely, emotions similar or dissimilar to those presented on the stage!"¹⁰

This definition implies that a drama is not a copy of the play in printed form. The meeting of printer's ink and paper does not constitute a drama. A drama is such only when it is being

¹⁰Original definition by Mr. Irving White, of Boston University, as given in a lecture on the drama.

acted. It must be in a moving, active state of motion rather than in a condition of inertia. Moreover, there must be a psychological tug of war between opposite factions in the mentality of the characters. There must be a crisis or situation demanding a decision. And the outcome must be in doubt. There must also be a solution to the problem presented in a way such that it satisfies those who are seeing and hearing the play. Such a presentation before an audience must, by its very intent, move an audience--either toward the conclusions of the drama or away from them.

One of the most important factors in audience control is the "dynamic" tension in a play. "Dynamic" tension in a play may be defined as the electrical voltage of the current of communication that exists between a play that is in the process of being acted and its audience. To say that a play is in the process of being acted is really redundant, since there is no such thing as a play in any other status. It is only when the curtain has risen and the actors have begun to speak their lines and act their parts that drama is created and may be said to exist.

Without a deep analysis of the mysteries of successful acting, it may be said, in brief, that one of the important elements in acting is the "dynamic" creation of the actors, individually and collectively. Moreover, the emotional in acting is not only among the actors, themselves, but also between the actors and the audience. This latter relationship, for lack of a better term, may be called the emotional action and reaction of the audience. This latter condition is the

consequence of the "dynamic" quality of the play.

The emotional tension of a play is contingent upon two factors: first, the skill with which the playwright has built scenes, situations, and circumstances that create emotional interest; and secondly, the skill with which the actors handle their lines to produce the maximum effect upon the audience.

Perhaps the easiest way to illustrate the "dynamic" in its most obvious form is to give examples of it from a half dozen or more dramas of varying types, some of them the greatest dramas of all literature. An examination of an old Morality, two plays of the Elizabethan age (a comedy and a satire), a well known comedy of Shakespeare, and three of his supreme tragedies should be sufficient to establish the dramatic "dynamic" in a wide and varied degree.

An examination of a production of the old Morality play of Everyman gives us ample reason to believe that the presence of the "dynamic" in its characters and lines accounts, to a great degree, for its continued life over so many years. Had Everyman consisted merely of characters, lines, and a story, it would have died long ago. But, interwoven with its lines, was the creative element of the "dynamic!" No amount of description can do justice to the feeling that overpowers an audience as it sees the character of Death approach Everyman and tell him that he must bring an account of his life to God. No paper could convey the feeling of mingled horror and dread that the character produces when, after Everyman has laughingly asked: "I know thee not: what messenger art thou?" Death replies with the simple line:

"I am Death"

Death is not an emotion; it is a process. Therefore, the effect of the scene upon the audience can be traced only to the existence of a condition (of which the emotional is only a part), and can be explained only in the term of a process of generated energy, as the interaction takes place. And the continued existence of the "dynamic" in that play is directly traceable to the continued flow and control of pathos as Everyman tries without avail to secure the adequate and necessary protection against his final reckoning. The interplay between Everyman and Death, Good-Deeds, Goods, Beauty, Knowledge, and others to whom he appeals, alone accounts for the success of the powerful effect that a production of Everyman could secure on an audience hundreds of years ago. And it is also the reason why Everyman is still alive to-day.

Everyman, of course, is a tragedy. But that comedy also is built upon the "dynamic" can be illustrated by two dramas from the Elizabethan age, The Shoemaker's Holiday and The Alchemist. These are both comedies of good construction and power. The Shoemaker's Holiday contains both light and broad humor; it is full of lyrics and the romantic element; and its characters are well drawn.

The Alchemist won Coleridge's praise as having one of the three best constructed plots in all literature.

Both of these plays meet the demands of the classical unity of time and place and action; and both plays are closely-knit in structure. The Alchemist makes up with satire what it lacks in romantic

elements.

The "dynamic" in The Shoemaker's Holiday is expressed through the genial humor of the play and its attitude of warm friendliness. It can easily be seen that the motif of the play is one of love of fellowmen and a desire to tolerate men's foibles with the attitude of wide tolerance expected of all true humorists. There is a cheery, friendly, lovable attitude about all the work that the author does. The spirit of Dekker shines through the lines of each character so that an atmosphere of pleasant understanding holds the audience throughout. Thus the "dynamic" takes the form in this play of the pleasant personality of actors in combination with the resultant pleasant personality of an audience--all in public form. It is an atmosphere of happy and fortunate combination of the human element on both sides of the footlights.

The "dynamic" in The Alchemist takes the form of hard realism, an appeal to the head and not the heart. The play is a satirical presentation of life, expressing a moral purpose to a certain extent. It follows the three unities. Since the play is a comedy of manners, portraying the society of its day, the characters must, of necessity, be broadly sketched. It is a play of satire--mostly of gullibility and hypocrisy. Here intellectuality is the means through which the "dynamic" finds expression. In a play of the type of The Alchemist, the "dynamic" would be less spontaneous and less sparkling. Contact between actors and audience would be of a more reserved and thoughtful nature. Therefore, the "dynamic" would be less apparent

during the presentation of the play and the people involved would be less susceptible to its existence. Nevertheless, the "dynamic" would be present as an inherent element in the success of the presentation.

If it is difficult to grasp the "dynamic" in plays of the Elizabethan period, it is perhaps due to the average person's lack of familiarity with the ideas and purposes of plays of that day and age. The plays of Shakespeare probably furnish a more fertile field for illustrations of the "dynamic".

In The Merchant of Venice, for instance, it is easy to see the elements that contribute to its ability to hold an audience. The plot of The Merchant of Venice, being as it is of a dualistic nature, lends an element of strength to the progressive movement so necessary to the atmospheric condition of a play. The strong plot of Shylock's intense desire for revenge hurls the play forward at a strong pace. The other plot, that of Bassanio's courtship of Portia, lends the necessary overtones to modulate the hardness of Shylock's greed for revenge.

The play starts with Antonio's familiar line: "In sooth, I know not why I am so sad." Such a skilful beginning shows that Shakespeare knew what orators soon learn: to catch attention from the very start. One of the essential elements of a drama or of a speech is pace which, to a certain extent, depends upon the amount of "flesh and blood" that have been put into the lines by an author or orator wise in the handling of audiences.

Throughout The Merchant of Venice Antonio appears to be

doomed. Such an element of plot as a man drawn inevitably towards his doom is one that is sure to create tense moments in the life of an audience. However, the thing that holds the play together is the consummate and intense determination on the part of Shylock for revenge. Such an attitude on Shylock's part provides the foundation on which other elements of plot may be built, specifically the comedy phases. Perhaps no play affords a better example of the various elements through which the "dynamic" can find expression. Greed, revenge, hatred, and bitterness all emanate from Shylock. Hatred, resignation, and firmness come from Antonio. From other characters come the elements of comedy, love, courage, happiness, youth, ambition, and the thousand and one elements involved in the lives of young people. All these things are best seen contributing their part to the "dynamic" as a whole in the court scene where "dynamic" tension is built from moment to moment on all the various factors that have been enumerated. Yet the "dynamic" is not any one of these factors alone;--rather it is the combination and the consequence of the combination. It is the action and interaction of humanity upon humanity.

A heavier type and variety of the "dynamic" can be found in the tragedies of Shakespeare. Macbeth furnishes an illustration of a kind of the "dynamic" that moves with tremendous vitality. With the weirdness of the opening scene, the "dynamic" in Macbeth has pace, emotional quality, and grip that are born of the action and interactions of human personalities in conflict. What audience can withstand the "dynamic" pressure of the plotting of Macbeth and his wife, of the

dagger scene, the murder scene, (even the Porter scene), the banquet scene, the sleepwalking scene, and lastly, the battle scene? It takes more than attention and emotions to make those scenes successful. It takes life in action, thought in application, the mind in motion, and the interplay and reaction of sparks of human souls in conflict.

In Othello, the "dynamic" is of a heavier type. Like in The Alchemist, the flavor of Othello is intellectual. Plotting is essentially a matter of cunning and scheming. While there is very little action in Othello, the curiosity of the audience contributes an element of the "dynamic" that is surpassed only by the intrigue of Iago. While Iago's mind is not a great one, yet it is above the average. And Iago's control of Roderigo, together with his manipulation of Othello, Cassio, and Emilia provides the necessary elements the "dynamic" demands in order that tension shall result. The soliloquies of Othello furnish ample material to increase and intensify the atmosphere where little plot exists; and, in all, the product of thinking minds gives Othello a sinister and attractive aspect.

Since Othello and Macbeth lend themselves so easily to a "dynamic" analysis, a comparison of the two may bring out points of excellence that contribute to the "dynamic".

In both Othello and Macbeth, Shakespeare has built scenes, situations, and circumstances that create tension. While such stage situations are cleverly designed, it takes excellent actors to produce the maximum results contemplated by the author. Hence the scarcity of good Shakespearian productions.

Of the two plays, the "dynamic" tension of Othello is less than that of Macbeth for the reason that Othello is more of a psychological study than is Macbeth. Othello depends more upon reflective plotting on the part of the conspirators, and the cunning of Iago is born of a mind gone astray from the highways of healthy thinking. In Othello, the plot must be kept a secret between Iago and Roderigo, with the audience in an eavesdropping capacity in order that the climax may be brought to a successful culmination. In Macbeth, the important deed is done at an early moment (Act II, Scene II, to be exact), whereas, in Othello, the pivotal deed of violence is postponed until near the end of the play (Act V, Scene II).

The "dynamic" tension of Macbeth is based upon the audience's interest in the consequences of a murder; in Othello, the tension is built mainly about the uncertainty of a murder taking place.

In Othello, as in Macbeth, murder is plural in number; but in Macbeth, the successive murders are accomplished to insure the success of the first murder; whereas, in Othello, the successive killings are due to a desire to avenge the first.

Probably the scene of greatest "dynamic" tension in Othello is Act V, Scene II, when the audience is enthralled by Othello's killing of Desdemona. In Macbeth, the scene of greatest tension is probably that of Act II, Scene II, in which Duncan is murdered.

In Othello, no deed of violence has been committed before the rise of the curtain. In fact, much of the time of the scene is taken up with the conversation between Othello and Desdemona before

the final act of murder. Everything is done before the eyes of the audience. And when Desdemona is finally smothered, the audience has been prepared for such a tragedy. In Macbeth, however, the deed is being committed off stage at the opening of the scene. Few nerves can resist tingling to the realization that "He is about it!" Lady Macbeth keeps the audience in a state of emotional tension in a manner quite different from the product of the conversation between Othello and Desdemona.

In Macbeth, for instance, the shriek of the owl, heard only by Lady Macbeth, sends shivers over many in the audience, whereas the final movement of Desdemona would probably produce a wave of pity and sympathy in the audience rather than a wave of fear.

The only touch in Othello that should produce a "dynamic" effect on the audience that it cannot control is the touch that comes when the audience, believing Desdemona to be dead, hears her voice again. Like an electric flash, such a voice could startle an audience.

Perhaps the most conclusive bit of evidence in support of the contention that greater tension is found in Macbeth lies in the fact that Shakespeare followed his murder scene in Macbeth with the tipsy Porter scene. To be sure, in Othello the plot has been developed too near its conclusion to permit of such a comedy scene. But even so, it is doubtful if it is even needed. While it is true that both plays end in baths of blood, the sympathy of the audience in Macbeth demands that the chief offender be punished; while in Othello the audience feels that each new casualty only adds to the enormity

of the original blunder. Of course, the audience desires the punishment of Iago for his crimes, but each of the other casualties seems only to increase the size of his crime.

As has been stated previously, a second factor in the "dynamic" tension of a play is the skill of the actors. While it is true that great actors might make Othello a more thrilling production than ordinary actors could make Macbeth, the fact seems to be valid that casts of equal ability could do better work with Macbeth than with Othello. Macbeth is built upon action and healthy villainy; Othello is built upon secret scheming. Macbeth is physical motion; Othello is psychological duplicity. Macbeth is the story of a strong and daring villain, misled by inordinate ambition; Othello is the story of a poor loser who plots his revenge. Macbeth's villain can be admired for his boldness, and even given sympathy for his first misdeed; Othello's villain must be despised for greater and greater meanness that is exposed as the plot becomes plain. Macbeth is painted with big, swift, sure colors; Othello is etched in shadows between black and white. Had he a little more familiarity with stagecraft, Robert Browning might have written Othello. But only a Shakespeare could have written Macbeth.

If a more intensified illustration of the "dynamic" is desired, it can be found in the great tragedy of Hamlet. Hamlet, bearing about him the veil of another world, an odor of the grave, and an emblem of "the life to come" carries the lure that builds tension in any audience. And the intensity of Hamlet's oath to avenge his

father's death is enough to send the play forward at a pace that compels attention. The great "dynamic" intensity of Hamlet, that which compels instant and continued attention, comes not alone from the plot, interesting as it is. The great concentration of energy in Hamlet comes from the character of Hamlet, himself. An enigma is always fascinating. It is to the mind of Hamlet that all advantages can be traced, for his was the mind of a giant in motion. Brilliancy of thought and depth of emotion sparkle among Hamlet's lines like sunbeams that play through a tumbling waterfall. Hamlet's profundity of thought and rhetoric of expression defy comparison. No character in any play even remotely approaches him. Hamlet may have been a man of inaction, but his mind was always in motion, thinking beyond "this ignorant present" into a realm beyond the ken of mortal men.

Hamlet, in the center of a stage, without uttering a single word, could hold an audience by the sheer radiance of a "dynamic" personality too full for adequate expression. Hamlet had more eloquence in his demeanor than Macbeth in all his actions. Hamlet's mind was indeed the ideal of motion in inaction.

So it is that we see illustrations of the "dynamic" in drama. Through the foregoing illustrations, the "dynamic" has been seen from various aspects. Since it is endless and ever changing, no complete exposition of it could ever be made. But illustrations have been made of the "dynamic" in comedy and tragedy, showing its method of arousing the desired creative reaction from the audience, under the guidance of the moving mind of the author.

Nor is drama restricted to people who bear the title of actors. While it is not customary to think of an orator in the role of an actor, it requires only a little imagination to visualize such an actuality. One orator in the role of an actor took the stage in the House of Burgesses in Williamsburg, Virginia, in 1765, with Patrick Henry playing the leading role, and with his lines composed chiefly about his dramatized opinion of Caesar, Charles the First, and George the Third. What happened at that time and place was drama of the highest type, even though no director shouted orders or corrected mistakes. No play ever written ever contained more genuine drama than did that one in the House of Burgesses in 1765, when, after climax had followed climax, Henry's side was declared to be the winner by a single vote.

In the cases of Everyman, Othello, Macbeth, Hamlet, and Patrick Henry's oration, it was the "dynamic" that made each live. And the entire theory may be stated in the simple dictum: the greater the elements of the "dynamic" present in a play or a speech, the greater is the play or speech. Furthermore, the essential elements of the "dynamic" are born of the drama.

Thus the dramatist is always trying to arouse emotions, since emotional response and emotional agreement between the play and the audience are necessary to the accomplishment of an effect upon an audience. May it be said here, parenthetically, that the mind must be disabused of the idea that effects upon audiences can be produced only by artificiality or in a manner we call "affected"?

To produce an effect upon an audience means to move the audience psychologically, and such a moving of an audience can be accomplished by the true methods of reading lines emotionally as well as by the artificial methods for which the stage is noted.

Hence the end and aim of drama is to get results from an audience by means of a stage presentation involving actors as the champions of ideas.

Drama, to qualify itself as such, must be on the stage in the process of action. The medium of this culmination is the process known as acting, involving what are called "actors." Acting consists in feeling the emotion and in having the audience respond to its effects. If it be true that an emotion felt by one or a few individuals can so affect an entire audience that the audience will also feel the emotion, then there must be some definite principles operating that ought to be considered. A few of those principles are these: first, an actor must experience an emotion, himself, before he can expect an audience to experience it. He must laugh (mentally) before he can expect the audience to laugh physically. He must cry (mentally) before he can expect the audience to cry physically. The emotion of the actor must always precede that of the audience. Secondly, the audience will put on the emotion the value the actor puts on it. If he does not feel the emotion deeply, the audience will not. Thirdly, audiences must be nourished on emotion. There can never be a moment when an audience is allowed to do nothing. So, too, there can never be a moment when an actor is on the stage with

nothing to do, with no emotion to radiate.

As a consequence, the actor learns very quickly to anticipate emotions and to move from one emotion to another emotion, and from one emotional climax to another. That is because the drama is built fundamentally upon the human element--human instincts and emotions in everyone who ever reads a line or hears a line read.

Drama is strong and vigorous life. It is not only as Cicero said, "The mirror of human life;" it is life itself--portrayed by living, breathing, and thinking human beings. Drama has its roots in the human element, that unknown quantity which makes people more than merely flesh and blood. Drama plays upon loves and hates, ambitions and hopes, fears and desires, native "drives," instincts, and emotions, and makes us so much an integral part of what we see and hear that we live every feeling, every thought of the play; otherwise it is not drama.

All these emotional possibilities are contingent upon the plot of a play which is the thread of narrative that serves as a skeleton around which the characterizations are built.

The plot has always played an important part in the construction of drama. Plot is so important that an author usually begins with the thread of a story or narrative and later originates the different characters that are necessary in order to tell the story to the audience. Plays usually stand or fall on their plots. Among the Greeks, the plot was known before it came upon the stage. To-day, plot is a matter of structure. This thing called "plot", in

another sense, is the track along which the drama moves; and the smoother the track, the easier and faster will be the progress of the journey.

In writing his plot, the author has probably found the most important raw material to consist of ideas. Part of his problem has been to put the ideas in such an order that there will be sequence, starting from the rise of the curtain to the first crisis, then to the second crisis, and so on. Plays must be built so that, as time passes, the situations become more intense; and the interest is heightened in what is next expected until the climax of the play is reached.

The climax of a play may be defined as the point of greatest emotion or interest. It is the point where the greatest excitement is likely to be exhibited. It is the point toward which every thing builds in the beginning of the play; and, after the passage of which, falling action sets in.

The author must keep in mind that the problems of plot, sequence of ideas, and climax are among the most important elements in writing a play. The author must also write his play to be produced at a certain pace. Pace is something that appears only in the actual presentation of the play; but even before the play is cast, it is possible to predict, from a reading of the play, the approximate speed at which each of the scenes should be produced. Lastly, in writing a play, an author should have clearly in mind the object or the purpose of the play. The purpose of the play dominates

it and influences all things attendant upon it. If its object is merely that of amusement, the author may put into the play considerable nonsense. If, however, he is really trying to write a great play, the play will undoubtedly contain several excellent passages, proclaiming the loftiest of emotions.

All these things that have been enumerated the author considers as he writes his play so that, when the play is ready for production, it is built upon sound methods and is subject only to its necessity of being rewritten if passages are found to be weak or otherwise unacceptable.

All these things are prerequisite to the production of a play. When the script has been put into the hands of a director, actors have been cast and rehearsed, and the play is ready for production, then other problems arise. The main thing, then, is to make the play a success in a "dynamic" way so that the audience will respond rather than be bored. In such an accomplishment several things have to be done, the first of which is to gain attention to the action the moment that the curtain goes up. Strong drama gains attention and holds it. That is because one of the main responsibilities of an actor with respect to an audience is, first of all, to get the attention of the audience. The actor can be aided by the author's having built into the lines that certain something known as "flesh and blood." But all lines are difficult at best, and the success of the lines that are read depends upon the ability of the actor who is doing the reading of the lines.

Another element in the success of the play is the extent to which the actor can put into the lines what is known as momentum. This can be made much easier if the actors have the ability to put virility into their lines. Drama needs motion; and a play must speed from crisis to crisis. The movement of a play is due to this kind of motion, the kind that gains momentum from the actor's reading of lines in a live fashion. And it is this added momentum which the actor contributes that causes the action to rise or to fall.

Moreover, plays are virile or anaemic according as their casts radiate emotions that become contagious. And it is the ability of an actor to concentrate tremendous emotion in his lines that stamps him as being great.

Still another element in successful presentation of drama is the hold a play has upon an audience. If a play does not hold an audience, it is not much of a play. And it is the extent to which actors contribute to the intensification of the hold a play has upon the audience that the actors help the play to be a success. Dramatic energy can be radiated by actors in reading their lines so that the audience feels the atmosphere as being saturated with a captivating power that will not release it.

Finally, there is in drama such a thing as a personal reaction. It is of a dual nature: among the actors, themselves, and between an actor and his audience. It is physically possible for an actor to have such an effect upon another actor that the latter will be stimulated to better work than he believed himself capable

of doing. Sometimes the latter affects the former, in turn, so that both play their parts better than either thought possible. Actors, also, affect the audience for better or for worse. The audience, in turn, affects the actors; and the resulting exchange and interplay of emotions, back and forth, produces results that neither side of the footlights believed possible.

To sum up, then: the heart's blood of the drama is emotion--emotion in concentrated form, built from climax to climax.

The application of all that has been said up to this point lies in the fact that if the elements enumerated as the vital parts of drama were taken over into the realm of oratory, effective speaking would be the consequence. Drama and oratory have many points of similarity. Oratory in its various forms may be likened to drama in its various forms. Tragedy may be compared with formal and serious orations and addresses; comedy may be compared with the lighter types of informal speeches; and farce will be found to be built upon the same foundation (psychologically) as some of our best after-dinner speeches.

Both the actor and the orator express emotion under pressure. Each has the responsibility of producing results in the handling of audiences through the medium of instincts and emotions. The greater the actor, the greater the effect upon the audience; and this statement is also true of the orator. The spoken lines of an actor must grip an audience; so must the lines of an orator. In fact, the greatest speeches are dramatized speeches: speeches that are so full

of emotion that an audience is tremendously influenced by them. The orator is simply a dramatist creating his own plot and lines, cutting out his own pattern of human approach, and skilfully producing his effects and accomplishing his purpose through the medium of mind, instincts, and emotions.

Not only is there a value to the dramatic, but the power of the dramatic is well known, -- on stage and rostrum. To use only one illustration: the plays of Shakespeare have probably exerted more influence on thoughts and emotions throughout the world than have the works of any other man. The speeches of the great orators of history have probably been the most dominant factors in moving men to action. And a comparison of the world's greatest plays with the world's greatest speeches would show that the great value of their accomplishments was such that their success could be charged to the inner, driving force of dramatized emotions. On the stage, it clothes the actor with invisible power of influence; on the rostrum, it gives the orator a great weapon of power. The source of that power may be found in the dynamo that creates the emotional and radiates it. If the source of the energy radiated by human personalities under pressure while they are before the public can be located, then the "drive" that makes dramas, actors, and orators great can be identified.

The elements of the "dynamic" that have been enumerated as being in the drama are just as much, and just as great, a part of oratory. The orator, in preparing his speech, works in a way similar to that of the writer and maker of drama. The speaker must create

his plot in the form of an outline;he must know the sequence of his ideas that are to be parts of his outline;he must build his speech from crisis to crisis,eventually culminating in his climax;and he must be able to predict,in his preparation,the pace he intends to set when he gets upon his feet,subject,of course,to the exigency of the occasion,the mentality of the audience,its size,and the pressure under which he must work. It is also true that the orator must accomplish his purpose,reach the objective or goal he has previously selected,and get results. All these things the orator must plan for,and prepare for,before he even rises to his feet.

Then,when he does get to his feet,the orator has the same responsibility as has the actor for getting the interest of the audience. The orator must build into his speech the momentum that keeps speeches as well as plays from sagging. If a speech lacks the necessary holding qualities,the orator's audience goes to sleep as quickly as it would were it at a stupid play. The orator must work to gain a condition of concentrated emotion--in both himself and his hearers. A good speaker should have just as tight a grip on his audience as does an actor. And the orator's responsibility of generating dramatized energy is just as large as is the actor's. In oratory,there is certainly the condition of action and reaction between speaker and listener;and in the event of there being more than one speaker on the same occasion,one speaker certainly has an effect upon another--for better or for worse.

All these points of similarity only go to show that the

speaker suffers, as does the actor, until the time comes for action before the public, and that the "dynamic" that is productive of success is present in both cases. The only difference between the two, actor and orator, is that one has lines given to him which he must use, while the orator must create his own lines at the moment of their delivery. In the case of the drama, the "dynamic" is more easily seen by the layman, although it is present to as great an extent in the realm of oratory for those who are trained enough to identify it.

In view of the foregoing, it should be apparent that persuasion cannot end with a preparation in accordance with the laws of rhetoric together with a speaker alive to his opportunity, -- nor even with "exclusive attention." Persuasion, to be successful, must add to those elements the more important one known as the "dynamic," the creative control of speaker over audience and the situation. Such creative control is most easily recognized in the drama; and once recognized there, is easily identified in the realm of oratory. Actors and orators work in similar ways to produce their results and to attain their success. Each depends for his success, not only upon a ten per cent of skilful organization and adequate preparation, but also upon the ninety per cent of investment in the "dynamic!"

III.

The third, and final, contention of this thesis is that the "dynamic" operates in accordance with well established and recognized principles of psychology since a speaker who is engaged in

public persuasion is simply using an outlet for self-expression and since the functioning of the "dynamic" is in accordance with the principles of group psychology.

In establishing the contention that a speaker who is engaged in public persuasion is simply using an outlet for self-expression, an attempt will be made to assume the viewpoint of the individual; whereas in establishing the second contention, that the functioning of the "dynamic" is in accordance with the principles of group psychology, the viewpoint will be that of the speaking process and of the crowd and group characteristics of audiences.

If we trace the "dynamic" back to its original source, psychologically, we shall find that it is a by-product of our native action tendencies, emotions, and desires. All human motives and endeavors find their origin in the instinctive urges or in the so-called fundamental "native drives" of hunger, protection, reproduction, and the like. After these requirements have been satisfied, the ensuing "drives" are usually for the expansion and enhancement of the status of the individual. One of the most prevalent of these secondary "drives" is that of public speech. And thus it is that we are able to partially account for the element of the "dynamic" in connection with this all important function.

What people inwardly desire, however, and what they outwardly manifest are two different things. A great many inhibitions come into play to block desires, not the least of which is that of fear. If, for example, an individual's ambitions are in the direction of leadership, but he is handicapped by fears of social failure because of limitations of physique, then there is created a situation in which conflict and repression are inevitable. Fortunately, however, nature provides a mechanism for overcoming such conflict and repression through

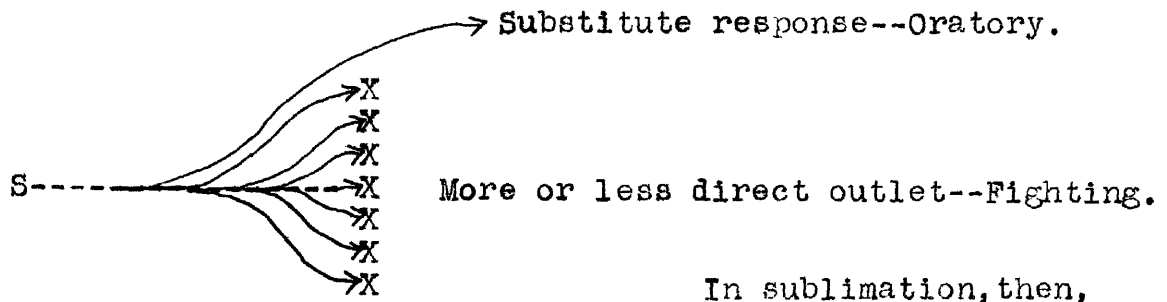
sublimation and compensation. so as to divert the thwarted desires of individuals to fields where the energy manufactured by the body under the influence of the emotions will find other socially approved outlets.

One such means of sublimation is that of speaking before the public. The story of practically every great orator has been that of a man seeking a medium or outlet of expression for his thwarted desires of conquest. To cite only one illustration: there is little doubt but that the king of England would have fared badly at the hands of Patrick Henry, had the former been within physical reach of the latter. Since it was impossible for Henry to raise an army and eliminate the king, physically, Henry used the substitute of oratory to attain the end of the freedom of the colonies.

Perhaps the following diagrams will illustrate the foregoing statements. The first diagram is simply the familiar one of a stimulus finding an immediate and satisfactory response:

S-----R

In the case of the following diagram, an individual has in his equipment the desire to be a great warrior. Since he lacks the physique, or opportunity, or social sanction that peace loving people refuse to give to warlike desires, such an ambition must be converted into something, such as oratory, that has social approval. In such a field, the individual will be giving expression to some of his natural desires and at the same time be in accordance with the rules and regulations of modern society. For example:



In sublimation, then,

we have a second source of the "dynamic" quality in speech.

Instead of having this human element in the form of the "dynamic" driving all about in a blind and irrational manner, there is a perfectly simple method of controlling it through what is known as "purposive behavior." The physical counterpart of the "dynamic" is what is known as energy seeking an outlet but held under pressure, and is termed universally either "dammed up energy" or "stored energy." Of course, the two terms do not mean the same thing. Our interpretation is that the "dynamic" consists of both. As Woodworth puts it: "Stored energy is like that of coal in the bin; dammed-up energy is like that of steam in the boiler."¹¹ That kind of energy is of great value when put to an intelligent use, but is of a very dangerous nature when it is allowed to act independently of intelligent application. Purposive behavior provides the compass by which intelligent direction may be given to energy held in reserve or under pressure. Purposive behavior may be characterized by the idea that it contains an element which persists in a general direction. The most important element in the persistence is the tendency toward some end or goal. In purposive behavior, the life wants something it has not. Now if purposive

11. Robert S. Woodworth, Psychology, A Study of Mental Life, Henry Holt and Company, New York, p. 83.

speaking is the consequence of purposive behavior toward the end of social leadership or group recognition, then the purposive speaking will be the result of the inner driving force that every human has, once it is aroused. Once stimulated, this inner driving force persists in a given direction until the end reaction is attained. It is born of the inner force that urges the organism on to a given goal, this inner force that persists and has a tendency to some end. Tracing this inner driving force to its origin, we find that it must start in a motive. By an examination of human motives, we find that their essence lies in the idea that a motive is a tendency toward a certain end result or end action, --which is what has been shown to be the most essential element necessary in purposive speaking, the result of purposive behavior.

Human beings, then, when acting under pressure, tend to generate what has been described as "dynamic" energy, upon which orators draw in emotional speaking in order to convert cold, logical facts into fiery, blazing feelings that leap from person to person and inspire the entire group. As a matter of record, we have no knowledge of any orator who made a great speech purely on logic, and without recourse to the emotional in his plea. Conversely, every great speech has been based, to a very great extent, on the ability of the orator to become emotional and to succeed in getting his hearers to become emotional over the same ideas which caused him to become aroused.

The great reservoir for nerve energy that must be tapped,

therefore, is the emotional, for "...an emotion is a conscious, stirred-up state of the organism!"¹² Emotions are contagious urges originated in a few individuals which spread among a great many people, sometimes with terrific results. An emotional state differs from a mere organic state in that an organic state can be localized. Emotions usually start with external stimuli or thoughts. So, too, in speaking, great oratory always originates in some thought or act such as that which arouses in the speaker the emotional response to a deed of injustice or violation of the principles of liberty. These would call forth from the speaker the emotional consequence of the energy that has been stimulated by such an act or thought.

Certain laws of the emotions have been set down. Scott calls attention to one which is stated thus: "The violence of the physical expression is in proportion to the intensity of the emotion!"¹³

This holds in the case of the orator since there is always a parallelism between the psychological and the physical. There can be no mental process without a neural action which usually leads to muscular action. Intense feelings result in intense bodily actions. The intensity of physical expression, therefore, depends, not upon the quality of the emotion but upon its intensity!¹⁴

The foregoing law indicates that there is a direct relationship between the intensity of an emotion and the extent to which it stimulates the actions of an individual. Or, carrying our

12. Ibid., p. 119.

13. Walter Dill Scott, Psychology of Public Speaking, Noble and Noble, Publishers, 76 Fifth Avenue, New York, p. 79.

14. Ibid., pp. 79, 80.

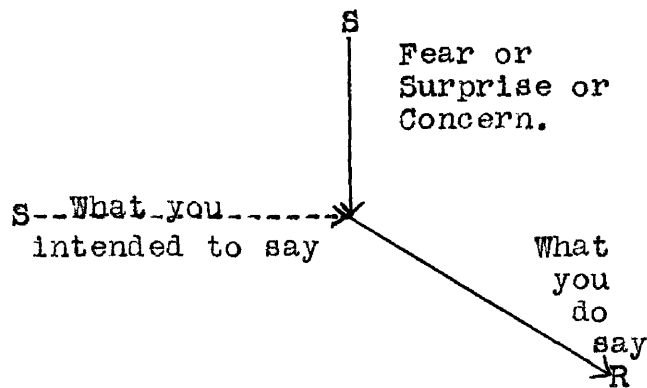
entire point: the intensity of an emotion magnifies and enlarges, proportionately, the consequences of the original, instigating motive toward its end accomplishment.

All the foregoing has been said to prove that the "dynamic" in an individual (the speaker) operates in accordance with the well known principles of native desires and their necessary outlets, together with the idea that the channels of emotional display enhance the "dynamic" to a much larger scale and with a more powerful influence.

Let us now turn to our second phase: to show that the functioning of the "dynamic" is in accordance with the principles of group psychology.

When an individual faces an audience and begins to speak, a number of things happen. Generally speaking, the orator affects the audience ; and the audience, in turn, affects the orator. There is set up between the speaker and the hearer a stimulus-response relationship entirely familiar to every student of psychology. Every time the orator says something, he produces an effect upon the hearer. The audience, in turn, recoils upon the speaker so that the emotions he stimulates in others return to stimulate him. If the speaker says what he had planned to say, that is, if the ideas the speaker uses are handled in just the manner in which he planned to use them, he ought to be fairly certain of the results that he is trying to obtain. By such a statement is meant that if the orator calls upon such ideas as love of home, all things being equal,

he can depend upon such a feeling being established in the hearts of his listeners. If he dwells upon the idea of hatred for a particular race, such an attitude ought to follow as a result in the minds of those who have listened. In other words, if the orator uses a certain stimulus, he ought to expect a reasonable response to follow. The interesting part of the whole process is the situation that comes about when the orator does not use the stimuli that he had expected to use, as in the case of a speaker's making up an entirely different speech after he stands up to face an audience. Just why and how this happens is hard to explain, but the following diagram may help:



A man, in the privacy and silence of his study, may plan his speech with infinite care, knowing exactly what ideas he is to use and in what order they are to be used only to find when he arrives at the point of speaking that confusion in the audience or on the platform, a noise outside of the room, or an unfortunate incident among the people in the audience have conspired to erase from his mind the various ideas and thoughts that he had prepared

for the occasion. Other stimuli in the form of worries or confusions rob the once fruitful mind of all of its resources and leave only barren soil instead.

Since the art of handling audiences depends to such a great extent upon presenting to audiences the proper stimuli, it is readily appreciated how important careful preparation is for the execution of a speech. Yet the stimuli that have been prepared for audiences may never be presented; or, suffering the misfortune of presentation in an unfortunate light, do not have the effect upon the audience that was expected. Hence it is necessary, in the handling of an audience, for the speaker to make his approach with the proper mental attitude toward an audience. Such a proper mental attitude has probably been expressed best by Winans in his discussion of the conversational quality in speech. Winans does not call it the "conversational style," since he says that he does not advocate any style.

As an illustration of what is generally accepted as an interpretation of the "conversational," it would be difficult to improve upon Winans when he shows how an individual can begin talking to another and be compelled to enlarge his efforts in order to reach all those who gather to hear what he has to say.

Winans defines the qualities of the best public speech to be those of conversation. The thing he does not stress sufficiently is that all the conversational characteristics in the world will not make a speech a great one unless it has other important additions.

Of these, the one on which a speaker's "dynamic" energy should be concentrated is that of winning the audience. Before an audience will accept the ideas of a speaker, the audience must want to believe him. Therefore, in the beginning of a speech, it is highly essential that the speaker devote some time to the task of making the audience want to listen. It is unwise for a speaker to plunge immediately into the depth of a speech without first having established himself "dynamically" in the mind of his audience. This initial moulding of the audience by the speaker is quite necessary on the part of the speaker if, later, difficult ideas are to be accepted by the audience.

A speech can be assured of success, to a reasonable degree, if the speaker, in the preparation of the speech, goes at the preparation from the viewpoint of audience momentum. Speeches planned and built to move from one emotional peak to another are usually the type that make lasting impressions on audiences. Speaking is analogous to the art of mountain climbing. Too, it is the art of getting others to climb the same mountain with you. Planning a speech is largely the problem of laying out the material so that the speaker can move from one point or peak to another without interruption. If a speaker learns to build his speech from the viewpoint of momentum rather than from the viewpoint of paragraphs, then all he has to do is to keep one finger on the pulse of the audience, bring the climax of the speech to a high degree of concentration, and finish forcibly soon after the climax.

It is, therefore, easily seen that while the act of speaking

to an audience and producing a reaction is largely a proposition of reproducing a stimulus-response condition, yet the realization of that relationship is to a certain degree dependent upon the speaker's knowledge of human nature, the human element, and how speeches should be planned.

In the matter of producing the proper stimulus-response situation, not the least important element is the part played by the single factor of attention. Therefore, it is essential that we pay more than passing interest to such an important phase of our problem.

Poffenberger¹⁵ tells us that: "Attention, by its derivation, means 'to be drawn to' or 'to be attracted to'. Out of all the complex of objects exerting their attracting power, one or a few of them will be the most effective and will be attended to. All the others then become distractors of the attention, in that they tend to draw the attention toward themselves. Thus, what is at one moment the object of attention, may at another be a distracter!"

Attention, in the terminology of Public Speaking, is the act of compelling an audience to concentrate on the thoughts of the speaker at the moment of the delivery of those thoughts through the medium of speech. Attention is, properly speaking, the most important prerequisite to the accomplishment of any object in the minds of people in the audience.

Winans makes the point that in order for a speaker to succeed in the accomplishment of his purpose, he must have the

15. A. T. Poffenberger, Applied Psychology, Its Principles and Methods, D. Appleton and Company, 1928, New York, p. 207.

exclusive attention of the hearers;and in order to have the exclusive attention of his hearers the speaker must know exactly what he wants to accomplish. This thesis contends that a speaker must go further and create a "dynamic" situation,in which attention is only one element or factor. This thesis contends that human experience has been such as to indicate that "exclusive attention" is a theoretical myth, and that the actual factors of opposition can only be overcome by the "dynamic"

Attention is necessary,of course,throughout all phases of the delivery of a speech. But attention,even of an "exclusive" variety,is only the beginning;and a very small one,too. Attention is the initial stage or preliminary step of focusing the forces in the audience upon a given idea. Psychological homogeneity,-not merely "exclusive attention",-must be consummated. Whereas attention would waste away,the "dynamic" sustains the focusing of the forces. The "dynamic" begins with interest and attention and ends with results.

In this problem of the "dynamic," attention is one factor. In attention there is what is known as the "factor of advantage," which is simply the way in which one stimulus is more effective than another. "...we may say that three general factors of advantage determine the power of any stimulus to attract attention. There is the native factor,consisting of change,intensity,striking quality,and definite form;there is the factor of habit,dependent on past experience;and there is the factor of present interest and desire!"¹⁶

16.Robert S.Woodworth,Psychology,A Study of Mental Life,Henry Holt and Company,New York,p.248.

With these few preliminary remarks, Woodworth then enumerates the so-called laws of attention which are:

"(1). The law of selection: of two or more inconsistent responses (or complex of stimuli) only one is made at the same time.

"(2). The law of advantage: one of the alternative responses has an initial advantage over the others, due to such factors as intensity and change in the stimulus, or to habits of reaction.

"(3). The law of shifting: the response that has the initial advantage loses its advantage shortly, and an alternative response is made, provided the situation remains the same!⁷

"(4). The law of sustained attention, or of tendency in attention.. A tendency, when aroused to activity, facilitates responses that are in its line and inhibits others. A tendency is thus a strong factor of advantage, and it limits the shifting of attention.

"(5). A new law has come to light, the law of combination, which reads as follows: a single response may be made to two or more stimuli; or, two or more stimuli may arouse a single joint response!⁸

"(6). The law of degrees of consciousness... thus stated: An attentive response is conscious to a higher degree than any inattentive response made at the same time!"¹⁹

All these laws play their part in the problem of the speaker's endeavor to create the condition of the "dynamic." Yet the foregoing, in dealing with attention and its laws, as elements of the "dynamic," fail to include one important idea. Experience has shown that the thing that holds the attention of an audience is what may

17. Ibid., p. 256.
18. Ibid., p. 263.
19. Ibid., p. 267.

be called the "Psychological Eye". The author's previous opinion was that a speaker held an audience through his eyes and his ideas. The experience of the author in working with a blind boy has led the author to believe that the eye that holds an audience is not a physical eye at all. It is an indefinable, psychological eye. The mind of the speaker seems to be looking at the minds of the people in the audience. There seems to be set up and established a psycho-physical contact that lures the opposite mind and holds it in a grip that is difficult to break.

Now that attention has been discussed, let us turn to another element in the "dynamic" closely related to attention, which is called the element of suggestion. The functions and responsibilities of suggestion are well stated by Allport when he says: "Suggestion is concerned with the control of bodily attitudes in three possible ways. First, it serves to build up or prepare the setting for a definite response when the releasing signal is given... Secondly, it may serve as the signal (social stimulus) which releases the attitude already established. And thirdly, suggestion may augment the released response as it is being carried out."²⁰

In explanation of those statements, Allport says: "1. There is a great power in the spoken word; but it is not a magic power. Every normal suggestion builds up its attitude upon some deep-lying reaction tendency already present. Interests, emotions, sentiments, derived drives, and innate prepotent reactions serve as bases. A classic example is the jealousy and suspicion of Othello wrought

20. Floyd Henry Allport, Social Psychology, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, Massachusetts, p. 245.

upon by the persistent artifices of Iago until an attitude of infuriated vengeance towards Desdemona was developed.²¹

"2. There are situations in which previous events have already given rise to a motor setting, and in which the suggestion serves merely to release the act for which the body is prepared.²²

"3. After... responses have been set off they may be intensified by a continuance of the same social stimuli that brought them about. Thus one would go forward more quickly, and his emotion would reach a higher pitch because he continued to see others doing the same act. The social stimulus thus serves as a suggestion not only for releasing the reaction but for augmenting it as it is being carried out. In both cases it serves as an allied stimulus and is contributory to a motor setting already existing. The term social facilitation may be used to include both those effects (releasing and intensifying)."²³

Scott contends that suggestion is to be considered the equal of logical reasoning in moving men. He also suggests methods by which audiences are made subject to suggestion. These methods are: avoiding suspicion or securing the confidence of the audience, using authority, using repetition, using figures of speech, and using indirect suggestion as was done in Mark Antony's address.²⁴

Attention and suggestion, then, are two important elements in the psychology of the "dynamic."

So far the discussion has been about the features of speaker and speaking. Now let us turn to a survey of the principles

21. Ibid., p. 245.

22. Ibid., p. 246.

23. Ibid., p. 246.

24. Walter Dill Scott, Psychology of Public Speaking, Noble and Noble, Publishers, 76 Fifth Avenue, New York, p. 167.

governing the action of audiences.

There are three kinds of audiences that are generally recognized: the harmonious audience, or the one in sympathy with the speaker; the antagonistic audience, or the one opposed to the speaker; and the balanced or receptive audience, or the one which is willing to listen as impartially as possible to the speaker, and then to decide on whether or not it agrees with him.

It seems unnecessary to state that such a study as this one must take for granted the ethics of persuasion. Crowd psychology can, of course, be exploited to bad ends as well as to good. No amount of knowledge of crowd psychology can be of more value than right and honorable motives on the part of the speaker working with the crowd. Honorable motives in speakers must be assumed. It is readily recognized that the manipulation of crowds can be carried to extremes and used to wrong ends. But only ethics and character can teach that the end does not justify the means.

But because even good motives are of little avail and of small success unaccompanied by a reasonable use of crowd psychology, a brief glance at the field is desirable. Much of a speaker's success depends upon a knowledge of how groups will react under group pressure.

Scott tells us the principles on which groups can be formed in order to provide a situation which is susceptible to the influence of the "dynamic." One method is to get an audience to sit close together. Another is to get all the members to perform the

same acts, such as all rising and sitting together. A third method is to get all the people in the audience to cheer during the early parts of the performance. This can be done by an introduction which draws great applause for the speaker as he steps forward. Another method is to use humor in the beginning of a speech. Still another method is by the presentation of common ideas such as those generally held by people on such subjects as freedom, liberty, equality, and so forth. All these methods can be utilized for the purpose of changing individuals into crowds!"²⁵

In the first moments of a speaker before an audience, there is tension born of uncertainty. This uncertainty on the part of the speaker is due to the fact that he has no way of knowing that he will be positively successful. There is tension on the part of the people in the audience because they have no knowledge of what the speaker has in store for them. Therefore, the first problem of the speaker is to release the tension which exists in the audience. The speaker must make the audience relax and feel at ease. The moment the orator faces an audience, then he must release the energy that is pent up within the people in the audience. But he must do more than that: he must get the people in the audience to act in unison. That is, the speaker must weld the separate units of humanity into one composite group of people known as a unified audience. This problem of getting people to act in unison is often solved by means of the simple expedient of the use of humor. Telling something humorous to an audience does two things: a laughing audience is telling the

25. Ibid., p. 180-183.

speaker by its actions and responses that it wants him to continue. More than that, any action performed in unison tends to the cohesion of the different units in the audience into one whole body. Not only that, but these two results make for the combination of the separate units into a group. As Allport tells us: "...we may define a group as any aggregate consisting of two or more persons who are assembled to perform some task, to deliberate upon some proposal or topic of interest, or to share some effective experience of common appeal."²⁶

The foregoing characteristics, then, form the basis and means of establishing the "dynamic" condition that can be created in an audience. Like a great organist, a speaker can play upon the instincts and emotions of an audience, knowing it will respond in characteristic ways.

Because a crowd seldom reasons or is critical, and since it must react in accordance with well established principles of stimulus and response, the experienced speaker, in creating the condition of the "dynamic," is similarly creating a condition wherein he is master of a situation and of the audience and can secure whatever action he desires within reason, since all he has to control is the stimulus or the suggestion he wishes the group to have.

In conclusion, it merely needs to be stated that this study has tried to show that persuasion should involve not only the basic principles of rhetoric, but also the "dynamic" as exemplified in drama. After a survey of the principles of rhetoric that have been

26. Floyd Henry Allport, Social Psychology, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, Massachusetts, p. 260.

established by ancient authorities, the "dynamic" was defined, illustrated in drama, and identified in oratory through comparison with drama. The functioning of the "dynamic" in accordance with well established principles of psychology was shown, first, from the viewpoint of the individual desiring to speak, secondly, in the speaking process, and thirdly, by showing that an audience reacts to the working of the "dynamic" in accordance with well known laws of group psychology. Therefore, it is contended that persuasion involves the "dynamic" as well as the basic principles of rhetoric in order to be successful before the public.

The End.