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speaker and gavel

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No. 1

EDITOR'S COMMENT

BILL BALTHROP

As Editor of *Speaker and Gavel* I must extend my sincerest apologies to the members of Delta Sigma Rho-Tau Kappa Alpha and to the readers of this journal for the inordinate delay in this issue's publication. A combination of circumstances resulted in this delay and extensive efforts are being made to minimize the possibility of such circumstances occurring in the future. Each change in editors also produces certain alterations in content, procedures and format. This shall be no different.

First, this and following issues will seek to address the varied interests of the membership by encouraging submission and publication of manuscripts addressing theoretical and pragmatic concerns to students and scholars participating in forensics activities. Some of the most significant statements in the development and refinement of debate theory have been published in these pages and, with the changing directions of other publications, *Speaker and Gavel* may once again serve this function. Debate, however, should not be the sole benefactor of such efforts, and articles exploring issues in individual events are encouraged equally.

Second, *Speaker and Gavel* welcomes suggestions for special issues devoted to a more intensive examination of particular topics. Plans are currently being made for a special issue exploring the challenges that forensics has faced in the 1970's, how those have been met and which remain. At the same time, the new challenges of the 1980's will be considered. Any suggestions concerning which issues should be addressed or about contributions to this issue should be forwarded to me immediately. Further, if you have ideas for special issues, please forward them—along with a brief statement of justification and potential contributors—to me as well.

Third, an Editorial Board will be established for this journal. This board will have for its primary responsibilities the solicitation and review of manuscripts for publication. Such a procedure should help to reduce the shortage of outstanding manuscripts submitted to this journal and, at the same time, provide more exacting standards for scholarship in the forensics community. A diverse collection of associate editors will ensure that all areas and perspectives receive appropriate consideration.

And fourth, those who encounter books which they wish to review for this journal should submit a letter indicating which books will be considered and some justification for the review. I recognize that many other journals, even those servicing the forensics community, provide reviews; but it is hoped that the perspective taken in these pages will be oriented toward this particular membership.

While these changes mark some departure from previous editorial policies, they should not be viewed as diminishing the importance of "tra-

ditional” features of *Speaker and Gavel*. The “Current Criticism” section of the journal will be encouraged and, hopefully, remain as prominent and valuable as before. While not placed within a separate area, the article by Kane and Weiler printed in this issue demonstrates the vitality of criticism and its importance in promoting the goals of Delta Sigma Rho-Tau Kappa Alpha. Further, statements reflecting the philosophies of prominent forensics programs will continue to make a strong contribution to this journal. Finally, *Speaker and Gavel* will continue to serve as a record of the activities of the organization although it is hoped that this function will take up *relatively* less space as greater numbers of manuscripts are received and published.

All manuscripts for publication should be submitted in three copies and should subscribe to the *MLA Style Sheet, Second Edition*. A title page—or cover sheet—should indicate manuscript title, the author and his/her position. All manuscripts will be submitted to a policy of blind reviewing and all indications of author’s identity, affiliation and position will be removed. It is hoped that all reviews will be returned to the editor not more than four weeks later and authors will be notified accordingly. Manuscripts cannot be returned after submission. Once a manuscript has been accepted for publication, all footnotes and references will be verified for substantive and stylistic accuracy. Any questions concerning references will be forward to the author for clarification and will be resolved to the editor’s satisfaction before publication.

I genuinely hope that we can be back on an appropriate publication schedule within a twelve month period while still maintaining a journal of which all can be proud. Despite the efforts of this editorial staff, however, this journal’s ultimate worth rests upon the forensic community in general and upon the membership of DSR-TKA in particular. With your cooperation, *Speaker and Gavel* can continue the efforts and contributions of those who edited this journal in the past and maintain a standard for those who follow.

TRUMAN AND THE A-BOMB DECISION: A RESPONSE TO J. M. WILLIAMS

THOMAS KANE AND RICHARD M. WEILER

In the Summer 1978 issue of *Speaker and Gavel*, J. M. Williams advances two theses regarding President Harry S. Truman's decision to drop the atomic bombs on Japan.¹ She argues first, that "Truman's role as presidential decision-maker was one of passive acquiescence," and of "blind allegiance" to the views of Franklin Roosevelt, and to the views of those of FDR's advisors held-over to the Truman administration; and second, that "a rhetoric of incrementalism" characterized the decision-making process throughout the period of the atomic bomb's development and eventual use.

We will discuss these theses in turn, noting in the former case that Williams presents an incomplete and distorted view of Harry S. Truman as decision-maker; and in the latter, that "a rhetoric of incrementalism" is, in her treatment, a vague and confusing conception, ill-suited to a meaningful critique of the decision-making process which resulted in the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings.

Our object will not be to assess the wisdom of Truman's decision, but rather to establish him as a rational and sober decision-maker, sensitive to the awful significance of his decision, and by no means the irresponsible abdicator that Williams suggests. Certainly, the charge that Truman allowed tens of thousands of Japanese to be killed by default is a serious accusation of criminal negligence, and one that should be accepted only on the basis of compelling evidence. We submit that a careful reading of the admittedly fragmentary evidence available to the critic will render such a charge baseless.

Thesis I

Williams' portrait of Truman as decision-maker relies heavily on Martin J. Sherwin's *A World Destroyed—The Atomic Bomb and the Grand Alliance*.² Using recently opened British and American government documents, as well as previously available material, Sherwin attempts to draw and secure the links between the policies of the Truman administration regarding the atomic bomb, and those of its predecessor, Franklin D. Roo-

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¹ J. M. Williams, "Truman and the A-Bomb Decision: The Rhetoric of Incrementalism," *Speaker and Gavel*, 15 (Summer 1978), pp. 71-78. Those acquainted with the literature on the atomic bomb controversy as it relates to Japan and later the cold war will very quickly notice Williams' use of the evidence to be careless. In twenty-seven instances, at least, she has used the words of others as though they were her own. While our intent in writing this essay was to disagree with her conclusions regarding Truman's decision to drop the bomb and that remains the focal point of this article, we feel compelled to indicate to our readers the unfortunate use of research material by J. M. Williams.

² Martin J. Sherwin, *A World Destroyed—The Atomic Bomb and the Grand Alliance* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975).

sevelt. He argues that Roosevelt's actions, while not wholly deterministic of Truman's, were far more consistent with them than other historians have supposed.³ While admitting that Roosevelt's recorded statements regarding postwar atomic policy were few and inconclusive, Sherwin claims that his actions reflected "the assumption that the bomb could be used to secure postwar goals; and this assumption was carried over to Truman's administration."⁴ The postwar goals to which Sherwin refers are maintenance of the Anglo-American monopoly of the atomic bomb, and the use of that monopoly, in James F. Byrne's words, "to make the Russians more manageable in Europe,"⁵ and, presumably, elsewhere.

On the question of the wartime, as opposed to postwar, use of the atomic bomb, Sherwin has less to say. His thorough search of available documents reveals only one statement, and a carefully qualified one, of FDR's intentions regarding use of the bomb against our wartime enemies. It is contained in an *aide-memoire* composed jointly with Prime Minister Winston Churchill on September 18, 1944, and says that "when a 'bomb' is finally available, it might perhaps, after mature consideration, be used against the Japanese. . . ."⁶

Williams is interested only in Sherwin's analysis of Truman's decision to drop the bomb on Japan. Here, she relies on the well-known evidence of Truman's lack of preparedness for the Presidency, particularly in foreign affairs. "Lacking any policies of his own," she says, "he had little alternative" but to follow those of his predecessor.⁷ This is a confusing argument, because as we have seen, Roosevelt had no definite policies regarding the dropping of the bomb on Japan. His only pronouncement on the subject suggested cautiously that "it might perhaps" be dropped, but only "after mature consideration." For unstated reasons, Williams believes that this statement "early predicts a gain in momentum for the decision to use the bomb." Even if this were true, however, Truman did not know of the statement at the time he made his decision, so it could not have been delimiting in any way.⁸

Roosevelt's views on dropping the bomb were unknown to Truman at the time he was supposedly demonstrating blind allegiance to them and were indefinite in any case. Sherwin emphasizes FDR's tendency to keep secret his diplomatic maneuvering and his thinking on atomic energy issues.⁹ Even his closest advisors were ill-informed. Thus, when Truman sought the advice of these men, they were speaking for themselves, not for any pre-existing policy. Daniel Yergin in *Shattered Peace* has described the very different foreign policy assumptions of Roosevelt and of those of his advisors who played a significant role in shaping policy in the early years of the Truman administration.¹⁰ Yergin's distinction rests on the more intensely anti-Soviet orientation of those advisors. Of course, this relates more to matters of postwar policy than to policy in wartime, but it

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 145–146.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁵ Louis Morton, "The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb," *Foreign Affairs*, January 1957, p. 347.

⁶ Sherwin, p. 284.

⁷ Williams, p. 73.

⁸ Sherwin, p. 144.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 37–38.

¹⁰ Daniel Yergin, *Shattered Peace* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1977), pp. 84–86.

denies the general link between foreign policy in the Roosevelt and Truman administrations. Where Sherwin is most successful in establishing such a link is in the limited context of Roosevelt's tendency to resist policies that would encourage Russian participation in the development and control of atomic weapons during and after the war. Whether Truman continued this policy uncritically, is certainly debatable,¹¹ but assuming he did, the link to Roosevelt is at least defensible. Truman's decision to drop the bomb, by contrast, cannot be linked to Roosevelt's views on the basis of the available evidence.

The evidence that Williams uses to connect Truman's decision to Roosevelt's "policy leaning" is inadequate for the task and illustrates for an historian the pitfalls of playing too loosely with context. She quotes General Groves, the military commander of the Manhattan Project, as describing Truman as "a little boy on a toboggan," carried away by the force of events.¹² It is unclear how this statement implies a reliance on FDR's policies regarding the atomic bomb or anything else. She footnotes Bernstein and Matusow's *The Truman Administration, A Documentary History*, who, unfortunately, do not tell us where they found Groves's comment.¹³ In his memoir of the Manhattan Project, however, Groves does discuss specifically Truman's decision to drop the bomb. After noting the opposition of some Manhattan Project scientists to using the bomb against Japan, Groves observes:

President Truman knew of these diverse and conflicting opinions. He must have engaged in some real soul-searching before reaching his final decision. In my opinion, his resolve to continue with the original plan will always stand as an act of unsurpassed courage and wisdom—courage because, for the first time in the history of the United States, the President personally determined the course of a major military strategic and tactical operation for which he could be considered directly responsible . . . (Italics ours)

Groves reference to Truman's "*resolve to continue with the original plan*," does suggest a presumption in favor of using the bomb once it became available. But Groves' description of Truman's role also suggests that going ahead with that plan was a separate and carefully considered decision, not just a blurred landmark that Truman's toboggan passed on its dizzying descent.

From Groves, Williams moves to Churchill's reference to the "deadly hiatus" created by the combination of FDR's deteriorating health and eventual death, and by the succession of the ill-prepared Harry Truman. "In this melancholy void," says Churchill, "one President could not act and the other could not know."¹⁴ A careful reading of the section of Churchill's memoirs from which this passage is taken reveals that it relates not to the decision to drop the bomb, but to the perceived failure of American foreign policy to contain adequately "Russian imperialism and the

¹¹ Joseph I. Lieberman, *The Scorpion and the Tarantula: The Struggle to Control Atomic Weapons, 1945-1949* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1970), pp. 92-93.

¹² Williams, p. 73.

¹³ Barton J. Bernstein and Allen J. Matusow, eds., *The Truman Administration: A Documentary History* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 2.

¹⁴ Leslie R. Groves, *Now It Can Be Told: The Story of the Manhattan Project* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962), p. 266.

¹⁵ Williams, p. 73.

Communist creed,” at war’s end.¹⁶ As Daniel Yergin, Walter LaFeber and others have argued, however, Truman’s sensitivity to the Russian threat after World War II was enough greater than Roosevelt’s to constitute a substantial departure from the Roosevelt policy of emphasizing friendly relations with Russia.¹⁷ Again, Truman’s alleged dependence on Rooseveltian precedent evaporates.

Williams quotes the memoirs of Admiral William D. Leahy who tells us that Truman assured his associates that “commitments already entered into must be upheld.”¹⁸ Since no commitment to drop the bomb had actually been made, this statement is irrelevant to that decision. Moreover, the Leahy recollections reveal that Truman made the comment in direct response to a question “concerning food distribution between the different zones of occupation in Germany.”¹⁹ There is no indication here that Truman intended his support of previous commitments to extend beyond this specific issue. In his memoirs, Truman does state more generally that “it was my intention to continue both the foreign and domestic policies of the Roosevelt Administration.” But he adds that “I made it clear, however, that I would be President in my own right and that I would assume full responsibility for such decisions as had to be made.”²⁰ Given the indefiniteness of Roosevelt’s atomic bomb policy, and given the quite different circumstances of the development, as opposed to the use of the atomic bomb, we can assume reasonably that Truman’s decision partook more of the independence shown by the second remark than of the dependence of the first.

This brings us to Williams’ claim that Truman’s decision was “characterized by strict . . . adherence to the advice of seasoned counsellors who surrounded him as Roosevelt’s appointees.”²¹ Williams states that “one conclusion that emerges clearly from a close examination of wartime policy formulation is that policy makers never seriously questioned the assumption that the bomb should be used.”²² Certainly, during the time of the bomb’s development, this was true. Until this weapon was an accomplished fact, what need was there to “seriously question” the assumption of its use? As Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson wrote later, “we were at war, and the work must be done.”²³ But to say that virtually unanimous agreement existed on the use of the bomb does not imply necessarily a lack of consideration of the larger questions involved. As Stimson added, “all of us of course understood the terrible responsibility involved in our attempt to unlock the doors to such a devastating weapon; President Roosevelt particularly spoke to me many times of his own awareness of the catastrophic potentialities of our work.”²⁴ No doubt, this awareness is what

¹⁶ Winston Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1953), pp. 455–456.

¹⁷ Yergin, pp. 87–91; and Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia and the Cold War, 1945–1966* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1967), pp. 21–36.

¹⁸ William D. Leahy, *I Was There* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1950), p. 349; and Williams, p. 73.

¹⁹ Leahy, p. 349.

²⁰ Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs, Volume I: Year of Decisions* (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1955), p. 9.

²¹ Williams, p. 72.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 74.

²³ Henry L. Stimson, “The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb,” *Harper’s*, February 1947, p. 98.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

led Roosevelt to suggest cautiously that the bomb “might perhaps” be used, “after mature consideration.”

That Truman was heavily dependent for information and counsel on Roosevelt’s foreign policy advisors cannot be contested. Lacking broad experience himself in foreign affairs, Truman did “the only thing he could—accepting ideas formulated by those around him, then acting on them as his instinct, personality and the situation dictated.”²⁵ But does this mean, as Williams contends, that his “role was reduced to little more than a ceremonial function;”²⁶ that his was “decision by default?”²⁷ We contend that this is a vast oversimplification of the decision-making process in Truman’s early years as president.

Williams observes that during this time, Truman “tried to appear decisive,” but she implies that this was a facade behind which cowered a hesitating and frightened man.²⁸ There is considerable evidence, however, that from the day he took over the presidency, Truman was, *in fact*, decisive. Ambassador to Japan Joseph Grew reported on May 2, 1945, less than one month into Truman’s presidency that “when I saw him today . . . I had fourteen problems to take up with him and got through them in less than fifteen minutes with a clear directive on every one of them. You can imagine what a joy it is to deal with a man like that.”²⁹

Secretary of Commerce Henry A. Wallace noted much the same phenomenon in meetings with Truman in late April and early May: “Truman’s decisiveness is admirable”³⁰ and “He also seemed eager to make decisions of every kind with the greatest promptness. Everything he said was decisive.”³¹ Wallace added cautiously, however, “The only question is as to whether he has enough information behind his decisiveness to enable his decision to stand up.”³²

This is more to the point. The issue is not really one of Truman’s temperament as decision-maker as much as one of the quality and sources of information upon which he based his decisions. Here, Williams makes two points regarding the informational inputs of the atomic bomb decision. First, she notes that the advisors upon whom Truman relied most, “Stimson, Leahy and Marshall, were obsessed with the military rather than the political implications of the war.”³³ Second, Williams mentions the reports of various *ad hoc* policy advisory bodies, including the Frank Report, the Szilard Petition, the reports of the Interim Committee, and Science Advisory Panel as examples of dissenting views that either never reached the President, or reached him in distorted form.³⁴

Williams’ list of Truman’s most relied-on advisors is open to question. Charles Mee in *Meeting at Potsdam* agrees with the choice of Leahy, but names Secretary of State James F. Byrnes as at least as important in shaping

²⁵ Yergin, p. 73.

²⁶ Williams, p. 74.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

²⁹ Robert J. Donovan, *Conflict and Crisis: The Presidency of Harry S. Truman, 1945–1948* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1977), p. 20.

³⁰ John Morton Blum, ed., *The Price of Vision: The Diary of Henry A. Wallace, 1942–1946* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1973), p. 440.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 437.

³² Blum, pp. 440–441.

³³ Williams, p. 73.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

Truman's thinking on foreign policy.³⁵ Quincy Howe's *Ashes of Victory* also stresses Byrnes' role.³⁶ Daniel Yergin names Churchill and Harriman, the two men whose influence Williams specifically discounts, as two of the four most influential in the first months of the Truman presidency (Leahy and the then Secretary of State Edward Stettinius are the other two).³⁷ These diverging views suggest the difficulty of assigning accurate weights to the advice of those involved in the decision-making process.

Of course, if all of them gave Truman *the same advice*, then the degree to which he relied on each is irrelevant. In fact, among the three advisors Williams names, there was far from complete agreement on atomic energy matters; and certainly, there was no obsession with the military implications of the war, at least as regards the use of the atomic bomb. Quincy Howe notes that from the first, Leahy was sceptical of the chances for the Manhattan Project's success.³⁸ More significantly, even after the success of the project was assured, Leahy urged Truman to drop the demand that Japan surrender unconditionally, in hopes that further American military action could be avoided.³⁹ Some historians have argued since that had the Allied leaders taken this advice, Japan would indeed have surrendered prior to Hiroshima.⁴⁰

As for Stimson and Marshall, we have Stimson's testimony that "both General Marshall and I . . . expressed the view that atomic energy could not be considered simply in terms of military weapons but must also be considered in terms of a new relationship of man to the universe."⁴¹ Neither of these men dissented from the decision to drop the bomb, but there is enough evidence of their concerns over the whole range of the bomb's implications to discount the notion that they suffered from a military obsession. Stimson, in fact, sent a memo to the President on July 2, 1945, urging that an advance warning of the bomb's use be given to Japan, in the hope that she would capitulate out of fear of its potential effects.⁴²

Williams' second argument concerning Truman's access to information assumes a filtering process which denied Truman the views of those who opposed dropping the bomb, or at least distorted them in some way. She cites Sherwin, and Bernstein and Matusow. These sources do discuss some informational gate-keeping; but the only instance they document in which information was actually blocked from Truman's access until after Hiroshima was that of the petition signed by Leo Szilard and other atomic scientists urging the President to use the bomb only after the Japanese had been informed of its destructive potential and given adequate time to respond, and only after all moral implications of the bomb's use had been considered carefully.⁴³ Williams provides no evidence that other sources of information were shut-off, nor does the Szilard petition incident mean

³⁵ Charles L. Mee, *Meeting at Potsdam* (New York: M. Evans and Company, 1975), p. 4.

³⁶ Quincy Howe, *Ashes of Victory* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972), pp. 378–379.

³⁷ Yergin, pp. 73–79.

³⁸ Howe, p. 400.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 400–401.

⁴⁰ Gar Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965), pp. 176–177.

⁴¹ Stimson, p. 100.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 102–104.

⁴³ Sherwin, pp. 217–218.

necessarily that Truman was ignorant of the arguments against the bomb's unannounced use. In fact, as Sherwin notes, the President met with Professor Ralph Bard, the lone dissenter from the report of the Interim Committee urging the bomb's use, some two weeks before the bomb was dropped. Bard did not oppose use, but like Szilard, argued that advance notice should be given. Truman said "the matter of a warning had received very careful attention,"⁴⁴ but declined to change course. Recall, also in this connection, General Groves' claim that "President Truman knew of these diverse and conflicting opinions," regarding whether to use the bomb at all. In sum, President Truman does appear to have been aware of the arguments of those who opposed use of the bomb or felt that its use should be announced in advance. His failure to take these courses of action may have resulted from a tendency to assign greater credibility to the opinions of those who favored unannounced use than those who opposed it, but it did not spring from ignorance.

What emerges from our discussion is a portrait of Harry Truman as decision-maker a good deal more complex and varied than the one Williams paints. We contend that the atomic bomb policy leanings of Franklin Roosevelt, due to their inaccessibility and vagueness, had no appreciable effect on Truman's decision to drop the bomb. We contend further, that while Truman did rely heavily on the advice of Roosevelt's foreign policy advisors, and while these men did unanimously favor the use of the bomb, their advice was not of one redundant voice but included concerns regarding a broad range of political and moral issues. Finally, we contend, that Truman was, by temperament, essentially a decisive man, conscious of, though not convinced by, views opposed to those of his principal advisors and sensitive to the unique responsibilities of his office. He made his decision as rationally as he could. Truman's decision to drop the bomb on Japan may not have been decision-making's finest hour, but neither was it characterized by blind allegiance or passive acquiescence.

Thesis II

Incremental decision-making as a critical concept applies to situations in which the decision under analysis is merely the latest in a series of decisions stretching over a relatively long period, aimed at solving the same long-term problem. As Williams describes it, "a policy is directed at a problem; it is tried, altered, tried in its altered form, altered again, and so forth."⁴⁵ In the case of Truman's decision to drop the bomb, we might define the problem as World War II, and the development and use of the bomb as one approach among many for speeding that war to a conclusion. Certainly, both Roosevelt and Truman sought an end to the war, and thus the decisions in the administration of each are part of the same incremental process.

So far so good. But Williams tries to use the concept of incremental decision-making in quite a different way. She sees the decision-making process not as one in which Roosevelt and then Truman applied various different potential solutions to the same problem, nor as one in which solutions tried unsuccessfully by Roosevelt were altered, tried again, altered again, and finally tried successfully by Truman. Rather, Williams uses the concept of incrementalism to stand for inertia. She sees Roose-

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 217.

⁴⁵ Williams, p. 75.

velt's decision to develop the atomic bomb, more-or-less on the assumption that it would be used, as determining Truman's decision to use it. No incremental alterations in the original solution are noted. From initial development to use, the process is an inertial flow toward a predestined result. "Thus use of the bomb," she says, "flowed out of the momentum of events, out of the locked-in quality of men and institutions, who, once committed, saw no way to rearrange their priorities and decisions."⁴⁶ This is hardly the flexible, experimental mode of decision-making that Braybrooke and Lindblom describe and argue for when they speak of incremental decision-making.⁴⁷

Williams emphasizes the alleged failure of Truman and his advisors to consider "the moral and political impact which the bomb might generate after the war."⁴⁸ Truman, she argues, was biased "toward the more short run and controllable elements of the equation."⁴⁹ She discusses the report of the Interim Committee, and the apparent agreement of its members to ignore the question of whether dropping the bomb could be avoided. These scientists, like Truman's advisors, allowed "the *use* of the A-bomb to become an *end in itself*."⁵⁰ (Williams' Italics)

Perhaps this short-sightedness, this tendency to place wartime military considerations above long-term political goals did afflict the Truman administration. But we are left to guess what these ignored long-term goals were and to what extent the decision to drop the bomb foreclosed them. Williams observes enigmatically that "the final assessment of Truman's A-bomb decision . . . may remain largely a question of values."⁵¹ Undoubtedly so! Certainly the question of how many more lives, American *and* Japanese, might have been lost had the bomb *not* been dropped, is a value-laden one, and one that might be classed as having a "moral impact." Significantly, it is a question that concerned Truman and his advisors profoundly.⁵²

As for the "political impact which the bomb might generate after the war," there is abundant evidence that the question of how atomic energy might affect postwar relations with the Soviet Union was an integral part of the decision-making process. At least two well-known historians have gone so far as to claim that the bomb was dropped primarily to impress upon the Russians the importance of cooperating with the United States in the postwar world.⁵³ Others, while conceding that the bomb would not have been dropped had impressing the Russians been Truman's only goal, argue that this consideration contributed significantly to the decision to use it against Japan.⁵⁴ Arthur Compton, a co-author of the Frank Report, states in its covering letter that "if the bomb were not used in the present war, the world would have no adequate warning as to what was to be expected if war should break out again."⁵⁵

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ David Braybrooke and Charles E. Lindblom, *A Strategy of Decision: Policy Evaluation as a Social Process* (New York: The Free Press, 1970).

⁴⁸ Williams, p. 78.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 75.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 78.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Stimson, pp. 101–102; and Truman, pp. 416–419.

⁵³ Alperovitz, pp. 229–232 and pp. 241–242; and P. M. S. Blackett, *Fear, War, and the Bomb* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1949), pp. 136–138.

⁵⁴ Sherwin, p. 225; and Morton, pp. 346–347.

⁵⁵ Sherwin, p. 213.

Thus, Truman and his advisors, as they approached those fateful days in August 1945, were keenly aware of issues that transcended the immediate goal of subduing Japan. They may have misjudged those issues, but they did not ignore them. Williams invokes incremental decision-making to portray the decision-making process that produced the A-bomb decision as one of inertia, of presidential abdication, and of moral and political myopia. The concept she chooses is ill-suited to her mistaken purpose.

Editor's Note: The reference by Professors Kane and Weiler to "careless" use of evidence by J. M. Williams "Truman and the A-Bomb Decision: The Rhetoric of Incrementalism," *Speaker and Gavel*, 15 (Summer 1978) is predicated upon incomplete quotation and citation in that article. Most of those errors involve not indicating the extent to which Williams directly cites the source, although the source is nearly always included in the footnote. In an effort to foster the highest standards of scholarship, the following corrections are provided to readers of this journal.

At the same time, it should be noted that J. M. Williams provided every possible assistance in correcting these errors and requested that the following statement be published:

"I sincerely hope that the corrections will demonstrate there was no malicious or willful intent to indicate use of material without use of appropriate credit. There was, however, a mishandling of direct quotations, an acutely distressing error on my part and an incomprehensible oversight, for which I vigorously apologize to the readers and editorial staff of *Speaker and Gavel*.

J. M. Williams"

Unless otherwise indicated, the following errors involve mishandling of direct quotations.

1. page 71, fn. 1.
2. page 71, fn. 3.
3. page 71, fn. 4.
4. page 72, fn. 5. See Martin J. Sherwin, *A World Destroyed: The Atomic Bomb and the Grand Alliance* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975), p. 150.
5. page 73, fn. 8.
6. page 73, lines 11–16. No fn. See Cabell Phillips, *The Truman Presidency, The History of a Triumphant Succession* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966), p. 52.
7. page 73, fn. 10.
8. page 73, fn. 12.
9. page 73, no fn. See Sherwin, pp. 147–148.
10. page 73, fn. 13.
11. page 73, fn. 14.
12. page 74, fn. 16.
13. page 74, fn. 17.
14. page 74, fn. 18.
15. page 74, fn. 22.
16. pages 74–75, fn. 23.
17. page 75, fn. 27.
18. page 75, fn. 28.
19. page 75, fn. 29.
20. page 75, fn. 30 and 31.
21. page 76, fn. 32.
22. page 76, fn. 33.
23. page 76, fn. 34.
24. page 76, lines 25–29, no fn. See Sherwin, p. 169.
25. page 76, fn. 36, 37, 38.
26. page 77, fn. 39.
27. page 77, fn. 40 and 41.
28. page 77, fn. 43, 44 and 45.

ON THE CURRENT STATE OF SCHOLARSHIP IN INDIVIDUAL EVENTS

JACK RHODES

The decade of the seventies has witnessed an unprecedented growth in intercollegiate individual events contests. *Intercollegiate Speech Tournament Results* reports that in the 1977-78 forensics season, the number of college tournaments holding exclusively individual events competition had risen to 28.6% of the total roster of tournaments, while those holding both individual events and debate comprised another 35% of the total number.¹ In the same volume, Jack Howe states:

In the course of these four seasons, 1974-75 through 1977-78, the number of individual events opportunities in intercollegiate forensics increased by 542, or a rousing 49%.²

It also seems significant that the Individual Events National Tournament sponsored by the National Forensic Association ranks in the 1977-78 results handbook as the largest tournament in the country on both lists, with 140 schools and 697 students participating, and that, in its very first year of operation, the American Forensic Association's National Individual Events Tournament attracted 59 colleges and 168 student participants.³

With this impressive growth in participation and the emergence in this decade of not one but two national tournaments in individual events, I think it suitable to examine the state of scholarship that has accompanied this surge of interest. Lamentably, there is not very much to examine. There have admittedly been sporadic attempts to give more permanence to, say, the winning speeches from the national tournaments. The valuable but short-lived *Journal of the Forensics Exchange* tried to provide a clearing house for the publication of speeches which the contributors deemed noteworthy; and such publications as *Speaker and Gavel*, *Forensic*, and the *AFA Newsletter* sometimes preserve the texts of championship orations or extemporaneous speeches. These efforts, while laudable, have typically been transitory and non-systematic. In any case, they do not meet the definition of "scholarship" used in this paper because at their best they normally value text reproduction *per se* and contain no analysis, criticism, evaluation, or comparative statements of any kind about the preserved speeches.

With this definition of "scholarship" in mind, let me move to the consideration of what scholarship has taken place during the 1970's in the individual events area. It seems safe to say that virtually all of what has been written or delivered at conventions has focused on the practical aspects of competition. The intent of most of the authors has apparently been to tell students and coaches how to do better in tournament competition. A cursory examination of titles and quotations seems to support this observation. In *Speech Contest Activities*, David Thomas states as his goal

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¹ Jack H. Howe, ed., *Intercollegiate Speech Tournament Results*, Vol. XVII (1977-1978) (Long Beach: Jack H. Howe, 1978), p. 106.

² *Ibid.*, p. 107.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 7 and 92-94.

for the book of essays "to help speech activities become more functional."⁴ As he and the other contributors continue through the various events under discussion, a standard "chapter formula" appears which deliberately places at least three-quarters of the emphasis in each chapter squarely on pragmatics:

In discussing each contest event, I felt the chapter should include a description of the meaning and usefulness of the event in terms of how it relates to the world beyond the speech tournament; a description of the rules of the event; practical recommendations for preparing contestants to compete; and advice for judging the event.⁵

Accordingly, *Speech Contest Activities* provides many practical suggestions and generalized tips for both coach and contestant; there is, however, very little space devoted to critical, historical, or empirical research which might validate these guidelines or generate meaningful questions about the events themselves. The emphasis is strongly on outlines, guidelines, and samples.

Nor is there any significantly greater emphasis on scholarship in the Individual Events chapter of *Directing Forensics* by Faules, Rieke, and Rhodes.⁶ It is true that the authors do provide an initial discussion of the benefits which they believe uniquely derive from training in the individual events and do make various other comments about the possible worth of specific activities throughout the chapter.⁷ But, again, the stress in this chapter, as in the essays of *Speech Contest Activities*, is on pragmatics.

As far as individual events are concerned, both the pragmatic and the theoretical considerations are virtually absent from *Forensics as Communication*, the published proceedings of the 1974 National Conference on Forensics held at Sedalia, Colorado. While the proceedings do indeed call for students to have the opportunity to participate in both debate and individual events, the conference was clearly occupied with the concerns of intercollegiate and high school debate to the point of *de facto* ignoring individual events. Readers of the proceedings will perhaps recall the "Definitional Statement" adopted by the Sedalia Conference:

Forensics is an educational activity primarily concerned with using an argumentative perspective in examining problems and communicating with people. An argumentative perspective on communication involves the study of reason giving by people as justification for acts, beliefs, attitudes, and values. From this perspective, forensics activities, including debate and individual events, are laboratories for helping students to understand and communicate various forms of argument more effectively in a variety of contexts with a variety of audiences.⁸

Now it seems obvious to me that the Sedalia definition, in its insistence on the "argumentative perspective," is a statement incompatible with virtually all individual events involving interpretation and that it is simply an inappropriate model to use when examining what transpires in such popular events as poetry, prose, or dramatic duo.

⁴ David A. Thomas, *Speech Contest Activities* (Springfield, Missouri: Mid-America Research, 1976), p. 12.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

⁶ Don F. Faules, Richard D. Rieke, and Jack Rhodes, *Directing Forensics*, 2nd Edition (Denver: Morton Publishing Company, 1978), pp. 199-229.

⁷ *Ibid.*, see especially pp. 199-203.

⁸ James H. McBath, ed., *Forensics as Communication* (Skokie, Illinois: National Textbook Company, 1975), p. 11.

While it is not the province of this paper to explore such ancillary though interesting questions as, "How did the Sedalia Conference allow itself to convene with so few good spokespersons for the burgeoning area of individual events?," what *can* be observed, here, I think, is that—regardless of the thinking of the conference—a great deal of work that occurs under the heading of individual events has very little to do with an "argumentative perspective." I simply disagree with the Sedalia notion that the communication to an audience of Keats's *The Eve of Saint Agnes* or Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey* relates in any meaningful way to the model of a laboratory "for helping students to understand and communicate various forms of argument more effectively." Lanier's *The Marshes of Glynn* or Frost's *Birches*, beautiful examples of the American lyric poem, may of course be forced onto the Procrustean bed of argumentative analysis in this "laboratory." But why should they be forced? We have no inherent reasons for thinking that any greater appreciation or understanding, any more useful insights, might result from this type of analysis. And certainly the Sedalia conferees make no attempt in *Forensics as Communication* to explain or defend the excellence or utility of their recommended "perspective" as applied to interpretation. Yet in 1977–78 intercollegiate tournaments offered 426 contests described as "interpretation" and another 151 two-person acting or interpretation events.⁹ But whether one accepts or denies the Sedalia perspective on individual events, it is incontrovertibly true that *Forensics as Communication* spends extremely little time discussing these events at all.

The full-scale books on forensics published since 1974, then, do not seem to provide very much in the way of scholarship on the individual events. Likewise, relevant articles in the scholarly journals appearing in the seventies are few in number and only marginally scholarly. On its very narrow topic, the 1973 article by B. W. Hope and Judith C. Hale raises some pertinent questions about the style and the classification of the introductions used in contest orations.¹⁰ My own article in 1972 on the selection of materials for oral interpretation contests addresses a somewhat theoretical, though admittedly narrow, question about the once-pervasive tournament rule that insisted on thematic presentations for interpretation contests.¹¹ The most recent *JAF* article on individual events, James Benson's 1978 piece on extemporaneous speaking, discusses the problem of organizational patterns for extemporaneous speeches with an eye toward developing "content criteria" to assist judges in competitive evaluations.¹² Each of these articles, in its individual way, makes some contribution toward theory-building in the individual events. Each is, it seems to me, a step—albeit very small—in the right general direction. There is clearly, however, much more to be done.

Before outlining a few of the items on the scholarly agenda, however, let me say a word about programs concerning the individual events at the national conventions: there have been virtually no such programs. At the San Antonio convention of the Speech Communication Association and

⁹ Howe, p. 107.

¹⁰ B. W. Hope and Judith C. Hale, "The Introduction to the Contest Oration: Is It 'Speech' or 'Declamation'?", *Journal of the American Forensic Association*, 9 (Winter 1973), pp. 367–370.

¹¹ Jack Rhodes, "The Selection of Materials for Contests in Oral Interpretation," *Journal of the American Forensic Association*, 8 (Winter 1972), pp. 135–138.

¹² James W. Benson, "Extemporaneous Speaking: Organization Which Inheres," *Journal of the American Forensic Association*, 14 (Winter 1978), pp. 150–155.

the American Forensic Association in November, 1979, there will in fact be a program devoted to intercollegiate individual events. This program is offered in response to numerous requests from the forensics community, and I think it will be both interesting and successful. But its focus will also be pragmatic rather than theoretical or scholarly, inasmuch as the panelists will discuss whether the community needs two national tournaments or just one in individual events. Hopefully, however, there will now be a more or less permanent spot for an individual events panel at the national convention; and in the future these panels may well wish to turn their attention to more clearly scholarly inquiries.

If this summary of scholarly activity in individual events during the seventies seems unduly bleak, let me observe on the positive side of the ledger that there are some hopeful signs. These have already been mentioned but perhaps bear review: the appearance of a separate book devoted entirely to individual events, some modest continuing contributions in the *JAF*, and the appearance of a full panel on individual events at the last SCA/AFA national convention of the decade. These developments are underscored, of course, by the surge of student participation in these activities which we have been noting throughout this paper. And it may well be that the scholarly output will soon naturally follow from this newly-found base of student interest, just as, in debate, theory often races to keep abreast of new tactics employed by imaginative debaters. Our task now, therefore, is to develop a scholarly agenda, to begin to suggest a few questions that might be researched and tested by those interested in the area. At this stage the list is certainly not exhaustive; it is intended to be preliminary and to provoke more thought and discussion about the individual events.

- (1) Do the individual events have any genuine value as a part of the student's education? If so, can this value be quantified? What role do training and coaching in individual events play in forensics education?
- (2) Are there certain individual events which most appropriately relate to certain educational goals? Which ones seem to relate to which goals? How might the teacher most efficiently maximize the achievement of these goals?
- (3) What is the role of audience adaptation in individual events? Is it of greater, less, or equal importance with the role of audience adaptation in intercollegiate debate? What methods, if any, can be used to teach audience adaptation through individual events—if the instrument is appropriate?
- (4) What is the comparative desirability of competitive versus noncompetitive participation in individual events? Does either format offer a better avenue for teaching individual events skills? Or are there specific events which should be noncompetitive for maximum utility, while others should be competitive?

These and other questions seem to afford a starting point for more inquiry into the usefulness and value of individual events; and I think we should address these questions, looking for honest answers, with the best tools to be found in our discipline. Yet practically no empirical research of which I am aware has focused on these events in which so many students and coaches spend a considerable part of their professional and co-curricular time and effort.¹³

¹³ A partial exception is the Ph.D. dissertation by David A. Williams, currently on

I am at a loss to explain this dearth of research. I know journal editors and convention planners who have spent considerable energy trying to solicit manuscripts and panels dealing with individual events; there clearly is a market for the publication and dissemination of individual events research. The scarcity of research is also puzzling because our discipline abounds in people well-qualified to undertake empirical, critical, and historical research projects. And the American Forensic Association has, through its research committee, demonstrated its willingness to receive research proposals concerning individual events.¹⁴

At this point I hope enough has been said to provoke more discussion and to encourage interested scholars to take up the challenge of research about the individual events. Our forensics community clearly possesses the people, the tools, and the resources to set a research agenda and start to move through it. It is my belief that the rewards of knowledge gained will be well worth our collective efforts.

the faculty at the University of Arizona, concerning oral interpreters' responses to audience feedback and subsequent adaptation and effectiveness while reading Robert Frost's "The Runaway." (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Utah, 1971.)

¹⁴ For an example of AFA-supported research in a similar vein, see Wayne N. Thompson, "The Early History of the National Contest in Public Discussion," *Communication Education*, 28 (May 1979), pp. 104-109.

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