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The editorial policy of Speaker and Gavel is to publish refereed articles dealing with the theory, practice, or criticism of public argument. Preference is given to topics drawn from the contemporary period, i.e., since 1960. Speaker and Gavel will also publish articles about major society projects, including articles on academic forensics. Articles featuring society projects may be commissioned.

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THE 1984 POLITICAL CAMPAIGN: 
THE RHETORIC OF JESSE HELMS

C. Scott Baker
Dean Fadely
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

When Democratic Governor James Hunt and Republican Senator Jesse Helms formally announced their candidacy in the 1984 North Carolina senatorial race, political analysts began to argue that this race would be 1984's second most important election. This analysis was due, in the main, to Helms' performance as a senator during the past decade. Helms' views and political tactics have made him an object of national attention, and his ability to arouse controversy provided the impetus for certain non-Rightist groups to target him for defeat in 1984.

While some members of the scholarly community have studied the rhetoric of the "New Right," notably absent from their research is an assessment of the rhetoric of Jesse Helms, a prominent conservative figure in that movement. Our intention is to report the results of such a study. Specifically, we intend to focus upon the ways in which Helms employs the principles of identification.

Traditionally the theory of identification has stressed the associative or "positive" side of the relationship between a speaker and audience. This focus is indicated in Aristotle's observation that it is easy to praise Athenians in Athens. Kenneth Burke described this notion in depicting "the politician, who addressing an audience of farmers, says, 'I was a farm boy myself.'" Like most political figures, Helms utilizes the techniques of associative identification. However, he also uses an opposite principle—a rhetoric of identification through dissociation.²

In the Fall of 1983, well over a year before the 1984 election, Jesse Helms began his campaign for re-election to the United States Senate. While politicians are often accused of altering their messages around election time, Helms' approach to gaining support remains the same at all times. He does not soften his attacks on special groups nor strive to avoid alienation of large numbers of voters. Helms' political philosophy is evidently one of "love me or leave me," meaning he does not care to adapt his messages for political purposes. For this reason, Helms' political alignments are never

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² Associative identification may be thought of as a positive form of identification in which the rhetor, in essence, argues that the audience should like him (identify with him in a positive way) because both he and the audience like the same things. To wit: "I was a farm boy myself."

Dissociative identification may be thought of as a negative form of identification in which the rhetor, in essence, argues that the audience should like him (identify with him in a positive way) because both he and the audience dislike, or even hate, the same things—Commie, Pinko, Perverts, for example.
vague to his constituency. Greensboro journalist Chuck Alston reports that Helms rarely offers the electorate any major surprises.

His political opponents change, but ... Helms still is running against the same old foes: government spending, abortion, big city newspapers, the forced busing of school children, and communists.

Helms, ... is running for prayer in the schools, an unadulterated free enterprise system, a strong national defense and the preservation, or restoration, of the values he knew as a boy ....

This political strategy has elected Helms twice, and Helms says he knows no other way.3

Helms' strategy has been classified by his latest senatorial opponent, Governor Jim Hunt, as "the politics of negativism and division."4 During Helms' filibuster to stop 1982 federal gas tax legislation, conservative Senator Alan Simpson of Wyoming labelled Helms "obdurate and obnoxious."5 As a result, some North Carolinians react with embarrassment to Helms' political ways and, in an editorial of June, 1983, Giles Lambertson, a Greensboro columnist with a consistently conservative bent, urged: "Be positive Jesse."

If Jesse Helms decides to run again for the Senate, he ought to take the high road. That route could lead not only to re-election but to wider respect among the people of North Carolina.

The senator's critics contend he is a negative wart on the body politic—a no-bird, a Prince of Darkness, a throwback to an era whose passing is un-regretted.®

Nonetheless, Helms dissociates from his critics and all others who do not subscribe to his brand of democracy. The era referred to by Lambertson must be revitalized, in Helms' scheme, if this country is to survive the many threats which Helms describes in his book, When Free Men Shall Stand. Starting with the first page of that treatise, Helms adopts an attitude of dissociation from modern political ideology and an attitude of association with what he terms the "roots of freedom."

In the preface to his book Helms praises his rural, Southern, Christian roots and makes a spirited statement of patriotism in which he depicts himself as a humble statesman fighting, virtually alone, the onslaught of forces which he believes undermine the Constitution's Christian ethic. Since the time of this country's independence, Helms asserts, America has suffered "times when our faith in God and in our country's institutions were put to a severe test."

On the whole, we kept the faith and surmounted adversity .... The sense of community, compassion, resourcefulness, courage, pride, and self-reli-

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In Helms' opinion, modern America is bereft of these values, spiritually desolated, and cynical: "Our political problems are nothing but psychological and moral problems writ large."^8

As a result of his condemnation of contemporary politics, Helms does not give the concept of government much allegiance. Instead, Helms claims that "the author of human liberty is almighty God."^9 This tenet is basic to the moral code of the New Right, of which Helms is a key spokesperson. In a sense, the American Constitution, like the Bible, was inspired by God, not by human beings. Liberals misunderstand that and, thus, do violence to the spirit of the Constitution. According to Helms, liberals have an "alleged objective . . . to preserve the separation of church and state." Nevertheless, liberals have made "secular humanism" the "state religion."^10 In Helms' words:

The new religion is, to sum it up, collectivist, totalitarian, and implacably hostile to the family, the church and free institutions. It claims dedicated adherents in politics, in communications and education, in business and industry. In short, the new religion makes a god of government."^11

Unlike these liberals, conservatives "have taken a dim view of state-sponsored schemes . . . . Conservatives believe that government begins with the individual and proceeds to the family."^12 In this interpretation of conservatism, government by the people truly means "by the people," and the citizen's only duty to the state is to give to Washington that which is Washington's, which is very little, and to give to God that which is God's. Therefore, the political principles of free enterprise are "economic and moral laws that simply will not bend."^13

Helms' religio-political mind-set divides the world into two large camps which reflects Helms' two-valued orientation. On the left are the liberals (anyone from those espousing communism, to government "big spenders," to humanists and college professors). On the right reside the conservatives. Accordingly, Helms dissociates from anyone not accepting his view of God, mother, country, and apple pie. At the same time, he reserves his association for those groups which, in his opinion, truly comprehend the original foundation of this country: "biblical faith and a biblical understanding of the nature of man."^14 In keeping with this faith is an almost Calvinistic belief in the work ethic and the concept of free enterprise. Approximately half of Helms' book is devoted to the alleged gradual decay of the free enterprise system brought on by foolish, modern economic decisions. Helms feels that

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^8 Helms, p. 10.
^9 Helms, pp. 10–11.
^10 Helms, p. 19.
^11 Helms, p. 27.
^12 Helms, p. 27.
^13 Helms, p. 16.
^14 Helms, p. 28.
^16 Helms, pp. 15–16.
Congress has, of late, adopted socialistic economic policies which discourage the profit motive. His prescription for this diagnosed disease is a full-fledged return to the economic principles set forth by Adam Smith.

It was a system based on freedom, not coercion, and the extraordinarily high standard of living that Americans have enjoyed for generations is a direct outgrowth of the concept of the free marketplace.

Just when a person would think the point had been made triumphantly for all time that *freedom is the only basis for prosperity*, a strange thing happened. American intellectuals, influenced by the Fabian Socialists in England, grew more and more interested in the political manipulation of the economy. Thus, using the "general welfare" clause of the Constitution as a wedge, the New Dealers were able to initiate the first wedge of governmental controls over agriculture, ... and the fatal precedent of governmental intervention in the marketplace was set for life ....

[T]he most insidious assaults on our economy have occurred, not in the marketplace, but in the classrooms of colleges and universities. Today we have a generation prepared in effect to repudiate its heritage.

Let there be no doubt: the alternative to the profit motive is the socialist state. History shows that no nation has survived for very long when its citizens were denied the profit motive. The police power of these states has had to be immeasurably enhanced to compel their citizens to work.¹⁷

According to Helms, the system of free enterprise is also threatened by excessive governmental control over the activity of the business community. Therefore, the role of business is of higher importance than the role of government in the successful system of free enterprise. In the passage below, Helms condemns government intervention into the realm of business:

Considered in the abstract, federal regulation and control are universally denounced. Our whole economy is papered over with edicts and quotas and a superfluity of laws ....

One does not have to observe the Congress very long to find there a profoundly anti-business bias. Not only have the environmentalists and the consumerists declared open season on American business, but the politicians are rushing in to win votes by denouncing American businessmen and industrialists as devils of the deepest dye ....

This nation's people need to be reminded that the greatest anti-poverty agency of all time is a business that turns a profit. And businessmen have got to take the lead in practicing and defending the economic principles that have made our country prosperous and free.¹⁸

Senator Helms denounces our nation's present system of taxation and spending. He feels that this system, if it is allowed to continue, will lead America down the path of the Roman empire. Helms cites Cicero's warning

¹⁷ Helms, pp. 29–30.
¹⁸ Helms, p. 37.
¹⁹ Helms, pp. 40–41.
to the Roman Senate to support his own argument against excessive taxation:

The Roman law code, like our own Constitution, contained a reference to the “general welfare” of the people. Cicero warned the senators not to misinterpret the word welfare . . . . The politicians of Rome listened politely, ignored his advice, and then proceeded to use the treasury to buy the political support of the masses. The doom of Rome was sealed.20

Perhaps Jesse Helms pictures himself as a latter-day Cicero, the unheeded voice of the people, crying in a wilderness of unwise government excesses. Whatever his self-perception may be, Helms powerfully associates with the system of free enterprise (as he comprehends it). However, at the same time he dissociates from what he perceives to be a majority of politicians who will sell America’s future for votes. For example, Helms denounces his colleagues for deficit spending:

the economic stress of this country . . . is the direct result of immoral apathy by too many Americans. Now we have known all along that it is immoral to borrow against the heritage of our children and grandchildren in order to enjoy comfort in our time. We have known that this deficit spending, this excessive, extravagant, wasteful and often corrupt federal spending is wrong . . . . Look where we are today. We are in a period of what appears to be recovery . . . I don’t believe it’s going to continue unless Congress faces up to its responsibility and its duty to cut federal spending.21

Helms also dissociates from the broad category of persons in the educational field: intellectuals are classified as leftist. For example, Helms writes, “[f]or many intellectuals, some form of socialism is vastly preferable to the workings of the unpredictable free market.”22

The country’s present system of taxation, according to Helms, is a form of economic slavery. Blame falls primarily on the legislators who, in 1909, passed the Sixteenth Amendment, the income tax law. Equal blame is levied on Congressional proponents of the New Deal who, for “the past forty years” have abused “the power of the purse.”23 Helms writes:

I have no wish to demean the idea that all citizens should welcome the responsibility to share in the support of the proper functions of government, properly conducted. Yet the crazy-quilt assortment of governmental programs and iniquitous exceptions and exemptions that lie outside the framework of limited government which Jefferson and his fellow patriots ordained constitute an immense drain on the productive capacity of this country. [Emphasis Helms]24

In general, Helms’ position on free enterprise and his excoriation of legislators and “intellectuals” who, in his opinion, do not nurture the kind of system he believes was “ordained” by the Founding Fathers function as a large-scale dissociation. Helms dissociates from a majority of federal representatives in office from the turn of the century, through the Roosevelt

20 Helms, pp. 46-47.
22 Helms, p. 30.
24 Helms, p. 51.
era, to the end of the Carter administration—a happy event for Helms. In 1980, a candidate had finally been elected to the Presidency with whom Helms could strongly associate. With the arrival of Ronald Reagan came a friendly climate in which to promote the Helms brand of free enterprise. In a speech delivered in September, 1983, Helms associates Ronald Reagan with the “heritage” of freedom (included in which is the system of free enterprise) he hopes Americans will preserve by re-electing his man.

What’re we gonna do with this heritage that we got free, really, just outa the accident of birth? Is it too much to ask to become involved in the political process? Is it worth it really to keep a man in the White House who ... is not without fault, he doesn’t claim to be. But, I’ll tell you one thing: he’s way ahead of whatever’s in second place. [Loud applause, coupled with “Hol,” and “Right on!”] Never known a more decent and honorable man, and I personally resent the kind of attacks that are made upon him. He’s a good man, and he’s doin’ the best he can with this country, and he deserves the support and cooperation of all of us.25

Finally, in a chapter of his book devoted entirely to a reminiscence of satirist Will Rogers, Helms hurls stones at his own glass house: Congress. In the closing portion of that chapter, Helms bites the Congressional hand which feeds him, and thus dissociates from a majority of his political colleagues.

Congress is responsible, in large measure, for the inflation now wreaking havoc on the American economy. It is Congress that has voted the enormous federal deficits that have saddled this country with a stupifying debt of far more than half a trillion dollars.

It is Congress, playing politics, that created the outrageous welfare programs that have encouraged citizens to stop working for a living. It is Congress that has permitted small businessmen to be swamped with federal regulations, controls, and time-consuming paperwork. It is Congress that has allowed the federal bureaucracy to double and treble, to the point that almost every American is frustrated with federal controls of almost every type.26

Helms’ denunciation of the government’s alleged socialistic temperament permits the inference that Helms is intolerant of nations which openly practice socialism and communism. In fact, communist governments and communists in general have consistently been the subject of Helms’ most virulent denunciation. Given America’s democratic system, it is not unusual for a U.S. politician to speak negatively about communism, therefore Helms’ position is not unique. However, his attacks on communism are so vicious that certain statements function as a dual dissociation. While denouncing communists for some “evil” transgression or another, Helms often implicates Americans as well for not responding with the same vigor as he. This method of dissociation is in keeping with one of Helms’ favorite aphorisms, “We become part of what we condone.”27 By using this saying to denounce Americans who do not denounce the communists as strongly as he does,

25 “Elms Speech.”
26 Helms, p. 64.
Helms associates certain groups with the communists, thus dissociating himself from both.

One dramatic example of this act of dissociation stems from Helms' response to the Korean Airlines incident of September 1, 1983. On that date, the Soviet Union shot down a Korean commercial airliner, flight 007, because it violated Soviet airspace off the west coast of Japan. Two hundred sixty-nine people were killed in the crash. Among them was U.S. Representative Larry McDonald, a Democrat from Georgia who was a staunch anti-communist with close ties to the John Birch Society.

McDonald was part of an American contingent sent to Seoul, South Korea by President Reagan to take part in a conference marking the thirtieth anniversary of a mutual defense pact signed by the United States and Korea. Senator Helms was also a member of that group but traveled on a different plane, flight 17, with other members of Congress. Helms treated this occasion as a personal brush with death and was reported as conjecturing that perhaps the Soviets were aiming to kill him, but fired upon the wrong aircraft.

After denouncing the Russians as barbarous, Helms asserted that their action "was a premeditated act in the sense that the Soviets have apparently adopted standard operating procedures to shoot down civilian aircraft that stray from the heavily traveled polar route." He also utilized an experience he had during the layover of both flights in Anchorage, identifying the deaths of people he met at the time as a deep personal loss. On several occasions following the incident, Helms reported that he came in contact with the Grenfell family, Neil, Carol, and their two young daughters, Noelle and Stacey. According to Helms' story, he played with the children before they boarded flight 007. In a January, 1984, television campaign address, Helms recounts this story:

The mother was reading them a story. And the little ones were listening intently.... And finally, the story book was laid aside, mama said, 'You girls play with your toys or look at your books and let mama rest her eyes.' And I saw that as my opportunity. I moved over and introduced myself and sat down with those two precious little children, and the three-year-old climbed on my lap and we began to play a little game that my own grandchildren enjoy. Now, maybe you've played it with your children or grandchildren. An imaginary oil truck tickles it way down the child's arm and makes deliveries of oil at an imaginary house at the end of each little finger. Each little hand is a neighborhood. And I remember the little one, Noelle, extending her arm and saying, 'Do it again!' And I did it again, and I did it again and again, over and over, until the public address system announced the impending departure of flight double-0 seven. Well, those two little girls hugged this stranger's neck and kissed me on the cheek and then waving and blowing kisses. They scampered through the door with their parents and they got on that plane.

29 Barkley, p. 1.
30 Barkley, p. 1.
In his first speech after the incident, Helms employed this experience in a very emotional, anti-Soviet appeal. The occasion for this speech was an early re-election rally in Winston-Salem on September 16, 1983. Most of the audience were supporters of Helms. After recounting his experience with the Grenfell girls, Helms excoriated the Russians and denounced Washington’s response to the Soviet act as soft:

Now, I mention that because I will readily confess that I may be paranoid, I may be obsessed ... but I think if there ever was a time to nail the communist hide to the wall it's now. [Vigorous applause] The world [fighting emotion] for the first time is beginning to understand what the Soviets are and what they're up to: No Samantha they are not folks just like us. They are cruel barbarians, they will do anything to destroy, they will do anything to dominate, they will do anything to overthrow freedom anywhere in the world. You may as well face up to it and face up to it now, and there's no point in sitting back and dealing with mamby-pamby words of condemnation. We have got to take action which will be felt in the Kremlin because we could say all we want to, and any resolution by the Senate, any statement by the President, and those guys say, 'Big deal ... Ho Hum.' We've got to turn the screws as tight as we can, starting, if I may suggest, with sending home that horde of KGB spies infesting this country. [Applause, verbal affirmations] We've got to understand that these people don't care about human life, they don't care about human rights, they are ... Godless atheists ... and they are out to control this world. If you don't believe it, ask the Afghans. If you don't believe it, ask the Poles. If you don't believe it, go to Africa and ask 'em. If you don't believe it, go to Central America and ask the folks who are the victims of the orchestration of the Soviet Union using that puppet 90 miles off our shore. It's time to say, 'Enough is enough,' and draw the line. [Applause] In the name of those two little girls, not to mention the other 267 innocent people, I think that the Lord will remember if we don't do what we can. Not to precipitate a war, that's ridiculous. But, we need to turn the economic screws in every way possible. We need to make clear that the first Aeroflot airliner that comes into our airspace will be guided down to earth and we will take over that airplane. And we will hold it, and if the Soviet Union does not make reparations to Korea, then give them the airplane. [Applause] I think that'd be a fair price to pay. [Emphasis Helms]

Later in the same speech, Helms revives the issue as a segue to his remarks on America’s needed spiritual revival:

Let me go back to the Korean plane disaster. I think we owe it to Noelle, little Tracy [sic], Larry McDonald, and all the rest to wake up and smell the coffee and realize that we do have a duty as a nation and as individuals. But, if we think for a minute that freedom can be saved simply by political action or governmental action we are missing the whole point of how freedom got here in the first place. [Emphasis Helms]

While Helms’ anger in this passage is understandable, he uses the emotional appeal to connect the deaths of the Grenfell girls with Soviet adventurism and expansionism. In effect, Helms is relating this occurrence to say, “I told you so,” to the American public regarding “Godless” communists. He also uses the example to dissociate from the general American policy toward the Russians. Six days after the KAL incident, Helms claimed, “If it’s
not an act of war, it'll do till the real thing comes along."\textsuperscript{34} While this remark did not constitute a recommendation for military response, it illustrates Helms' consistent practice of taking exception with Washington's position. Instead, Helms advocated that the U.S. "shut down relations with the Soviet Union and do our best to bring communism under control" through economic and diplomatic sanctions. The President's response was not tough enough, said Helms, and he listed several actions which he felt would be sufficient, saying, "I would tighten the screws across the board,... Some would say, 'You're inviting war,' and I say, 'Poppycock.'"\textsuperscript{35} A week later, Helms maintained his disagreement with Reagan:

The President is missing a golden opportunity if he doesn't nail the Soviet hide to the wall. ... He should tell the Soviets he is not going to stand for this. I want him to go beyond the rhetoric and do something substantive.\textsuperscript{36}

The Senator's reaction to this event is one of the most recent attacks on American foreign policy in a long line of dissociative statements. Chapter Eighteen of his book is entitled, "Ropes to the Hangman," in which he expresses his dissatisfaction with U.S. policy toward communist entities since Truman's "great mistake"\textsuperscript{37} in Korea in the 1950s. Helms maintains that, beginning with the Truman administration and through those of Johnson and Nixon, American policy has been flaccid concerning alleged communist designs on world domination. Referring to the conflict in Vietnam, Helms writes:

Moreover, our failure to defeat the communists decisively in Korea permitted them to solidify their position in China and thereafter to export revolution to the countries of Southeast Asia.

President Johnson and Nixon both persevered in the same naive faith in 'negotiation,' disregarding the advice of their highest military advisers.

As the years went by and the bloodshed continued unabated, the bankruptcy of our policy became evident, and the American people began to challenge the very basis on which the war was waged. ... In the end, we forced an ignoble and unworkable 'truce' on our allies, the South Vietnamese, and we began a steady retreat from confrontation with the Soviet Union which continues to this day. . . .

Subsequent events have proved detente to be a horrendous adventure in self-delusion. Even as the battle raged in Vietnam, American liberals, in a display of credulity that has no equal in modern history, were swallowing the story that the Soviet Union wanted nothing more than to relax tensions in the world, to beat its swords into plowshares, and to devote its gargantuan energies solely to improving consumer goods for Soviet citizens.\textsuperscript{38}

Upon derogating American policy, Helms issues a warning against creeping communism and offers Americans two policy options. The U.S. may either acquiesce to the Soviet threat or, citing the defiance of Stephen

\textsuperscript{35} Alson, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{37} Helms, p. 93.
\textsuperscript{38} Helms, pp. 93-95.
Decatur, spend “Millions for defense, . . . but not one cent for tribute!”

To wit:

Unless we have a swift reversal of these policies . . ., not only will the tenure of this country as a great world power be one of the shortest in all history, but we will inevitably be reduced to a client state of the prospective world-wide Soviet Empire. Though many Americans prefer not believe this possibility, only two alternatives confront us. We might prefer to put off action and decision, seeking but to live and let live and get on with our daily affairs.

Considering the might of our enemy, delaying action is not a reasonable option. Our forebears had the sense to heed the words of Paul Revere: ‘The British are coming!’ Unless we heed the words of his counterparts today, . . . we are going to be invaded: ‘The Russians are coming.’ The possibility we refused to admit will come to pass, and we will be powerless to respond to it.

More recently, Helms has dissociated himself from efforts to produce Soviet-American arms reduction agreements, arguing that the Russians cannot be trusted to abide by them. In addition, he has borrowed Reagan’s oft-criticized remark that the Soviet Union is “the focus of evil in this world,” and blames the news media for being too sympathetic of the Russians, labeling the media “apologists for the Soviet Union” who, in turn, “are playing the American news media like a fiddle.”

Within this argument that America is too gentle with the Russians, Helms contrasts the ideas of two prominent political theorists: one Russian and one American. Ironically, Helms dissociates from the American and associates with the Soviet. The philosophy of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn is preferred over the philosophy of Henry Kissinger. Solzhenitsyn is a man of “genius and courage,” while Kissinger is the “chief author of this deception” called détente.

Jesse Helms’ relationship with Solzhenitsyn is one which Helms frequently calls upon to support his argument against the Russians and the policy of détente. He claims the America’s devotion to détente is the reason President Ford “refused to receive Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn at the White House, out of deference to the wishes of Comrade Brezhnev.” Citing Solzhenitsyn, Helms criticizes American businesses for exercising their free enterprise too freely by maintaining trade relations with the Soviet Union, especially in electronics. Such activity is classified as “selling ropes to the hangman.” In Helms’ view, trade with the Russians is motivated by greed.

More than citing Solzhenitsyn’s arguments, though, Helms considers himself a close associate of the Russian. On occasion, Helms will center his anti-communist argument around a narrative involving a visit Solzhenitsyn made to Helms’ Washington home shortly after he came to the United States. As the story goes, Solzhenitsyn and Helms sat up all night while the Senator

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39 Helms, p. 98.
40 Helms, p. 98.
42 Helms, pp. 95–96.
43 Helms, p. 96.
absorbed stories about Russian oppression and Solzhenitsyn’s faith in God. 

Quite often, in speeches, Helms will refer to this meeting during his conclusion before recommending America’s return to spiritual values. For example, in a Winston-Salem speech, Helms affirms his respect for Solzhenitsyn:

I guess, Borden [to his introducer, Borden Manes], it goes back to what Solzhenitsyn told me in the living room of my home, ‘bout five or six years ago, when he came to Washington. He sat there that night, and he said, um, in his broken English, he said, ‘Senator, do your people not understand, do your leaders not understand?’ And I had to tell him, ‘No,’ I didn’t believe they did, really. And he began talking about his years in the concentration camp. He began talking about all the things he wrote in The Gulag Archipelago. And you sit there and you look at a man who has been through it. And you realize, my Lord, how blessed I have beeni Because, as Solzhenitsyn said, ‘you have never been oppressed, Senator.’ And I had to admit that I hadn’t. I was born in this country and I grew up in this country and I’ve enjoyed the benefits of this country and so have most of you. [Emphasis Helms]

In contrast, Helms denigrates the philosophy of former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. Kissinger, according to Helms, was the primary proponent of a dangerous policy with the Soviets. In Helms’ words, Kissinger effectively wiped out any possibility of American superiority in the notorious SALT I agreement. The terms of this pact permitted the Soviets three nuclear missiles for every two the U.S. had, plus $1 billion worth of American grain, generously subsidized by the U.S. taxpayers.

In the summer of 1983, Helms parted once again with his compatriot, Ronald Reagan, when he refused to endorse the President’s choice of Henry Kissinger to head a commission on Central America. Helms’ role in this issue is more than rhetorical since he was at the time chair of the Western Hemisphere subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. At the time of Kissinger’s appointment, Helms promised to bring Kissinger before the committee to determine “what, if anything, he knows about Central America.” Helms also admitted his prejudice against the appointee: “There may be someone in this broad land who is lower on my list of choices than Mr. Kissinger, but I can’t think of him.”

Helms’ also castigated his colleagues, as well as his opponents, concerning policy with China. In the following passage, Helms employs his “lone ranger” theme:

About four years ago, for example, President Jimmy Carter asked the Senate to grant what is called ‘Most Favored Nation Trade Status’ to communist China. Now, I opposed Mr. Carter’s proposal because I know that unfair competition from Chinese textiles produced by slave labor would destroy the jobs of countless thousands of textile workers in North Carolina and throughout the country. And I recall receiving a letter from Governor Hunt urging me to support his deal with the Chinese communist regime in Peking.

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45 Elms Speech.”

46 Helms, p. 95.

But I did not, I could not agree with Governor Hunt. And as it turned out, I was the only United States senator who spoke out against President Carter’s deal with the Red Chinese. And I remember standing alone on the Senate floor that afternoon pleading with the senators to consider what they were doing! [Emphasis Helms]*

Jesse Helms’ rhetorical stance on the country’s policy regarding communism is consistent with his relationship to the American political establishment. Regardless of the fact that he may share conservative viewpoints with the Reagan administration, Helms does not step lightly when he finds points of disagreement which may be isolated.

Indeed, Helms did not alter this practice at the Republican coronation of incumbent President Ronald Reagan in Dallas. During the 1984 Convention, Helms maintained his divisive tactics by seeking to polarize his fellow party members on the issue of space-based defense systems. Helms’ concern was that certain liberal factions in the G.O.P. would dilute the conservative tone of the party’s platform by opposing Reagan’s so-called “star wars” initiative. Helms singled out a particular Republican liberal, Senator Lowell Weicker of Connecticut, as a threat to the conservative platform. The Associated Press reported that “Helms says Weicker is a liberal who would agree with Hunt on almost all matters in the Senate.” In Helms’ words, “I am pro-Reagan and anti-Weicker, . . . I will do anything I can to prevent Weicker from possibly undermining one of the finest presidents we ever had.” Helms also expressed a desire to purge the Republican party of any liberal influence whatsoever. He recommended that the American political system be realigned “to get liberals in one [party] and conservatives in another.”*

Such a political discipline serves to isolate Helms, at times, as an anomalous conservative. While mainstream conservatives may pursue and publicly advocate a policy which is more acceptable to a larger number of their colleagues, the Helmsian conservative is capable of detecting flaws within the policies of his own camp, and minces few words in illuminating these flaws. However, on the issue of Most Favored Nation Trade Status with the communist Chinese, Helms gives his constituency an opportunity to legitimize, or at least rationalize, their own conservative, anti-communist beliefs. Helms links opposition to a rapprochement with China to the notion of protection for the North Carolina textile industry.

Are such rhetorical tactics effective? Do they work? Based on Helms’ last three campaign efforts in North Carolina the answer would appear to be yes. From the standpoint of effectiveness, Helms’ rhetoric, specifically its dissociative nature, can be judged as effective, or at least more effective than the rhetorical effects of his political opponents. This judgment assumes that Helms’ persistent use of the dissociative approach to identification is somewhat appealing to an isolated portion of North Carolina’s citizenry. If this assumption is true—if people like to hear a dissociative speaker—and if the amount of these listeners is vast, then such an approach would be successful in a political campaign.

If Helms' candidly presented, negative stance on the issues (which is a result of the two-valued orientation) is applauded by great numbers of voters, then perhaps this approach is responsible for getting Helms elected. If, indeed, such is the case, then two observations are in order.

First, Jesse Helms would be ill-advised to change his approach. By altering his message and becoming more moderate and more sophisticated in his approach to identification, Helms could possibly alienate the only supportive factions he possesses. Furthermore, if Helms "softened" his approach and ceased utilizing the rhetoric of polarization, he would perhaps fail to achieve identification with any group, and thereby attract few votes. It may be that Jesse Helms, and the New Right in general, thrives on polarization by appealing to people with a similar dissociative, two-valued orientation. This leads us to our second observation. Given that polarization via the two-valued orientation has kept Helms in power through three senatorial elections, perhaps this fact indicates something about the sophistication, or lack thereof, of a large portion of North Carolina's electorate.

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50 It should be noted that the following observation lends itself to misinterpretation as being offensive. However, it is not intended to offend.
MOYNIHAN AT THE UNITED NATIONS: ULTIMATE TERMS AND RHETORICAL STRATEGIES

J. Justin Gustainis
SUNY-Plattsburgh

An unnamed American official, quoted in the October 6, 1975 edition of U.S. News and World Report said, "Nobody has ever before talked to the United Nations for us like this." The official was referring to Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Harvard professor, adviser to presidents, and former U.S. Ambassador to India, who, for eight months during 1975 and 1976, was the United States' Ambassador to the United Nations. As The New York Times noted at the time of Moynihan's resignation from his United Nations post, "no American Representative in the 30-year history of the United Nations has stirred so much controversy."^2

This essay examines Moynihan's principal speeches at the United Nations from two perspectives: His use of god and devil terms, collectively referred to as "ultimate terms" by Richard Weaver, and his rhetorical strategies. Moynihan's rhetoric while at the United Nations is worthy of study by the rhetorical critic for several reasons. First, Moynihan saw his own responsibility in his job to be primarily rhetorical. Any student of the United Nations realizes quickly that the vast military, technological, and economic power of the United States has relatively little impact in that forum. The United States has one vote, the same as the smallest Third World country (except in the Security Council, where the United States is still but one voice among several). Moynihan perceived the United Nations as "an instrument of persuasion."^3 As Moynihan put it himself: "The main object of public diplomacy, which the U.N. is, ... is not to paper over differences, but to make their existence known and to make them clear, to define those differences so as to reduce the possibility of misunderstanding between countries."^4

A second reason has to do with the effect Moynihan's rhetoric had upon the American public. Although Americans as a rule pay little attention to what goes on at the United Nations, such was not the case with Pat Moynihan. This may be measured in several ways. One measurement may be applied to the mail which poured into the United States Mission to the United Nations during Moynihan's tenure. After Moynihan had been on duty for seven months, the total ran to 28,261 pieces of mail; only 191 of these evaluated Moynihan negatively.^5 A survey conducted by the Opinion

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5 "A Fighting Irishman," 27.

Research Corporation in early 1976, found that Americans supported Moynihan overwhelmingly; 70% indicated that they thought he should keep speaking out "frankly and forthrightly." The British publication The Economist noted that "Mr. Moynihan's performance has made a lot of Americans feel better, for the simple reason that they felt that they had been shouted at long enough in the UN and it was time to shout back . . ." And it was Moynihan's rhetoric at the United Nations, along with the attention and approval it garnered from his followers in the United States, that was a major factor in his fairly rapid transition from U.N. diplomat to U.S. Senator.

A third reason why Moynihan's U.N. rhetoric deserves scholarly attention is that unlike much public discourse in the modern age, Moynihan's speeches were largely written by himself. This eliminates the "ghostwriter" problem with which many rhetorical critics have had to wrestle. It is true that Moynihan did not determine the policy that would be articulated in his speeches; that was done mostly by President Ford and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. However, the language of the speeches and the phrasing and construction of the arguments was mostly Moynihan's responsibility. It was a responsibility to which he gave much thought and effort. In Moynihan's own words, "There is nothing more serious than language.

This essay focuses on Moynihan's six major speeches made at the United Nations while he was U.S. Ambassador to that body:

—His statement to the Plenary Council on November 10, 1975, wherein he attacked a resolution introduced by Third World countries which equated Zionism with racism and racial discrimination.

—His statement to Committee III, on November 12, 1975, proposing a worldwide amnesty for political prisoners.

—His statements to the Security Council in December, 1975, in which he attacked a Security Council resolution condemning Israel's air attacks against Lebanon.

6 "A Fighting Irishman," 27.
7 "Moynihan and His Moment," The Economist, 39 (February 7, 1976), 11.
10 "Politics Today Interview: Daniel Patrick Moynihan," Politics Today, 6 (March/April, 1979), 20.
12 "U.S. Proposes Worldwide Amnesty for Political Prisoners; Statement by Ambassador Moynihan, Committee III, November 12, 1975," Department of State Bulletin, 73 (December 15, 1975), pp. 867-871 [Hereafter referred to as "Committee III Statement"].
13 "U.S. Vetoes Unbalanced Security Council Resolution Concerning Israeli Air Attacks on Lebanon," Department of State Bulletin, 74 (January 5, 1976), pp. 21-26. This article contains four statements by Moynihan relative to the resolution: "First Statement of December 4" (pp. 21-22); "Second Statement of December 4" (pp. 22-23); "Statement before the Vote, December 8" (pp. 23-25); and "Statement after the Vote, December 8" (pp. 25-26). For purposes of analysis, these four speeches were considered as one [Hereafter referred to as "Speech Vetoing Security Council Resolution"].
—His speech on Angola to the General Assembly, wherein he denounced the Soviet incursion into that country.14
—His speech of December 17, 1975, to the closing session of that year's General Assembly.15
—His speech to the Security Council vetoing a resolution to change the framework for peace negotiations in the Middle East.16

Moynihan’s Use of God and Devil Terms

In The Ethics of Rhetoric, Richard Weaver discussed what he called “ultimate terms,” which he saw as the source for “rhetorical force.”17 According to Weaver, a rhetor could employ one of these ultimate terms to draw an audience’s attitudes toward some idea or thing with which the term was linked. Used in such a way, the term was called a “god term.”18 Likewise, one could employ a term for which the audience had a strong revulsion, link that term with another concept, and cause the audience to mentally draw away from that concept. When a rhetor does this, he or she is employing a “devil term.”19 Weaver gives several examples of what he considers god terms, including “progress,” “science,” “modern,” “efficient,” and “American.”20 For devil terms, Weaver lists the examples “un-American” (thus demonstrating that the opposite of a god term is often a devil term), “prejudice” and “ignorance.”21 However, Weaver seems to recognize that god and devil terms are relative to time and place when he says, “the affections of one age are frequently a source of wonder to another . . . .”22 This viewpoint seems to be shared by Charles U. Larson, who demonstrates how god and devil terms have changed in America from the 1950s to the 1970s.23 Thus, since ultimate terms can change with time and culture, it might be possible for the rhetorical critic to gain useful insights by determining which such terms are used by particular rhetors in specific situations. Larson would seem to be in agreement with this idea when he writes that one “can learn much from identifying persuaders’ sets of positive and negative terms, for they signal the kinds of relationships they see operating in the world—what they see in opposition to what.”24

16 “United States Vetoes Changes in Framework for Middle East Negotiations,” Department of State Bulletin, 74 (February 16, 1976), pp. 189–194 [Hereafter referred to as “Speech on Middle East Negotiations”].
18 Weaver, p. 212.
19 Weaver, p. 222.
20 Weaver, pp. 212–222.
21 Weaver, pp. 222–226.
22 Weaver, p. 212.
24 Larson, p. 62.
Actually, Larson’s point may be only partly true. If one proceeds from the notion that the skillful rhetor will attempt to adapt language to the audience as much as possible, analysis of god and devil terms may show not only what values the speaker holds, but may also give some insight into the perception the rhetor has of the audience’s values.

This notion of audience adaptation may be particularly important at an institution like the United Nations, where a wide variety of cultures and, presumably, values are represented. As William Starosta has contended,

> Because an audience in the United Nations represents a fairly ‘universal’ sampling of cultures, ‘identification’ becomes difficult on particulars. The audience differs in background, standards and convictions relevant to a particular act of communication. As a result, ‘meaning’ given to actions must be expressed in a form suited to the acceptance of the widest possible audience.

Thus, analysis of Moynihan’s use of god and devil terms may give some insight into how he adapted the policies of Ford and Kissinger into terms that were likely, in his view, to be persuasive amid the variety of cultures, values, and perceptions extant in his audience.

In the following analysis, terms that were seen as very similar were considered to be the same (i.e., the words “peace” and “peacemaking” were counted together as “peace”; “negotiating,” “negotiate” and “negotiation” were all considered to be the same and counted as “negotiation”). Whether a word or phrase was employed as a god term or devil term was determined by the context in which it was employed in Moynihan’s rhetoric.

Analysis of Moynihan’s six major speeches shows that he employed a large number of ultimate terms: 61 god terms and 38 devil terms (not counting duplications). However, many of these were employed only once or twice. The following discussion will focus on those terms which Moynihan employed five times or more, either across all six speeches or within one or two.

There were two god terms which were employed by Moynihan 19 times each. The first of these to be considered is “human rights.” Moynihan used “human rights” as a god term seven times in his speech to the Plenary Council, 11 times in his statement before Committee III, and once in his speech on the lessons to be learned from the prior session of the General Assembly. It may be seen as ironic that Moynihan, representing a Republican administration, gave so much emphasis to a concept which was to become almost a trademark of Jimmy Carter, and the object of no small amount of scorn from Carter’s Republican opposition.

Although no one devil term was employed by Moynihan as a consistent contrast to the “human rights” god term, a number of mutually related devil terms were used by him which may be seen as the opposite of human rights. “Nazism,” “Fascism,” “repressive,” and “totalitarian” were each used once; “apartheid” and “torture” were each employed twice. So the contrast is clear. For Moynihan, and presumably, for his audience as he perceives it,

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"human rights" is a god term and various ways of denying or abusing human rights are all used in contexts which make them devil terms.

The other god term used 19 times by Moynihan is "negotiation." He mentions it six times in his speech on the resolution condemning Israeli air attacks in Lebanon; three times in the speech on the lessons of the 30th General Assembly; and 15 times in his speech on Middle East negotiations. Moynihan's disproportionate employment of the term is not necessarily surprising; one would expect him to mention "negotiation" frequently in a speech on a resolution proposing a change in a structure for negotiation. Moynihan also uses the term "mediation" six times in the speech on the Israeli air attacks.

Before discussing the devil terms used in contrast to "negotiation" and "mediation," it may aid our understanding of Moynihan's rhetoric to mention another frequently-used god term: "peace." Moynihan uses "peace" a total of 31 times: once in his speech on political prisoners; 11 times in his address on the Israeli air attacks; once in his speech on Angola; and 17 times in his speech on Middle East negotiations. If one examines the contextual uses of the terms "negotiation," "mediation," and "peace," it is easy to perceive how they are related in Moynihan's mind. Negotiation and mediation are the pathways to peace; they have value because they aid the peace process. The peace process is good because it protects the lives of "innocent civilians," a god term used by Moynihan seven times.

In contrast, it may be seen that Moynihan employs a variety of devil terms which are depicted as threats to the peace process and to the innocent human life that peace safeguards. He uses "colonization" (or some variant like "colonial powers") 16 times, 15 of these in his speech on Angola. This is a devil term guaranteed to have an impact on much of Moynihan's U.N. audience, since many of them represent nations which had only recently become independent nations after decades (if not centuries) of being ruled as colonies. There are a number of other devil terms which Moynihan brings into his rhetoric with less frequency than "colonialization," and taken together they show a strong contrast to the notions of negotiation, mediation, and peace. He uses "murderers," "persecuting," "despots," "conquest," "exploitation," "maiming," "slaughter," "conflict," "incursions," "aggressive," "war," "force" and "occupied territories" once each. "Terrorism" is employed twice; "imperialist" (a buzz-word of both the Third World and the Communist bloc) four times; "intervention" five times (intervention may be either a god or devil term, of course, depending on what the intervention is described as doing; however, Moynihan employs it strictly as a devil term); and "violence" is used 10 times.

Thus, Moynihan's world view (or, at least, the one he is trying to communicate to the other U.N. delegates) seems clear. Negotiation and mediation are good because they lead to peace. Peace is good because it protects innocent civilians. Colonization, on the other hand, is bad, and is linked with such things as imperialism, intervention, conquest, exploitation, and occupation of territory. These things are bad because they lead to such things as murder, violence, terrorism, persecution, maiming, slaughter, conflict, and force. These, of course, may be seen as having their main impact on innocent civilians.
Apart from those discussed above, the only other god term which Moynihan employs with any consistency is "democracy," which he uses a total of 11 times—four times in his speech on political prisoners and seven times in his speech on the lessons of the 30th General Assembly. Consideration of democracy as a god term, and examination of the way Moynihan uses the concept in his U.N. rhetoric, completes his world view. The democratic nations, especially, but not exclusively the United States, are portrayed as engaged in negotiation and mediation. They are the peacemakers. And, although Moynihan almost never says so explicitly, it is clear from his use of devil terms that he intends to depict the totalitarian nations of the world as the ones who engage in colonization and aggression, and who bring about all the harm to innocent civilians.

Thus, analysis of the god and devil terms employed by Daniel Patrick Moynihan at the United Nations can give the critic insight into the view of the world which Moynihan intends to communicate to his fellow delegates. As has been shown, most of the god and devil terms used by Moynihan have been very general and thus open to wide acceptance by his audience. Most countries, for example, are likely to agree that innocent civilians should be protected, even though not all countries may have the same perception of what constitutes innocence. Likewise, most, if not all, nations are likely to oppose aggression, imperialism and murder, even though they may disagree on which particular acts in the world arena constitute aggression, imperialism and murder. Thus, Moynihan is mostly dealing in generalities, which seems appropriate for the forum in which he operates, since "International problem solution, in the long run, must reflect an agreement upon . . . generalized symbols, rather than upon acts."^26

Moynihan's Use of Rhetorical Strategies

This section provides identification and discussion of Daniel Patrick Moynihan's rhetorical strategies as seen through his major United Nations speeches. Before Moynihan's specific strategies can be dealt with, a discussion of the overall notion of rhetorical strategy is necessary.

A strategy is a choice made with a view toward securing a particular effect. A rhetorical strategy is thus a choice among symbols designed to secure a particular effect upon an audience. As Karlyn Kohrs Campbell observes, "the description of strategies determines how the rhetorician shapes his material in terms of his audience and his purposes."^27 Such choices are called "symbolic strategies" by some scholars.^28 Rhetorical strategies thus involve "language techniques that alter verbal behavior" on the part of the rhetor,^29 as well as a "conscious or unconscious response to a problem,

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^26 Starosta, 253.
^29 Campbell, p. 36.
question or situation." A number of scholars in Speech Communication have used the notion of rhetorical strategy as a perspective from which to view various types of discourse.

Analysis of Moynihan’s United Nations rhetoric reveals that he employed four major rhetorical strategies: denunciation, an emphasis on “paying dues,” argument from definition, and the notion that “sauce for the goose means sauce for the gander.”

**Strategy #1: Denunciation**

It is not unusual that Moynihan’s rhetoric features frequent use of denunciation, which appears in all six of his major speeches. It has been observed that Moynihan was sent to the United Nations “with what seemed like a clear mandate to raise some hell.” Indeed, Moynihan was first considered for the United Nations position after writing an article for Commentary in which he said, “It is time . . . that the American spokesman came to be feared in international forums for the truths he might tell.” And Moynihan’s style at the U.N. was designed to inspire fear, or at least attention. In speaking against a resolution equating Zionism with racism and racial discrimination, Moynihan began his address by saying, “The United States rises to declare before the General Assembly of the United Nations, and before the world, that it does not acknowledge, it will not abide by, it will never acquiesce in, this infamous act.” And if the impact of this opening was not enough, Moynihan ended his speech with the same sentence. In a later speech, Moynihan referred to the Palestine Liberation Organization by saying, “They have openly declared their hostility, indeed their contempt, for the work of this Council.” In a speech on Angola, Moynihan accused the General Assembly of accepting “a big lie,” regarding Soviet responsibility for the invasion of that country.

But Moynihan is not always so unsubtle, and his other rhetorical strategies reflect a less direct approach to the problems of international cooperation.

**Strategy #2: “We Have Paid Our Dues, so We Are Entitled to Criticize; You Haven’t, and You’re Not”**

The somewhat unwieldy title given to this strategy does not refer to the payment of monetary dues to the United Nations; rather it is intended in

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32 Buckley, p. 107.
36 Moynihan, Speech on Angola, p. 80.
the more general sense of "paying dues" as putting in time and effort on something. In other words, when Moynihan employs this strategy he is saying, "This is something we have worked on and contributed to; we are thus entitled to criticize it or modify it. If you haven't worked on it or contributed to it, you have no right to criticize." Moynihan resorts to this strategy in four of his six speeches. For example, in one speech relating to political prisoners, Moynihan says,

no fewer than 23 of the draft resolution calling for amnesty for South African political prisoners have political prisoners of their own. In the case of the draft resolution calling attention to the plight of political prisoners in Chile, it would appear that 16 of the cosponsors fall into the category of nations which have political prisoners of their own.\(^7\)

What Moynihan seems to be saying is that those nations which have political prisoners of their own are not entitled to criticize other nations for the same offense; they have not "paid their dues." Not only does Moynihan criticize other nations for speaking without paying their dues, he also uses this tactic to defend the United States by pointing to the dues which this country has paid with respect to various issues. For example, in defense of America's approach to Middle East negotiations, Moynihan points out, "We speak not just as a government but as a government seeking to bring peace in the role of mediator. That is our role."\(^8\) Thus, according to Moynihan, the United States is competent to discuss what form Middle East negotiations should take, since this country has been trying to mediate the disputes there for years. Other countries, who have not been involved, are not entitled to criticize.

**Strategy #3: Argument from Definition**

Richard Weaver defines argument from definition in this way:

The argument from definition ... includes all arguments from the nature of the thing. Whether the genus is an already recognized convention, or whether it is defined at the moment by the orator, or whether it is left to be inferred from the aggregate of its species, the argument has a single postulate. The postulate is that there exist classes which are determinate and therefore predictable.\(^9\)

It seems clear that Weaver considered definition as one of the strongest forms of argument, certainly superior to the argument from circumstance.\(^10\) If that is so, Weaver would have been gratified by the U.N. rhetoric of Daniel Patrick Moynihan, for Moynihan used this type of argument in four of his speeches.

One of the clearest examples of Moynihan's use of argument from definition is when he rhetorically asks the General Assembly, "What powers does an assembly have?"\(^11\) He then answers the question, showing in the

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\(^7\) Moynihan, Committee III Statement, p. 869.
\(^9\) Weaver, p. 86.
\(^10\) Weaver, p. 114.
\(^11\) Moynihan, Speech on the 30th General Assembly, p. 141.
process that the General Assembly has been trying to perform functions not inherent in the definition of an assembly.

There are other examples as well. Moynihan uses argument from definition in reference to the question of admitting the Palestine Liberation Organization to full member status in the United Nations. He contends,

Mr. President, it goes without saying that any member of the United Nations is a state. We do not have members, and the charter does not provide for members, which are not states. The Palestine Liberation Organization is not a state. It does not administer a defined territory. It does not have the attributes of a government of a state. It does not claim to be a state. That is the basic relevant fact we have here with respect to the proposal before us.\(^{42}\)

**Strategy #4: “What Is Sauce for the Goose Is Sauce for the Gander”**

Although Moynihan never uses this old proverb in any of his U.N. rhetoric, he does argue the underlying meaning of the proverb: if you accept this principle which you are advocating, one day someone may take the same principle and use it against you. Moynihan makes use of this strategy in three of his speeches. For example, in discussing charges about the abuse of human rights by various nations, Moynihan attacks the way certain nations have used the phrase “human rights,” and says, “If this language can be turned against one democracy, why not all democracies?”\(^{43}\) In other words, he is saying to other democracies at the U.N., “If you let them do this to us, then one day they will do it to you, too.” He uses the same approach in discussing the Russian military incursion into Angola, arguing that, if the United Nations would condemn imperialism at other times and in other places, they must do it now, as well.

I wonder if our anti-imperialists would listen to me while I talk about this, please, for another moment, those of us who are so enthusiastic to see imperialism end, will they pay a little attention to this new imperialism?\(^{44}\)

So it may be seen that Moynihan employed four different rhetorical strategies in his rhetoric at the United Nations. Consideration of those strategies, along with analysis of Moynihan’s use of ultimate terms, may give some greater understanding of the rhetoric of one of America’s most controversial public spokespersons. Regardless of whether one agrees with Moynihan’s approach to rhetoric or foreign policy, it is hard to disagree with British journalist Alexander Cockburn, who wrote, “Moynihan . . ., in his discourse and in his political attitudes, stands as one of the most prominent articulators of the cold-war consensus that has carried the United States forward over most of the last 30 years.”\(^{45}\)

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\(^{42}\) Moynihan, Speech on Middle East Negotiations, p. 189.

\(^{43}\) Moynihan, Committee III Statement, p. 870.

\(^{44}\) Moynihan, Speech on Angola, pp. 82–83.

THE PUBLIC PRESENCE OF FORENSICS

Robert O. Weiss
DePauw University

An editorial which Lionel Crocker once wrote in the Speaker of Tau Kappa Alpha (March 1938, 6) may serve us as a quaint but disturbing reminder of the public connections and public significance of forensics. Let me quote a paragraph of it:

As TKA members take their places in the communities, they should carry with them their interest in public discussion. Would it not be a worthy gesture if TKA members in communities would call up the local debate coach and tell him that they are at his service? They could serve as judges of tryouts, they could give talks on phases of platform work, they could give cups to winning teams, they could attend debates, they could speak an encouraging word to contestants. Further than this they can run for election to the school board and there use their influence to win for public discussion a place in the life of the school that it deserves and needs today. From the National Secretary it is possible to get a list of TKA members living in your community. Why not get them together and discuss ways and means of furthering forensics, public discussion, debating, platform work of all kinds in your community? Intelligent discussion is absolutely necessary in our form of government.

Well, Lionel Crocker was a dreamer, executive secretaries no longer keep track of every living alumnus, and quite possibly no one responded directly even then to that editorial call, but the presumptions that the academic forensics enterprise has substantial roots in the society around it and that "intelligent discussion" is vital to our form of government are worth contemporary attention and response. Forensics has an important public face, public responsibility, and public presence, and without overstating the case we will suggest that one role of a national organization such as DSR-TKA is to reinforce that public presence.

"Public presence" may be seen as the reciprocal influence between any enterprise and the whole society. To the extent that such an enterprise indeed manifests a public presence, it is known to the public, responds in a meaningful way to public needs and goals, and draws from that public both guidance and substance for its internal operation.

The whole educational process, within which forensic activities are so fundamentally embedded, absolutely requires a public presence, as does the academic field of speech communication with which it is so closely linked.

Let us consider, then, the condition of the public presence first of education as a whole and then of communication as a field of study before turning to forensics in particular and an outline of the ways in which a national organization may contribute to future developments in forensics.

The Public Presence of Education

Advance to the pavements and retreat to the ivory tower have perennially constituted twin impulses of the educational world. Neither of these im-
pulses can be ignored. No matter how detached and even isolated scholars may become in the pursuit of truth, education is expected to have a public presence as well. As a societal institution, the schools are expected to do some good, to contribute in some way, to pay their way.

Unfortunately, the survival of education and components within it have frequently seemed to require, thanks to Weberian demands of bureaucratic existence, the building of defensive barriers of specialization and expertise as opposed to the creation of constructive links with the rest of the society. Every entity, whether medicine, law, or plumbing, has to pretend to possess some arcane skill and argot not easily accessible to others. You have to keep your secrets and your psychological distance. On the other hand, as we may readily observe, education is also subject to the distortions of the marketplace, where academia is supposed to meet whimsical and ephemeral expectations of all segments of society or even to bolster particularly sagging public ideologies.

Recognizing these pressures and distortions, we can look more clearly at how the public presence of education should be shaped. Assuredly, it has the responsibility to produce various forms of knowledge, and this knowledge should be knowledge that matters. Furthermore, education has an obligation to make knowledge available, not only to its own immediate student clientele and its own professional circle, but to society as a whole. And in our own culture it faces the added expectation that it prepare individuals for effective participation in a complex democratic society. All of this suggests that the shaping of a viable educational system requires what we have called a public presence.

The Public Presence of Communication

Speech communication as a field of study is, of course, subject to the same pressures of specialization that other academic disciplines face, and it often enough succumbs to them. However, the fact that the object of study is communication (a notably public phenomenon) and the public-oriented directions of contemporary theory and research do appear to give the field a larger public presence than it might otherwise have.

All of the current attention to the development of meaning as a construct of symbol-using speakers and listeners leads us to be as concerned with so-called audiences as with independent messages. Popular interactional models for research reinforce the expectation that meanings are a product of what is going on between and among persons as influenced by the context they are in, thus hardly ignoring their public nature. In argumentation, especially, the interest in assent as central to validity as well as research into the conditions and fields of argument (you can't study an argument field without looking at how people really argue) have the same effect.

And aesthetic theory and research have taken many of the same directions, so that the oral interpretation of literature now at least considers the centrality of audience response and will not ignore its public dimension.

One might add, also, that the very popularity of communication and its components throughout the social fabric has given added impetus to a public impulse in the field. People are expecting speech communication to
come up with something useful and be a little help around the house. Thus, despite manifest temptations to isolate itself as an esoteric academic specialty, the field of communication is prone to respond to the reciprocal influences which constitute a public presence.

The Public Presence of Forensics

Forensics as an educational activity likewise has its private and its public dimensions.

It is in some ways private. As an investigative activity it serves somewhat detachedly as a sort of laboratory in which diverse procedures may be tried out to examine their implications and effects. And for educational purposes forensics provides a sheltered playground for the training of skills which may conceivably be useful to students later on.

But it is also public, and the public dimension of forensics has, it is fair to say, been considerably slighted by recent practice. Far too few people ever hear a real debate. At one tournament the teams reported to headquarters, “We can’t have a debate in room 213; there’s a class in there,” and had to be told, “That isn’t a class, it’s an audience!” Weird practices luxuriate in rank profusion, unchecked by the vigorous pruning which public exposure would require. One need not subscribe completely to Craig Pinkus’ blunt judgment that “debate today is a consumer fraud” (Speaker and Gavel, 20, p. 46) to agree that consumers are being seriously neglected by the activity. And in individual events, although participants still occasionally applaud one another when they aren’t off “tripling” in another locale, even they often find themselves engaging in a coterie activity with little reference to a public presence.

To instate a greater public presence in forensics would call for attention to both elements of the reciprocal influence between this activity and the society of which it is a part.

For one thing, it would mean looking more directly to society for substance and direction in what is done. Events are of more value when they approximate a simulation of what actually goes on in human communication, or when they contribute directly to the public discourse. Assistance and evaluation are available from a wide range of competent sources who may provide help in making forensics more realistic. Finding out what reaction our performances genuinely elicit will put the activity on a sounder basis.

Furthermore, instating the public presence means giving as well as receiving. Insofar as any techniques of criticism and of communication constitute models which might be emulated, they should be brought out where the public can see them. Insofar as these techniques may contribute to public decision making and humane understanding, they should be encouraged to make that contribution. Getting out and facing the public can help the audiences as well as the participants.

The Role of the Honor Society

As was suggested earlier, one role, and perhaps the most important role, which the honorary organizations should be able to play usefully in the
future of forensics is to augment and improve the public presence of the activity.

Two prominent and inherent characteristics of organizations such as Delta Sigma Rho-Tau Kappa Alpha contribute to this potentiality: (1) The organizations are in the primary business of recognizing excellence, an activity which is by nature useful only if it is done in full daylight as a public phenomenon, and (2) the organizations have firm roots among communication practitioners and the general public in the multitude of alumni members whom they have turned out over the years.

First, they publicly recognize excellence in communication. In designating individuals for special attention, they implicitly provide models and standards for the whole public. There are a number of ways in which this inherent recognition feature will function to augment the public presence of forensics.

(1) The very election of an undergraduate member constitutes an “event” newsworthy enough for publication in local and hometown papers, where it also serves as a reminder that forensics is still an important constituent of a college education and that some students are demonstrating notable achievement in these activities. Publicity itself reinforces the public presence of forensics.

(2) As national organizations, the honorary societies go further and recognize notable individuals who have demonstrated excellence in communication in their public careers. For instance, DSR-TKA in its “Speaker of the Year” awards has honored through the years such effective speakers as Theodore Hesburgh, Walter Cronkite, Vernon Jordan, Sam Erwin, Carl Sagan (last year’s winner), and both Walter Mondale and Ronald Reagan. In addition, each year several alumni of the society are selected as Distinguished Alumni on the basis of their contributions to effective communication within American society. Such awards not only reinforce the individuals named, but also reinforce the values to which forensics subscribe, namely effective, intelligent, responsible speech.

(3) It has been an easy extension for these organizations to move from recognition and honor to criticism and evaluation, primarily through the efforts of such society journals as Speaker and Gavel, which regularly publish criticism of contemporary rhetoric in the service of improving public discourse. DSR-TKA also published a separate paperback volume of such criticism. Since a public presence implies a responsibility to improve the conditions of democratic discussion, as Crocker indicated 50 years ago, such services are beginning to be extended beyond the limited circulations of the society publications to reach all manner of media publication.

(4) One more rather underutilized method for tying the recognition function of a national organization to the public presence of forensics is to give a larger public dimension to their national tournaments and to the local tournaments which various chapters sponsor. People should be informed that students are constantly winning awards for excellence in forensic pursuits. Some of them can even be invited to see what is going on. This information need not be limited to the mere facts of winning and losing, either. At the DSR-TKA National Conference, the student congress “results,” in the form of a brochure containing the resulting recommendations.
and not even mentioning the top speaker awards, is distributed nationally to leading legislators and to concerned public interest groups.

Besides having the function of publicly recognizing excellence, national honor organizations have the second inherent feature of having broad roots in the form of an alumni network consisting of the ablest individuals who have taken part in intercollegiate forensics. This feature permits further substantial contributions to the public presence of forensics.

(1) In the first place, whenever forensics reaches out to make itself known to the public, the alumni are the first ones who are likely to pay attention. At least some of them have residual interest in news of their old team as it appears in the papers or in the alumni magazine. A few of them, indeed, are editors and news directors. This attention can be directed by the national organizations not only to won and loss records, but to the aims and values of effective communication as well. Besides, public respect for forensics makes the national honor they have received more valuable.

(2) The network of alumni can also be of the kind of direct help and support which Lionel Crocker envisaged. When invited to national and other tournaments they are inclined to come, and they can coach and judge and advise. They are in a position to line up audiences for debates and other forensics events. They may even give endowments and scholarships. More fundamentally, if their counsel is sought out as persons who are directly involved in public discussion every day, the changes which will inevitably occur in the activity will be directed toward socially desirable ends. They're the ones who will determine whether freedom of speech and rational deliberation will continue to be valued in this country.

(3) By extension, then, forensics can draw upon all of the membership alumni, all of the forensics alumni, and all of the alumni of institutions where they are represented, to draw upon their assistance, guidance, and support, and can in return provide them with the services and the well-trained communicators they will need in the future.

Manifesting a viable public presence for forensics does not mean mounting a new public relations campaign, although that might not be a bad idea. It really means establishing a closer link between forensics and the society of which it is a part. Having a public presence means to see as well as to be seen. What is being done in the activity should sound something like what is going on all around it, and at its best forensics should be directly contributing and leading the way in useful and honorable discourse and communication.

First we have to listen. So let me make one modest but concrete proposal. In the final rounds of our various national tournaments we should invite one reputable expert to attend and provide us with a solid critique of what goes on. In the NDT finals, for example, we should get a person knowledgeable in the field of space exploration and development. We should ask, not for a won or lost decision, but whether the soundest possible arguments for and against space development had been presented, whether the best evidential resources had been applied, and even how comprehensible the presentations had been. And we would publish those critiques in our journals. We can do that. And we should.

The stated purposes of the national organizations imply a concern with
the public presence of forensics. For instance, the two specific purposes of DSR-TKA, as stated in its constitution, are (1) "to promote interest in and to award suitable recognition for excellence in forensics," and (2) "to foster appreciation of freedom of speech as a vital element of democracy."

Therefore, the contribution which national organizations such as DSR-TKA will most appropriately make to the future of forensics, as motivated by direct statements of purpose such as this and by their inherent characteristics as we have reviewed them, is to bring the public to forensics and forensics to the public, thus establishing a much-needed public presence for the whole educational forensics enterprise.
THE AUDIENCE-STYLE DEBATE: AN ALTERNATIVE FORENSIC ACTIVITY

Halford Ross Ryan
Washington and Lee University

Fortunately for the forensic community, Ronald Matlon and Lucy Keele have provided a particularly useful survey of some 703 participants' perceptions of National Debate Tournament style of debating from 1947 to 1980. Before proceeding to my thesis, a classical partitio is appropriate. I do not imply that there is something wrong with NDT debate which this essay purports to fix. The advocacy of audience debate as an alternative forensic format does not suggest the mutual exclusivity of it with any of the other forms of academic debate presently practiced. Rather, I posit that audience-style debating is an alternative extra-curricular forensic activity which can stand alone or in some symbiotic relationship with existing forensic programs, and that DSR-TKA chapters, either individually or collectively, should implement an audience-style debate league at the regional and/or national level. Notwithstanding the ends to which the NDT community may wish to apply the Matlon and Keele study, I shall use some of their findings, in addition to earlier writings on the subject and my experiences in local, regional, national, and international audience debates, to argue that the audience format is a needed alternative in academic debate which DSR-TKA should foster and bring to full fruition under its aegis.

At issue is the need for rhetorical training which debaters believe they miss in NDT debate. Matlon and Keele note: "Running as a thread through several recommendations and disadvantages is the theme that debaters need more training in persuasion theory." Yet, the theme is not new. Over a decade ago, Joseph Wenzel recognized the same need: "In the area of teaching, it should be obvious that we can use campus and community programs to lead our students to more complete rhetorical competence when they have opportunities to speak in real, public settings."

Audience debate can meet that need. Indeed, it is distinguished by two features which facilitate the debaters' practice of rhetorical skills. First, the

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2 The incidentals of audience debate are advantageously flexible. Although the number of debaters on a team is generally two, a third debater can easily be accommodated by assigning a rebuttal to that speaker. Although the time limits are generally 8 minute constructive speeches and 4 minute rebuttals with a necessary allowance made between constructive and rebuttal speeches for audience participation, the times can be adjusted by mutual agreement to satisfy individual needs; likewise, the number of rebuttals can be stipulated by the debaters. Finally, it is ideal if the auditorium is amenable to a physical "division of the house" after the fashion of the British debating unions, but that is not necessary for a successful audience debate.
3 Matlon and Keele, 204.
debaters must persuade an audience, which decides the winning team, instead of the trained debate coach-judge who usually renders a decision in most forms of academic debate. There are important differences—in terms of rewarding certain kinds of debating and punishing others—in whether an audience or a debate judge decides the debate, and these will be explained in the next sections. Secondly, the act of debating before service clubs and religious groups, or campus audiences interspersed with interested townpeople, or enticed or compelled audiences of speech communication students, constrains the student debater to practice Donald Bryant’s famous dictum of “adjusting ideas to people and of people to ideas.” The audience debate is a functional forensic activity in which the debater can learn and practice persuasive adjustments to the audience-as-judge. The next two sections will treat the nature of those adjustments in light of Matlon and Keele’s essay and earlier writers’ findings.

Adjusting the Debate to the Audience

Matlon and Keele found that “there are aspects of competitive debate which encourage bad public speaking habits and these should be discouraged.” The NDT debaters made several recommendations and three of them are specifically relevant here (listed in their rank order, with number of times offered placed in parentheses):

1. Slow debaters down and stop the “spread.” (122)
2. Teach students persuasion and communication skills. (79)
3. Encourage more real-world argumentation. (53)

Debaters need an educational environment in which the debate coach can teach and the debater can practice those recommendations.

Recommendation one. Debaters’ delivery skills need improvement. Henry McGuckin wrote: “the norm is a pretty far cry from the norm of ‘good’ delivery in the rest of speech communication education.” Simply stated, the live, lay audience tends to reinforce good public speaking skills and to sanction poor ones, such as overly fast speaking and the spread. Few, who have either closely observed an audience debate or participated in one, would gainsay the point. Even an obstinate spread speaker can be humbled by catcalls from the audience to slow down, or barbs to that effect from one’s opponents—often accompanied by approving applause from an exasperated audience. Given the observable fact that audiences find overly fast talking objectionable, the coach can counsel the debaters to adjust their rates to more conversational levels. Audiences expect it, reward it, and penalize those who do not. In fact, McGuckin believed “we should do more toward providing, even demanding,” debate formats such as audience debating in order to modify debaters’ delivery style.

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6 Matlon and Keele, 203.
7 Ibid., 201.
9 Ibid.
Recommendation two. Concerning teaching persuasion theory and communication skills, Matlon and Keele wrote that "We are not certain how the activity of debate could provide more training in persuasion theory, but clearly debaters should be encouraged to take classes which meet their needs." I do not maintain that a strong grounding in audience debate will completely satisfy debaters' needs in persuasion theory and communication skills, nor obviate their taking such classes. However, I do believe that the debate coach can significantly meet their needs by teaching debaters rhetorical skills so that debaters can adjust successfully to situations wherein real audiences, and not debate judges, decide the outcome.

Two examples illustrate the opportunity to teach student debaters the skills needed to adapt to a live audience. First, in preparing for an audience debate on the need for prayer in public schools at a denominational college—with its team on the affirmative—debaters could learn the rhetorical necessity of audience analysis. While evidence from liberal and secular sources might persuade the "reasonable man" paradigm of the debate coach-judge, that kind of evidence would probably have little efficacy in appealing to a denominational collegiate audience. Consequently, the team might learn that a better persuasive strategy would be to eschew such evidence in favor of more neutral and conservative sources for that institutional setting. Second, the audience debate affords an opportunity for debaters to learn better habits of speech delivery. This is a function of experiencing and reacting to audience feedback. On the unfavorable side, the audience's coughing and shuffling about can motivate a debater to monitor, and to improve as necessary, effective communication skills such as less reliance on the flow sheet for more audience eye-contact, varied vocal inflections rather than sing-song patterns, and body language to reinforce salient arguments. Conversely, and on the favorable side, positive audience feedback, such as applause or "crossing the floor" by members of the audience, can reinforce the practice of sound and effective communication skills.

Recommendation eight. The former NDT debaters suggested an encouragement of more real-world argumentation. If it is true, as Steven Shiffrin wrote, that "It should not seem surprising that debaters are not eager to communicate with those unfamiliar with the complexities of the subject or with the 'rules' for judging debates," then perhaps participation in audience debates could rectify a problem Matlon and Keele noted: "Only after entering the real world did many discover that there is more to the communication process." This is an area in which audiences react differently to argumentation than debate judges do. Lynn McCauley and Richard Stovall noted that their NDT debaters had some initial problems in adjusting to an audience rather than a coach-as-judge, but that the effort was eventually successful and beneficial: "The first few debates were particularly difficult for the debaters who found that actual audiences do not respond to attacks of inherency, attitudinal motivation, and extra-topicality. Only

10 Matlon and Keele, 204.
12 Matlon and Keele, 204.
after continuing negative feedback from the audiences did our debaters begin to modify their debating techniques.”

Kurt Ritter also allowed that audiences expect to listen to real arguments: “Freed from any responsibility to an audience, debaters waste their time on such nonsense issues as ‘uniqueness,’ ‘attitudinal inherency,’ ‘quantitative significance,’ ad nauseam.” The audience debate situation not only demands more realistic argumentation, but it also affords an opportunity in which real-world argumentation can be delivered in a reasonable fashion: “Poorly delivered, excessively emotional, undocumented, or ill-reasoned arguments by either the debaters or speakers from the floor are quickly labeled as such. In short, students see the pitfalls of which their instructors cautioned them.”

In fine, the audience debate can inculcate the kinds of speaking skills recommended by the NDT survey and by other writers. Its crux comes from learning how to adapt to the live audience. The real audience expects reasonable argumentation and effective delivery skills, and it rewards with its verdict those debaters who practice them.

Adjusting the Audience to the Debate

Some of the NDT debaters’ suggestions can be implemented by adjusting the audience to a debate. When this occurs, several advantages accrue to the community, the department, the debate program, and to the debaters.

The Community. The benefit of forensics being associated with service in the community needs no detailing here, and an audience debate can be a beneficial university service to the public. According to Herb Jackson, audience-style debate “provides the citizen with an opportunity to participate in a group process that is in keeping with the best democratic traditions of the town meeting.”

In addition to public service, debaters have an opportunity to extend to the community an important teaching office. Thomas Harte found that lay audiences do not apply the sound rules of evidence which are prescribed by argumentation textbooks. A part of a debater’s argumentation could be aimed at adjusting the lay audience to the appropriate tests of evidence which is presented in the debate. This kind of argumentation, whereby the debater asks the audience to accept or reject claims on the basis of these accepted tests for evidence, seems to satisfy the NDT debaters’ recommendation four: “De-emphasize the use of evidence as a substitute for argument. (66).” The debater can teach the lay audience to evaluate the efficacy of evidence in the debate. This task can be performed best by those who practice it best—university debaters.

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15 McCauley and Stovall, 92.
18 Matlon and Keele, 201.
The Department. To be sure, the department can benefit from sustaining the community service discussed above, but the department can also lead successful campus forensic activities. From experiences in hosting and attending NDT tournaments over the past fifteen years, I can candidly communicate that rarely, if ever, did laypersons or non-forensic students attend those debates. The existence of numerous NDT debaters' recommendations partially explains why that condition obtains. However, my experiences in audience debates, from the local to international level, indicate that lay audiences will attend and participate in such forensic events. The goal of the department now is to re-adjust, as it were, the audience back to debate, and audience-style debates can readily meet that end.

The Debate Program. At least three advantages can accrue to the forensic program by implementing audience debates. First, recommendation six can obviously be accomplished: "Get students into other forensic activity such as audience debates. (66)." Second, audience debates are cost-effective in a time of budgetary concern. The host school can provide a night's room and board for its forensic guests, and that is cheaper than traditional debate expenditures. When compared to time and travel expenditures for the team making the journey, audience debates are still considerably cheaper than their NDT counterparts.

The third advantage is that audience debates can be an excellent forensic research situation. Although it is beyond the purview of this essay to postulate the research paths to be pursued, the point is that audience debate is a real-world situation in which to conduct forensic research. Wenzel noted that such research has been too wedded to the NDT model: "We must break out of the confinement imposed by taking the tournament debate as our chief model. An appropriate rationale and perspective for developing campus and community programs may help to serve that purpose." Kenneth Andersen made a similar conclusion: "Those who fall within the forensics and debate community are doing less and less study of argumentation in the wide range of real-life settings in which it occurs, of which competitive debate is one. The majority of empirical researchers in the speech discipline now work with paradigms quite unlike those suggested by contest debate and by argumentation and debate textbooks."

The Debaters. It is worth remembering that many former NDT debaters perceived particular needs inherent in the practice of NDT-style debate, or else they would not have made their recommendations. In adjusting students to audience-style debate, one can fulfill suggestion five: "Get more students involved in your program. (66)." Students who are either unwilling or unable to commit considerable amounts of time and travel to NDT debating may find the audience debate an attractive forensic alternative. I have found that to be the case, and Donald Bingle reported that occurring

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19 Ibid.
20 Wenzel, 255-256.
22 Matlon and Keele, 201.
at his institution. Incidentally, prospective students can be adjusted to debate at institutions with part-time and commuting students. The "Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education" recommended that extra-curricular programs, such as debate, be adapted to the special need of students who find "Many of these activities are time consuming and hence not very attractive to part-time and commuter students. In some cases, however, one can take the activity to part-time commuter students instead of expecting that they travel to participate in the activity. Colleges should thus invite residential students to travel occasionally to locations in which commuter students could participate."

Lastly, the director of forensics can satisfy debaters' seemingly unquenchable thirst for publicity by adjusting an audience back to debate. My experiences have demonstrated that if the debate team offers an audience a timely topic, ample opportunity for the audience members to give short speeches and to cross-examine both teams, and reasonably delivered arguments, the debaters will gain notice and stature on the home campus by speaking before peers, because their peers will attend an audience debate.

Conclusion

I have argued that audience-style debate is a viable forensic activity which can be attractive to both students and to audiences. It is a situation in which debaters can learn to adjust their rhetorical skills and delivery to real-life audiences. When this occurs, the audience can be adjusted back to the educational value of once-popular campus events, and several practical advantages accrue to the community, the department and institution, the debate program, and perhaps most importantly to the debaters themselves.

The call for rhetorical debating has been echoed in essays written over the years by forensic educators and now, with the Matlon and Keele study, former NDT debaters themselves re-echo similar themes to directors of debate. All of these suggestions can be realized in the audience-style debate. I believe that Delta Sigma Rho-Tau Kappa Alpha should be the forensic organization to examine and eventually to implement such a program among its interested chapter members. Perhaps a league of chapters who are committed to the reciprocal responsibilities of hosting and travelling at the regional and national level would be appropriate. But whatever welcome ideas and useful suggestions might be forthcoming, directors of forensics should remain mindful of President Franklin Roosevelt's admonition in his First Inaugural Address: "There are many ways in which it can be helped, but it can never be helped by merely talking about it [applause]. We must act . . . ."

THE EVOLUTION OF AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION DEBATE

Lawrence W. Hugenberg
Youngstown State University

In a recent essay, David Ross argued that there are inherent difficulties associated with the judging of debate situations. He declared, "judge competence is a potential problem due to the nature of the profession." Historically, debate activities have been viewed with one specific purpose in mind—the educational benefits for the participants. The relationship between the judging of the activity and the educational asset to participants has undergone continual scrutiny. Scholars throughout the history of competitive forensics have argued for and against varied philosophical and practical orientations. These positions tend to cluster around specific central themes. Research studies will be cited in this essay as they relate to the themes which emerge through historical survey. As early as 1940, William Schrier argued, "These are two outstanding reasons for holding intercollegiate debate contests—information for the public and training for the debaters. While some of us may differ as to the weight to accord each of these, all are agreed that both aims are present." The education of the student-citizen-debater continues to be operational justification for ongoing support of and participation in intercollegiate debating programs. The judging and/or critical appraisals of the debaters' efforts should reflect the educational objectives alleged to be the foundations of the debate/forensics event.

In attempting to crystallize a focus on debating programs, Daniel Rohrer claimed:

Debate should focus on man's ability to understand himself and society by stimulating and challenging analysis of persons and circumstances involved in the communicative process, providing resources concerning analysis and synthesis, and by offering resources concerning alternative "avenues to the mind" in the form of persuasive strategies.

This article is a revision of a paper presented during the Central States Speech Association Convention, Chicago, Illinois, April, 1981. The author would like to thank professors Robert W. Smith of Alma College and James P. La Lumia, Youngstown State University for their insightful comments on earlier drafts of this manuscript.

1 David Ross, "Improving Judging Skills Through the Judge Workshop," National Forensic Journal (Spring, 1984), 34.

Although possessing these altruistic motives, intercollegiate debate continues to be criticized from a variety of sources. One such criticism was leveled by Charles Willard when he stated:

> Academic debate is a “game” in the most rigorous sense of the term. Competing teams seek favorable decisions from neutral judges through the use of oral argument. The argumentation occurs in an artificial context which is defined by certain rules and traditions designed to enhance the educational benefits of the game.

Willard hints at the continuing problem in intercollegiate debating—the judgments. If Willard's perceptions are accurate and the rules of forensics were established to enhance the educational benefits for participants, the "artificial environment" becomes problematic for the communication of persuasive strategies. Because the situation is artificial, and perhaps non-communicative, the decisions of the judge become questionable as an educational benefit for the debaters. Ross reiterates this perception of the judges' decisions in concluding, "Perhaps a major reason for this distressing situation rests with a judge's perception of the critic's role."

The role of the judge in academic debating has been questioned regularly since the need for and the behaviors of judges became part of forensics. Howard Woodward, in 1915, cited a colleague who declared, "But my experience on debate without judges has convinced me that, from the standpoint of the debater at least, it is a better plan." Woodward claimed debates without judges had the following advantages over debates including judges: "1) more freedom in the choice of the question ...; 2) there is more profitable discussion ...; [and] 3) the debater gets much better training." As evidenced by this seminal essay, the problems associated with debate judging are not new. Recently, Balthrop made this case in concluding, "The idea of 'critic-judge' is certainly not novel; indeed this image seems to have predominated during the history of intercollegiate debate."

The Role of the Judge: Deterrent or Benefit?

Woodward concluded, "the most profitable intercollegiate debates can be held without decisions. The debate then becomes a true culmination of instruction in debating and the work may well constitute a course given for credit." Although Woodward's claim may appear extreme, it contains interesting insights into the appropriate role of the judge in debate activities. First, if debate competition could be held without decisions, more and different topics might be debated. Second, more audience-participant dialogue would be encouraged. Finally, the artificial circumstances described

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* Ross, 35.
* Woodward, 231.
* Woodward, 233.
earlier are not proper training grounds for students to learn communication strategies adaptable to experiences encountered in most careers.

Other scholars have attempted to illustrate the problem of having judges influence the outcome of intercollegiate debates. Sarrett, although addressing the need to have competent judges employ consistent standards, believed that, "Whether the complaints [against judges] are entirely unfounded or not matters little; the fact remains that, because of a vast amount of inexpert and incompetent judging there is much dissatisfaction with our present system."\(^\text{10}\) The difficulties encountered with judges working intercollegiate debate events have been echoed and re-echoed in the professional journals of speech communication. Giffin argued against the inconsistencies in debate judging in claiming, "many students of debate have wondered if the criteria of judgment advocated by a judge in his calmer, more reflective moods is the same as he used in the more heated atmosphere of the contest."\(^\text{11}\) Sproule reiterates this problem in concluding, "The 'ideal' judge is an illusion. As long as debates are conducted and judged by fallible mortals, discrepancies will persist."\(^\text{12}\)

With the history of problems and inconsistencies and discrepancies in debate judgments, the discipline of speech communication has done little to remedy the problem. Several scholars have discussed symptoms; but few have attempted to resolve the problem. Participants, coaches, and organizers of debate events recognize the fact that debate events are perceived to be as good as the judges and the criteria they employ. Hufford contends:

> Debate has always depended on qualified and conscientious judges, and the fact that it has grown and prospered is a tribute to the men who have served in that capacity. But the fact that judging is good should not lead us to relax our efforts to make it better. Improving judging must basically be the responsibility for each individual judge.\(^\text{13}\)

Although not articulating the characteristics of the "good" judge of debate, Hufford recognizes the importance the judges play in creating a good or bad debate experience for individual participants. He concludes, "Intercollegiate debate can be no better than its judges."\(^\text{14}\)

Developing better judging standards, for more consistency, seems a realistic goal for everyone interested or participating in forensics. However, the problem remains primarily the individual judges' critical standards. Reynolds addresses academic debate from the perspective of the judge. He argues:


\(^{14}\) Hufford, 120.
Competitive debate must presume reasonableness on the part of the audience (critic or judge). It must create a reality of its own in which the judge is preeminently rational, not only capable of suspending his or her own real-life prejudices and predilections but willing to reach a decision guided only by the argument he or she hears in the course of the contest.\(^\text{15}\)

If judges' orientations can be altered to include a more rational, reasonable approach to the judging process, it would also seem likely that the orientation of debate programs would also change as well. If the rewards were received for reasonable arguments in debate contests, "winning" would then take a secondary place to the learning and teaching of communicative argumentation. Coaches would be forced to teach argumentation to students for successful debate experiences. This rebirth of communicative competence would reintroduce the principles used to initiate forensics events for student training. It is unfortunate that individual idiosyncrasies and different interpretations have led competitive judges to emphasize different and continually varying aspects of participants' efforts. Ellis and Minter note, "If we [debate coaches] want our teams to be motivated to work hard and improve their abilities, we need to be able to assure them that their efforts will receive a fair evaluation by informed and attentive judges."\(^\text{16}\) The best a debater can hope for during a contest is a fair and impartial evaluation of her or his performance. If merely relying on hope; the situation is not the best coaches and judges can offer a student-participant.

Another issue related to debate judges and their decisions remains: Are the standards of evaluation used academically sound in theory and practice? Giffin stated, "It would be interesting to determine on a much broader basis if, and to what extent tournament debate judges employ academically desirable criteria."\(^\text{17}\) The educational development and communication training of the participants must remain as the paramount reason for the existence of debate/forensic programs. The dichotomy between the current emphasis in debate on winning and the actual communication training of the participants remains. The rationalizing of these differences has been largely left to the interpretation of the individual at the program level. Using forensics activities to develop student awareness of necessary conditions of successful communication must be emphasized. Taking the skills learned in forensic training and practice out of the artificial environment, ala Willard, to more lifelike environments must be included as a goal of contemporary forensic/debate programs. Without this central purpose, there can be no educationally sound reason for continued funding of forensic activities. Seemingly, forensic coaches continue to offer students the illusion related to the importance of winning forensics tournaments—regardless of educational transfer of knowledge and/or skill. Giffin articulated the problems of academically rewarding criteria for judging to the forensics community.


\(^{16}\) Dean S. Ellis and Robert Minter, "How Good Are Debate Judges?" Journal of the American Forensic Association (Spring, 1967), 53.

\(^{17}\) Giffin, 71.
Little if any progress has been demonstrated to prove or disprove the academic worth of any sets of criteria used to judge debate. The problem of different standards used by different judges in different situations remains. Little attention has been given to the educational benefits the student participants experience through participation in debate tournaments in the practice of forensics. Usually, people interested in forensics as an educational experience translate that interest into manuscripts for conventions or articles for publication. Seldom does this interest translate into change in forensics activities.

The problems encountered with the judges of forensic events is well documented. Melzer argued, “Many of the problems that exist and which must be faced realistically are problems concerning judges.” Recognizing the problems encountered with judges and the importance of their decisions, Berthold concluded, “For debaters, the ballot is an evaluation of their own skills and often offers suggestions for improvement.” Students use the returned ballots to modify their communication patterns. The comments and evaluation contained on the ballot ought to promote insight, they are violating any sound educational rationale for the continued use of criticism in debate/forensics events. The potential educational benefits of the judges’ decisions is suggested. If the educational aspects of debate are to be realized, they should be determined prior to the establishment of any judging criteria. Failure to do this suggests potential weaknesses in the criteria that may be utilized by any or all of the critics/judges.

The Judge’s Decision: “Winners and Losers”

The debate judge’s favorable decision is the ultimate goal for a student debater; per the advise of her or his coach. As illustrative of participant emphasis on a favorable judge’s decision, Drum suggests, “there are essentially four debaters all concentrating their attention and efforts on a single person: the judge.” This undivided attention on the judge seemingly violates basic principles of human communication. However, this is frequently the case. The single judge in forensics events has come under attack by scholars and researchers for promoting a lack of audience awareness by the participant beyond the judge. Student-debaters need to recognize that an audience is a collection of individuals with different backgrounds, values, experiences, amounts of information, and thought processes. Debaters should be instructed in the art of adapting messages to particular audiences. This kind of analysis and adaptation is broader than the one judge sitting in a room with debaters competing for favorable reactions.

Schrier illustrated a problem with a single-judge caucus in debate/forensics activities. He claimed, “My primary objection to decision debates is that the emphasis is misplaced; it is on the decision,—it should be on the de-

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bating.\textsuperscript{21} Klingbiel reiterated this by urging, "Talk to the judges. My first college debate coach made this very plain. The 'ladies and gentlemen' don't count. It's the three judges that have the power to feed the great American appetite for victory that count."\textsuperscript{22} This isolated focus on the judge and the decision, places the debater in a tenuous position in preparing for a debate as a communication activity. Not only is the debater preparing for communication to only one person; the skills needed to persuade and/or inform an audience are not emphasized. The debate experience ought to be used to prepare the student for adapting messages to an audience of more than one person. The tendency for debaters to focus attention on the judge was illustrated by Drum when he argued:

As his turn arrives, each debater speaks to that judge. He usually speaks forcefully, not so much because he feels forceful, but because (1) he is excited, (2) he knows this is expected of a "winning debater," or (3) he doesn't know any other way to present a case.\textsuperscript{23}

Success demands that the collegiate debater collect the "usual" hardware presented at debate tournaments. Coaches and perhaps even school administrators and peers place undue pressure on student-debaters to win. If a student continually fails to win or place in tournament activity, it is likely the individual will be replaced on the debate team (at least the travelling team).

Miller suggested the coaches of intercollegiate debaters emphasize winning too much, largely ignoring any audience present. He claimed, "Many coaches do not even consider audience necessary evils, but simply consider them unnecessary. Debate training is incomplete unless the debater has many experiences speaking before audiences."\textsuperscript{24} [Emphasis mine.] Other scholars have outlined the difficulties encountered by debaters who adapt solely to judges in order to receive favorable marks. Markgraf suggested, "Of utmost immediate concern in tournament debating is the encouragement of the highest standards for judgment; this concern is subverted when debaters are urged to stoop to hour by hour adaptations to judges."\textsuperscript{25} Although the judges are members of the audience, they are not the only individuals present. It seems fair to conclude that adapting to a portion, often a small portion, of the audience violates the traditional training given students in basic speech communication courses. To remedy this situation, Markgraf suggests, "The responsibility for objectiveness lies with the judges; debaters have no responsibility to cater to critic whims."\textsuperscript{26} If debaters were trained to adapt messages and arguments to their entire audience, then debate activities could be considered communication events. The skill to adapt messages to listeners and listeners to messages could be learned through

\textsuperscript{21} Schrier, 369.
\textsuperscript{22} Henry C. Klingbeil, "Debate or Politics?" The Quarterly Journal of Speech (April, 1928), 219.
\textsuperscript{23} Drum, 28.
\textsuperscript{24} N. Edd Miller, "Some Modifications of Contest Debating," Speech Teacher (March, 1953), 139.
\textsuperscript{26} Markgraf, 39.
broader audience-adaptive situations than one critic (judge) debate tournaments. Using the public as audience for these student-debaters would be more likely to reinforce these adaptive skills. Freeley contends, "Debates presented before public audiences should be regarded as an opportunity to educate the student about audience analysis and to educate the audience about debate."  

Debaters seeking favorable decisions from individual judges have overrun the debate tournament circuit. Debaters and coaches want wins and judges are placed in a position of having to select a winner from all the participants in the event. Haiman claims, "Too many people who are caught up in the game of forensics ... have become so involved in the pursuit of victories and in the development of skill in the attainment of those victories that they have forgotten the purpose of the contest." Perhaps the most complete summary of the problem with debate was presented by Pearce when he wrote, "Although some find debaters' concern with winning records, trophies, and speaker awards reprehensible, the competitiveness which characterizes tournament forensics insures that those procedures which debaters know will bring wins and high speakers' points will be adopted." This win-or-else philosophy permeates the coaching of student participants. It seems difficult to defend this posture on any academically sound grounds. There should be more education in the training of student-debaters than the emphasis on adapting messages to only one judge. Training students to be communicators-debaters serves a necessary function in a pedagogical sense. The process of successful communication has a rich tradition, a solid theoretical foundation, and multiple practical applications. With the injection of argumentation to communication education, the student-participant benefits with the attainment of usable skills consistent with pedagogical outcomes. If the participants, coaches, and judges adopt an orientation consistent with the philosophies of the communication discipline, debate activities would become communication events which necessitate individual adaptations to particular audiences. This set of communication principles and practices might have greater future potential for the student-debater.

Decision Making and Evaluation Standards

Scholars and coaches of debate have suggested certain standards and sets of criteria to use in judging forensics/debate events. Johnson asserted, "For judges who wish a more simplified method of judging, the following grouping of points listed above is suggested: 1) Voice and delivery; 2) Arguments and subject matter; and, 3) Effectiveness and power as a speaker."

Table 1. Johnson’s Recommended Ballot.

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* * * Taken from T. Earle Johnson’s “How Should A Debate be Judged?” in The Quarterly Journal of Speech, April, 1928. p. 399.

Figure 1. Johnson’s Recommended Ballot.

though simplistic standards, Johnson fails to clearly delineate how a judge ought to implement them during the contest. However, he does suggest adaptation to the audience present for the debate activity. Figure 1 is a reproduction of the criteria proposed by T. Earle Johnson for judging debate/forensic events.

Recently, a movement to remove delivery from consideration when evaluating debate has emerged. Friedman suggests, “In order to manifest excellence, the debater must demonstrate two kinds of knowledge to an ultimate degree: (1) a knowledge of argumentation, and (2) a knowledge of the materials related to the debate proposition itself.” There is no mention of or apparent concern with the effective delivery skills evidenced by the debater. Is there a defensible position one could adopt in adhering to a delivery-less set of criteria for evaluating intercollegiate forensics?

James McCroskey and Leon Camp also proposed the elimination of delivery considerations when evaluating a debate. They claimed, “Delivery mannerisms can and do distort the perception of the quality of analysis, refutation, etc. Some believe that to consider delivery as a separate criteria is to judge delivery twice.” The delivery of the message remains as one insight into a communicator’s attempt to adapt to or be concerned with the audience. If this element is eliminated from a judge’s consideration, there will be little left to analyze but the content and the organization of the message. McCroskey and Camp, citing a survey of college debate coaches, rank the elements that should be of major concern to the judge of

debate. They are, in rank order, (1) case, (2) analysis, (3) organization, (4) evidence, (5) refutation, (6) language, and (7) delivery. The first six are related to sufficient content to persuade the judge and the organizational structure selected to best present the evidence. It is inappropriate to limit judges in evaluating a debater's performance to only content and organization. Content and organization are not sufficient to warrant a communication event. McCroskey and Camp continue, "As most coaches and judges of debaters have noticed, ineffective delivery characteristics such as over-projection and excessively rapid rate are not uncommon." If the audience of a debate is unable to comprehend the debater's lines of reason because of a rapid delivery rate and bothersome levels of vocal projection, it seems most beneficial to point these out to the student-debater on the ballot so they can be corrected.

Judges of debate should not tolerate rates of delivery which are too rapid nor should they accept projection levels which are inappropriate for the communication situation. McCroskey and Camp disagree in concluding, "the suggestion that delivery ought to be omitted from debate ballots, ... again seems appropriate." The inclusion of delivery in deliberations of debater performance as perhaps the most important criterion in the evaluation of debatem is more defensible on communication principles. If debate coaches and judges reward communicatively sound behaviors by debaters, then delivery cannot be ignored. The alternative suggested by McCroskey and Camp is indefensible and unjustified on any sound educational principle.

The current American Forensic Association (AFA) Debate Ballot includes: analysis, reasoning, evidence, organization, refutation, and delivery. Delivery remains an integral part of the overall evaluation of performance. Supplementing the numerical evaluations of each standard would enhance the educational benefits of debate participation by suggesting specific ways to improve individual communication skills.

Audience Participation Debate Events

An alternative to single-judge events is audience participation or audience sway debate. This activity continues to grow in popularity across the country as an alternative to or a complimentary activity with traditional debate. In defending the rationale for these debate activities, Boaz and Ziegelmueller conclude:

The concept of an audience debate tournament is predicated on two fundamental assumptions: (1) that speech training should prepare students for effective democratic citizenship, and (2) that democratic leadership requires men and women to present their ideas clearly and persuasively. Thus, the primary objective sought in establishing an audience debate tournament was to provide competitive debates which would demand the judicious use of a broad range of persuasive appeals.

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33 McCroskey and Camp, 61.
34 McCroskey and Camp, 62.
35 McCroskey and Camp, 62.
These arguments reiterate points presented earlier by other scholars in discussing the benefits of intercollegiate debate. Pease argued:

The contention of the article is that college audiences should function as nearly as possible as audiences in the world-at-large; that there should be the largest possible influence of and appeal to the audience; that we cannot expect the greatest good either to the audience or to the speakers; that to secure these ends the audience must have a part in the game.\footnote{Raymond B. Pease, "The Audience as the Jury," The Quarterly Journal of Speech (July, 1917), 218.}

Pease suggested the inclusion of the audience in the debate decision-making process of determining who won and who lost. Pease continued, "Of course the decision might be rendered on the basis of a majority vote by the audience as a single group; but the objection to this is the lack of distinction or significance of the votes."\footnote{Pease, 219.}

Audience participation debates are alternatives to the "judge-oriented" debates of the present. Audiences are sufficiently critical and qualified to judge persuasive communication. Although one could construct an argument that the average audience is not as qualified to judge events as the "trained" debate judge, this argument simply does not stand up to careful scrutiny by the moderate advocate of debate. An audience can check appropriate boxes on tally sheets as confidently and as competently as any debate judge. However, I suggest that there be some additional on-the-spot training of the audiences. This would enable each member of the audience and the debaters to have more confidence in their decisions. As communication professionals and educators we must advocate the movement towards debate as a communication event. In this light, the easiest debate-type event to defend is the audience participation debate activity. Schrier offers one of many defenses of this debate type, "the outstanding advantage of debating before organizations [audiences] is that it increases the emphasis upon debate as public discussion."\footnote{Schrier, 373.}

Audience participation debating better prepares the student-participant for the type of argumentative forums likely to be encountered in the future. Boaz and Ziegelmueller conclude, "Communicating complex ideas intelligently to people from all walks of life demands that students learn to be logical, persuasive, and interesting within a single presentation."\footnote{Boaz and Ziegelmueller, 271.} Being able to persuade an audience, as opposed to receiving the winning vote from a single judge is better communication training for the student entering any profession or career. Audience participation debating is enjoyable to the student-debater because they are not in a position to use the persuasive skills and strategies taught them on "live" audiences. Another benefit of audience participation would be any intellectual growth for the listeners in the audience.

Audiences of participation debates should be prepared to make significant, reasonable, well-supported decisions about which contestant or contestants utilized persuasive strategies more effectively. The use of an audi-
ence sway ballot (i.e., "I support the resolution"; or "I oppose the resolution." oftentimes only measures the emotional response by the audience member to the resolution. If the measurements of emotional responses to resolutions indicated the effective or ineffective use of evidence, reasoning, argument, and logic by the student-debaters, these ballots would be optimum for audience participation in the event. However, only limited research suggests that a shift in emotional responses indicates effective persuasive strategies.

Thus, we need other measures and training tools. Holm contends a judge must establish those things he or she expects from good debaters, and in which way the participants measure up to the standard. The rest of this article will develop primary considerations for audiences to utilize when actually deciding which contestant(s) evidenced greater persuasive skills.

### Criteria for Audience Participation

First and foremost, in developing a set of criteria for use, the audience must be reminded to minimize the influence of their emotional responses to and bias towards the resolution. Wells claims that decisions must be made on the merits of the argument presented, not personal opinions of the judges. Although originally meant for the individual judge at tournament debates, this advice seems a beginning to construct the criteria for a public audience to use in evaluating a debate.

With a clear conception of argument, the listener can jot down criteria he or she may wish to use in analyzing a communicator's efforts. A major concern will be the use of data (invention) available to the debater. The debater's effective use of data reiterates traditional perspectives of persuasive communication. The ability to discover sufficient data and organize that data into a coherent persuasive message would be the primary focus of audience participation debate. Student-debaters who develop higher levels of skill in this aspect of communication will possess that skill throughout their career or professional life.

Other criteria are available to the judge of intercollegiate debate. Since the audience participation debate is a communication event, delivery will be a major criterion for the audience's decision. Debate needs to be a communication event, wherein student-participants are taught the skills of effective delivery. Delivery should be a major concern to the audience evaluating the communicator's (debater's) efforts. Briefing the audience on the qualities of "good" delivery will prepare them to evaluate each student-participant's delivery as part of their overall appraisal.

Henderson sums up the overriding approach that may be taken in training the individual audience member to be a critical thinker and critic when participating in a debate. He writes, "a judging paradigm responsive to a role as a citizen attempting to evaluate a single proposition is as good a

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Figure 2. Evaluation Form for Audience Participation Debate.

starting place as any." Kruger reiterates the importance of being a critical thinker in claiming, "a debate judge must be above all a critical thinker if he is to properly evaluate a debate and provide some guidance to these students engaged in this all-important activity." More recently, Balthrop

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declared, "Adoption of the critical stance as a judging perspective means, also, that the judge participates actively in the debate process." A live audience, aware of the principles of communication is more likely to engage in the debate actively than a single judge. This conclusion seems warranted because the student-debater would seek audience involvement; but would probably feel uncomfortable if a single judge in the traditional debate event became too involved. The expectation of the student-debater-communicator is different in these two situations.

Perhaps we should reexamine the early writings of scholars in the communication field as they attempted to establish our discipline for some insight into the importance placed on debate-as-communication. In 1917, Sarrett provided the debate judge with 11 questions he used in explaining a debate decision to an audience. These questions were:

1) Which team was superior in the clear, coherent, and effective organization of its material?
2) Which team better supported its contentions with sound proof?
3) Which team established and maintained the most critical issues?
4) Which team was superior in destroying its opponent's critical issue?
5) Which team, through greater freedom in departing from prepared speeches, and through superior extempore speaking and resourcefulness, more readily adapted its arguments to the arguments actually made by its opponents upon the platform?
6) Which team in its constructive argument manifested a superior analysis of the question?
7) Which team manifested a superior analysis of the debate as it actually progressed on the platform, i.e., which team was superior in discovering and following the strategic issues rather than the minor or irrelevant points?
8) Which team was superior in team work?
9) Which team was superior in delivery, aside from the effective delivery presumed in other questions?
10) Which team in general—aside from the rebuttal work presumed in other questions—was superior in rebuttal?
11) Which team was superior in debate strategy?

Although originally prepared as advice to the experienced tournament judge, we could use these same questions as guidelines for audience members serving as the "judge" in a debate.

Arguments against audience participation debate center on the idea that there are too many people making personal, idiosyncratic decisions with little regard for sound academic, educational reasons. However, there is
also an argument that as the number of judges’ ballots used increases, there is more evidence of a central tendency in responses. The responsibility for providing the audience with sound reasons for decisions falls on the coaches of debate and faculty in speech communication departments. Successful audience evaluations of debates may be achieved through a brief period for preparation (similar to the seminars proposed by Ross48). Certainly, the subjectivity of judges’ decisions will remain the strength of rational discourse. However, it is suggested here that a standard set of criteria with latitude for reasonable, divergent interpretation by members of the audience be developed.

Explaining the criteria to the audience provides greater opportunity for consistency in the decisions rendered on debates. Using several hundred audience members as judges is better than the individual whims of a single debate judge. Implementing a standardized set of criteria by the audience members during an audience participation debate is useful. The following set of criteria is presented for use in audience participation debating. Each component of the set is easily explained to the audience prior to the beginning of the debate. Each component reiterates traditional principles taught in communication classes for several decades. When used in conjunction with an audience sway ballot, the debate itself turns into the educational experience it was intended to be. On the behavioral level, the audience sway ballot may be used to measure change in audience opinion. On a more cognitive level, the instrument presented below may be used to measure audience reactions to specific aspects of the participants’ presentations. Feedback contained therein can be used by the student-participant to become more communicative when presenting persuasive arguments to reasonable groups of people.

Conclusion

Past history has established debate as an educational experience for the participants. Debate activities were developed to teach students to analyze problems, develop rational arguments concerning the problems, and communicate their ideas to others. If queried, few debate coaches will contend that this is not a desirable outcome of all the coaching, all the practicing, and all the competing student-debaters engage in. This ability to develop critical thinking capacities was to be an outgrowth of intercollegiate debating. Debating activities have recently been exposed as artificially constructed situations in which the student debaters implement artificial persuasive strategies. As early as 1917, scholars suggested using audiences as judges and having the debaters face a large audience and use persuasive appeals to move them. Recently this notion has been implemented with different

48 Ross, 33–40.
degrees of success on many college campuses. The goal of debate ought to be the training of students to participate in communicative situations effectively.

Intercollegiate debate must focus on the relevance it has for the student participants. Is the traditional style of rapid-fire, judge-centered debate the type of communicative experiences the students need? Is the audience participation debate style the type of communicative experience students need when entering their chosen professions or careers?

The answers to these questions should be answered by each debate coach, judge, and debater. Establishing criteria to be used by audience members is essential for the proposed shift in forensics to audience participation debate. If these criteria are defined and accepted, perhaps the traditional style of debate may adopt the same set of standards and reward debater’s communicativeness and not rapid information firing. Practical criteria will benefit student-debaters more than the often heard grumblings about “an unfair judge” who didn’t appreciate a particular debater’s non-communicative, traditional debating style.
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