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# SPEAKER AND GAVEL

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# speaker and gavel

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**SPEAKER AND GAVEL**

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## **SPEAKER AND GAVEL**

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## TOWARD AN UNDERSTANDING OF MARXIST DISCOURSE: MAJOR ERNESTO "CHE" GUEVARA'S FEBRUARY 26, 1965 ADDRESS TO THE CONFERENCE ON AFRICAN-ASIAN SOLIDARITY

Omar Swartz  
Purdue University

This essay examines the language strategies that socialist leader Che Guevara used to address a multi-national Third World delegation of socialist and sympathetic nations in 1965. As a Marxist revolutionary, Che's message to the Third World involved the themes of resistance and aggression. Specifically, Che advocated Third World military unity to thwart the imperialist policies of the First World. The success of such discourse, calling for personal sacrifice and dangerous armed struggle, demanded specific justificatory strategies to gain popular appeal, an appeal that is seldom understood by members of the First World.

Not only was Marxist justificatory rhetoric of aggression seldom understood in the First World, it was intentionally polarized, marginalized, and rejected. Indeed, from the perspective of First World politics and economics, Che's advocacy of African-Asian solidarity grounded in the Marxist tenets of armed insurrection and national empowerment constituted a perceived threat. Consequently, Che's call to revolution was met with physical force, as has been the larger context of the socialist struggle. In addition, recent developments in the Soviet Union have drastically undermined the credibility and feasibility of the Marxist agenda. In other words, the feasibility of Che's message, criticized and marginalized by First World power ideologies, is less viable a political program now than when it was articulated thirty years ago.

The question arises: if Marxist ideology is less interesting in the early 1990s than it was in the late 1960s, why review an obscure speech from a faded, albeit interesting, political figure whose credibility is unrecognized by First World political audiences? To answer this question, the reader must consider that Che's speech and political perspectives were a *response* to conditions of war and aggression sponsored by First World economic interests, interests which cultivated elaborate rhetorical strategies to perpetuate and justify their transgressions.<sup>1</sup> These strategies have been well documented, and it is not

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<sup>1</sup> For a concise history of the conditions of war and hostility sponsored by the First World, see Michel Beaud, *A History of Capitalism: 1500-1980*, trans., Tom Dickman and Anny Lefebvre (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983).



the intent of this essay to recapitulate them here.<sup>2</sup> While there have been many studies of First World ideological positions with regard to war and aggression in Third World nations, there have been few studies that have explored the rhetorical strategies of the marginalized Other, the Third World Marxist rhetorician.<sup>3</sup>

With the events of the recent Cold War in mind, and in particular, the precariously strained relations between the Nation of Cuba and the United States, this current study heeds Robert Ivie's (1974) call for scholars of rhetoric to "respond" to how policy makers justify war and aggression. Che is an important figure for this study because of his prominence in the Cuban revolution, his high administrative post in the young Castro administration, and his position as a spokesperson for millions of Latin Americans and Africans who have struggled against First World imperialism and have tried to find political and economic sovereignty.

Central to biases grounding this essay is the sentiment that rhetorical criticism is be a process whereby divergent patterns of experience are brought together and mediated so that the dialectical tension between them can be channeled into productive rather than destructive agendas. Indeed, in Ivie's studies of war rhetoric a similar concern is expressed, one in which ought

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<sup>2</sup> The following articles are particularly noteworthy examples of ideological critiques of either First World aggression or First World ideology generally: Jeff Bass and Richard Chervitz, "Imperial Mission and Manifest Destiny: A Case Study of Political Myth in Rhetorical Discourse," *Southern Speech Communication Journal* XLIII (1978): 213-232; Samuel L. Becker, "Marxist Approaches to Media Studies: The British Experience," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 1 (1984): 66-80; Edwin Black, "Ideological Justifications," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 70 (1984): 144-150; Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart, *How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic*, trans., David Kunzle (New York: International General, 1975); Lawrence Grososbert, "Strategies of Marxist Cultural Interpretation," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 1 (1984): 392-421; Robert Ivie, "Images of Savagery in American Justifications for War," *Communication Monographs* 47 (1980): 279-94; "Presidential Motives for War," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 60 (1974): 346-109; "Progressive Form and Mexican Culpability in Polk's Justification of War," *Central States Speech Journal* 30 (1979): 311-320; "Speaking 'Common Sense' About the Soviet Threat: Ronald Reagan's Rhetorical Stance," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 47 (1984): 39-50; "The Metaphor of Force in Prowar Discourse: The Case of 1812," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 68 (1982): 240-53; "William McKinley: An Advocate of Imperialism," *Western Journal of Speech Communication*; and Michael J. Sproule, "Propaganda and American Ideological Critique," *Communication Yearbook* 14 (Newbury Park: Sage, 1991) 211-238.

<sup>3</sup> In contrast to the abundance of studies located in the previous footnote, my search for essays similar in intent to my own located only two studies that specifically focused on Marxist Third World discourse. These studies are Beatrice K. Reynolds, "Mao Tse-Tung: Rhetoric of a Revolutionary," *Central States Speech Journal* 27 (1976): 212-217; and Tvan Van Dinh, "Ho Chi Minh as Communicator," *Journal of Communication* 26 (1976): 142-147. One additional study, William J. Starosta's "Roots for an Older Rhetoric: On Rhetorical Effectiveness in the Third World," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 43 (1979): 278-287, discussed the characteristics of a Third World audience, but only marginally discussed its relationship to Marxist discourse. Finally, Jack Butler, "Russian Rhetoric: A Discipline Manipulated by Communism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 50 (1969): 229-239, addresses some of the concerns necessary for understanding Communist discourse, but it does not address specifically the concerns of Third World Marxist discourse.

to be taken more seriously by scholars of rhetoric. He explains that "[r]hetorical studies can and should function as an instrument of life, especially through the critical analysis of war discourse" (337).

In short, along with Ivie, this essay calls for rhetorical critics to scrutinize the rhetoric of aggression that propels societies into ideological and physical warfare. Simply, it is not enough to understand the rhetoric of U.S. war aggression without appreciating the dialectical counterpart of that discourse. Before citizens of this nation can understand who they are in relationship to collective acts of U.S. aggression in the Third World, they need to understand the collective acts of retaliatory aggression sponsored by socialist leaders in the Third World. More specifically, before critics can judge the viability of war discourse being offered to the American people, the critics need to have a greater appreciation for how the "enemy" portrays its ideological struggle against the U.S.

The enemy may no longer be Marxist, but the enemy will always remain as long as the United States engages in an imperialist dialectic. An ideological counter-partner will be created or found. This in mind, Ivie's construct of rhetoric, as an instrument of life, suggests that it is appropriate for criticism to reveal how the political agendas of elite or revolutionary policy makers potentially threaten regional and world peace. Research in this area can "assist rhetoricians substantially in their search for additional rhetorical forms associated with aggressive human behaviors" (345).

In order to accomplish my critical goals, this paper is organized according to the following sections. First, for readers unfamiliar with Che Guevara and his significance as a persuader, I will discuss Che's life and highlight how he represented an "enactment" of his message which gave him great credibility as a speaker and aided the socialist cause in trying to unite Latin America against First World oppression. Second, in order to specifically treat Che's three main topics in this speech—the function of socialism, the moral responsibility of economics, and the unjust nature of international law—I will briefly review some of the assumptions that underlie Marxist political discourse. The third, fourth, and fifth sections of this paper involve a more specific and detailed criticism of each of Che's three topics.

#### An Introduction to Che Guevara

Che Guevara was raised in an *bourgeois* Argentinean middle-class family and earned a medical degree from the University of Buenos Aires in 1953. In his college years he traveled widely through Southern and Central America and was exposed to the squalor and depravity that characterized the lives of most of the Latin American peoples during this period of American economic expansion. Soon after graduation, Che rejected the practice of medicine to engage in political activity. For Che, political activity was a pursuit that he felt was analogous, on the societal realm, to the physician's effort to cure disease in the human body.

Che's anti-American political activity earned him recognition in revolutionary circles and he was soon introduced to Fidel Castro in Mexico. Within a short period of time, Castro persuaded Che to join his 1956 revolution. With less than 100 men, Castro and Che navigated a decrypted boat from Mexico to Cuba and initiated a military campaign that succeeded in over-



throwing the American backed Batista regime in 1959. Upon taking control of the island, Castro and his backers instilled a Marxist government in Cuba—a government that was highly influenced by Che's own socialist ideals.

Because of Che's unrelenting pursuit of his socialist agenda, his martyrdom in the battlefields against imperialism, and the fact that he ultimately refused to institutionalize himself in the comfortableness of the upper echelons of Castro's regime, Che, and not Castro, came to embody the persona of the "freedom fighter," or "guerrilla," as a key concept grounding the theory and rhetoric of revolutionary warfare. Arguably, Che's perceived moral stature is greater than most active socialists in the annals of Marxist revolutionaries because he emphasized most vividly what Karlyn Campbell and Kathleen Jamieson (1977) identify as an *enactment*. According to these authors, speakers can aid the acceptance of their messages if they can "incarnate" their argument and embody "the proof of what is said" (9). Che did not merely preach revolution and sacrifice; he exemplified revolution and sacrifice, and, in so doing, he inspired the revolutionary action of others.

In Third World Marxist thought, Che had become the representative of a collective group struggle. Through his life and actions, Che transcended the various cultures of the Third World by illustrating how sacrifice and struggle, coupled with the Marxist belief that liberation through armed struggle was historically inevitable, could bring about better living conditions. Even in the United States, among people who disagreed with his Marxism and his tactics, Che is regarded by some as a folk hero for his devotion to justice and his relentless pursuit of his humanitarian inspired utopian dreams. Che's editor, John Gerassi (1968) explains how Che "was an idealist, a man who lived . . . a man who died—for other people, for people he never met, for the poor, for the exploited . . ." (1). While Che's Marxism may be discredited as a viable political system, his efforts to bring dignity and prosperity to the Third World ought to be recognized as a reasonable response to the brutal conditions of imperialism.

In this study, a single speech by Che is analyzed for its justificatory rhetoric supporting the cause of Third World solidarity and world-wide Marxist revolution. While the generalizability of conclusions drawn from a single piece of discourse is difficult to achieve, the practice serves other heuristic interests. In particular, it is unrealistic to draw sweeping statements about the "nature" of Marxist justificatory discourse based on such a small sample; however, my role as a critic informs Che's rhetorical strategies so that it is possible to recognize the intrinsic value of Marxist discourse and discourse communities, even in an era where Marxism itself is losing its competitiveness in the ideological marketplace of the world.

The title of Che's address, itself, is indicative of the justificatory techniques that Che utilizes throughout his discourse. He identified his address as "On Our Common Aspiration: The Death of Imperialism and the Birth of a Moral World." In this title, Che establishes an important theme that he is to carry throughout his address and throughout his struggle as a revolutionary. Much in the way that the First World *bourgeoisie* democracies denounce communism, Che presents imperialism as the antithesis of justice and a hindrance to peace in the Third World. This peace can be purchased only through unity which alone can bring out its defeat.



The address was delivered on February 26, 1965, in Algiers for a conference on African-Asian solidarity.<sup>4</sup> The mid-1960s was a period of great unrest in Africa and Asia where many nations were starting to emerge as autonomous after centuries of colonial rule by European powers. Yet this transition was not to come easy for Africa, Asia, or for Che. Shortly after delivering this speech, Che, frustrated with the inactivity of a bureaucratic position, severed his leadership ties to the Cuban government and resumed the role of an active revolutionary, a decision that led to his 1967 death in Latin America.

Just as the speech was a call for action and an attempt to achieve solidarity through struggle, Che, as an enactment of his message, was an impressive person to advocate Third World solidarity. Specifically, while being an Argentinean, Che fought for the "liberation" of Guatemala, Cuba, the Congo, and Bolivia and traveled widely in his effort to unite Latin America. Indeed, Che's actions personified a united Third World. While Marxist ideology was his method of achieving his utopian goals, the intent of his effort was grounded in a humanitarian sentiment that went beyond the letter and spirit of Marxist dogma. In his biography of Che, Andrew Sinclair (1970) explains how Che's entire life was spent in an effort to bring humanitarianism and comfort to the suffering peoples of the Third World:

When all is said and done, when his words and acts have been coldly seen and sometimes condemned, the conviction remains that Che was always driven by his love for humanity and for the good in mankind. The ideals expressed in his writings, his whole life and his passion and his death, transcend ideology (105).

Thus, in analyzing the discourse of Che, or of any other Marxist speaker, it may perhaps be effective to consider the spirit in which he or she spoke. The positions of Marxist revolutionaries are often extreme, but then again, the conditions under which they must work are often incompatible with sanctioned channels for addressing grievances. Consequently, the oratory of Che and other Marxist speakers should be studied for the assumptions it makes about conflicts in the world and judged on how well it mediates those conflicts.

#### Assumptions Underlying Marxist Rhetoric

The conditions behind the rise of socialist thought and the development of Marxist ideology are varied and difficult to trace. However, like the development of Capitalism and First World political ideology to which Marxism is a response, the European Enlightenment is a good place to begin exploring for conceptual clues which shed light on the assumptions Che makes in ordering his political perceptions. An extremely helpful source for isolating these clues can be found in Morse Peckham's (1962) study of "tragic vision" and "identity" in Europe's Enlightenment period.

In particular, Peckham highlights two assumptions from which much socialist thought slowly matured. For Peckham, the concepts of "cosmic to-

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<sup>4</sup> All citations from this speech come from a translation by Leonard Mades and were posthumously published in *Venceremos! The Speeches and Writings of Ernesto Che Guevara*.

ryism" and "hierarchy of the natural" (75) emerged in the European intellectual environment, an environment accepting quasi-scientific paradigms of social and dialectical progress. While Peckham is speaking in terms of the larger socialist movement, a movement involving many strands and diverse factions (like that of the Cuban revolution), Peckham's three concepts adequately mirror presumptions found in Che's discourse, presumptions which helped the argumentation and justification strategies that Che utilized in his speech.

According to the account of socialist thought advocated in this essay, an account generative of Che's discourse, the concept of *cosmic toryism* assumes that institutionalization and bureaucratization are natural and positive by-products of an organized society. They are a "natural" extension of social and legal consciousness. More specifically, the tenets of central planning and other dictatorial controls of society are based on the assumption that, left to their own devices under the moral sanction of a "free economy," people will set up oppressive class structures. The ruling classes will create a government that refuses to interfere with the workings of a "market economy." In such a system, institutionalization and bureaucratization are kept to a minimum and society is less organized, so that individual freedom can exist unimpeded by social obligations. Thus, the argumentative base that Che is working from involves the assumption that the absence of legal consciousness and morally created political institutions in the First World has led to the oppression of the Third World. In his search for a moral world, Che is trying to organize society in a fundamentally different political paradigm than that which had existed previously.

The second assumption, *the hierarchy of the natural*, has more substantial implications for understanding Che's and other Marxists' discourse. Under this assumption, the human being is considered inherently perfectible. Yet this is a material perfection, an earthly perfection, not perfection in the spiritual world. As a corollary to this assumption, education, which shows how individuals are enslaved by false ideology, becomes the most important concern for Marxist speakers, as education is seen a panacea for social ills. In other words, the educated mind is able to "conform . . . to the law of nature" (75), which, in this case, is represented by the socialist state; this law of nature is indicative of cosmic toryism—the centrality of the state in socialist doctrine.

In assuming that people are inherently correctable, Che hoped to bring about the death of imperialism through the unity of the Third World. Subsequent Marxist agitation was designed to shake *bourgeois* and oppressive false consciousness from its foundations in the minds of his Third World audience. Once this oppressive consciousness was acknowledged, then his oppressed audience could work to construct a new moral world from the ashes of the old. Under this perspective, Che's central assumption was *perfectibility*, an important requirement for the socialist order.<sup>5</sup> Without per-

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<sup>5</sup> The entelechy of *perfectibility* involves important rhetorical considerations, as recognized by Kenneth Burke. For instance, in his "Definition of Man," Burke explains that man is "rotten with perfection" (16). For Burke, the *telos* of people compels them to create idealist states upon which to ground their motivations. This leads to con-



fectibility, human beings have no way to grow and learn to adapt their lives to the socialist "laws of nature." Here is where the overt calls for hostility in Che's discourse can be found. In Marxist ideology, the principle of perfectibility grounds Marxist rhetorical apologetics. As Peckham explains, "to make [Man] perfect, whatever impedes his perfection, his perfect adaptation to his environment, the way he ought to live, must be destroyed" (75). For Che and for Marxist rhetoric generally, the ethical code that grounds their justification of aggression is that the ends justify the means:

[I]f the communist theory of history is scientifically true, therefore the aims of the communist state are natural. It follows that the rulers of the communist state are justified in doing anything they think advisable, that is, what their theory of history tells them is advisable, in bringing about communist ends (76).

In this brief review, then, I hope to have shed insight on some of the major assumptions fundamental to Che's speech. In so doing, it should become clear how *cosmic toriyism* and *hierarchy of the natural* are meta-ideological Marxist concepts from which rhetorical argumentation is generated. What I have attempted to illustrate is only a small slice of the larger Marxist picture. This essay is proposed not as an ending, but as a beginning and is intended to inspire further research on other specific Marxist orators (i.e. Vladimir Lenin, Fidel Castro, Mao Tse Tung, Ho Chi Minh, to name only the most obvious examples).

Within this limited analysis of Che, many areas of further research suggests themselves. For instance, it is clear that the title of Che's address offers an argument with two distinct premises. The first is a premise based in "fact" in the sense that imperialism is an observable phenomenon with tangible effects felt by the inhabitants of the Third World. Che's second premise of his title is grounded in Marxist mythology and is represented by the belief that there is a negative correlation between imperialism and a moral world. The use of these premises indicate that Che's entire argumentation structure has grown out of nineteenth-century Romanticism and "its wholly new concept of how to deal with history" (Peckham 126). As Enlightenment presuppositions are still guiding the actions and identities of First World *bourgeois* democracies, exploring the relationship between Romanticism and Marxism may further help us to understand the tensions and conflicts of the twentieth-century and help us to anticipate the conflicts of the next century.

While "birth" and "death" metaphors were not new to the nineteenth-century, the notion that there was a scientifically verifiable social condition that awaited the "correct" historical crisis to enact itself was a novel conception. More specifically, the belief that social conditions could be politically mediated constituted a substantial break from traditional aristocratic European culture and its reliance on a ridged social hierarchy, one based on

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traditions and tensions within the human individual as this perfectibility can never be achieved. Ultimately, this stress leads to the dialectical process upon which human history is negotiated and created.

divine sanction and privileged property rights. In this sense, Che's arguments clearly stem from Romanticist thinking and the belief that social systems should emulate naturalist patterns as represented by observable laws of history. Che's title further serves to unify the thematic structure of his subsequent argumentation. This is particularly evident in Che's three main topics: the function of socialism, the moral responsibility of economics, and the unjust nature of international law. Each of these will now, in turn, be covered in more specific detail.

### Che and the "Nature" of Socialism

In this section, Burkean principles of *division*, *identification*, and *order* will be utilized to explore Che's explanation of socialism. Furthermore, a Burkean perspective is helpful in elucidating Che's rhetorical technique for redescribing the problems facing the Third World into Marxist terms with Marxist solutions.

Che begins his speech by representing Cuba as "the lone voice of the peoples of Latin America" (378). Cuba has achieved this status through the strife of revolution. Thus, in the technical sense of Marxist doctrine, Cuba has been "liberated" and is now governed by a mandate originating with "the people." From the point of view of a non-Marxist, however, Che's claim is absurd; non-Marxists fail to appreciate Che's assumption that the people's of Latin America are voiceless. These people believe that the Latin Americans speak through the political and economic institutions imposed upon them by the European powers.

Che's claim is made more rhetorically substantial when it is seen through the Burkean concept of "ultimate order." For Burke, the *perfectibility* concept is intimately tied to the concept of *hierarchy* and *entelechy*. By the nature of their symbol systems, human beings seek order in the establishment of hierarchies. This is particularly evident where Marxism is concerned. For instance, Burke (1950) observes that "much of the rhetorical strength in Marxist dialectic comes from the fact that it is 'ultimate' in its order" (190). By this Burke means that Marxism assumes a political hierarchy that is bureaucratic and institutional by nature. In other words, Burke's perspective helps to collaborate what Peckham defined earlier in this essay as "cosmic torism."

More specifically, the fact that Marxist discourse is "ultimate" in its order, "perfect" in its assumptions about human and historical *telos*, allows Che, as spokesperson for the proletariat, to evoke the power of synecdoche in representing Cuba's interests as the interests of the larger Third World. In other words, Che's speech illustrates how the Marxist *telos* represents the entelechy of the non-Marxist world. Roderick Hart (1990) elaborates on how Burke's concept of "ultimate order" is a rhetorical device which invites synecdoche in Marxist discourse:

The worker worked for the state, the state works for the worker, all worked for the mother land. As a result, the peasant could perform his menial chores happily, knowing that he or she was contributing *directly* to the great historical drama of communism (350).

In more overtly Burkean terms, the proletariat that Che addresses in his



speech is "substantially" free to contribute to the historic unfolding of Marxism. The oppressed Third World peasant has an uncontaminated vision of what the world is *really* like, "where as other classes must protect their interests by a partial avoidance of the truth, inasmuch as they enjoy their rights at the expense of others" (GM 356). In his or her direct, unclouded relationship to "truth," the dedicated Marxist self-consciously represents a "correct" place in the *ultimate order* of nature's "just" hierarchy.

For Che and for Marxist discourse generally, the perspective of *ultimate order* assumes an *a priori* knowledge of the human condition as being economically and historically determined. As a consequence of this assumption, class struggle becomes a primary notion which serves two rhetorical functions. In the first rhetorical function of class struggle, the division between the classes clearly establishes the relationship between the "haves" and the "have-nots." According to the Marxist perspective, class struggle is "inevitable" under the conditions of a "false" political system. Thus, it becomes morally imperative for people to resist the inequities of their class in order to expediate the unfolding of the "correct" political state. In the second rhetorical function of class struggle, speakers can assume an implied tyranny behind the working class condition. In implying a tyranny behind the conditions of a diverse group of people or nations, speakers can cultivate identification among the repressed class and establish a common ground for collective unity and action.

The principle of *identification* is a central concept in contemporary rhetorical theory. Simply stated, identification involves the joining of substantial interests. In a consubstantial relationship, the perceived commonality between the perspective of the speaker and the desires of the audience are aligned. Within the sphere of this alignment, persuasion has the potential to occur. In other words, language and attitudes are made to interact, via the process of identification, to aid in the mediation of some adverse exigence.

In the case of Che's discourse, the exigence he is trying to mediate is imperialism. For example, under the assumption that the human being is economically and historically constituted and that, with conscious effort, a modification of these phenomena can potentially lead to the establishment of a communist utopia, Che is able to cultivate identification strategies. Specifically, in order to transcend the cultural differences of his multi-cultural audience, Che proposes the front of "our common aspiration, the death of imperialism . . ." (378). As a Marxist, Che sensed that his multi-cultural audience demanded a material sense of identification. To accomplish this, Che makes explicit the connections between his audience's undeserved ill-fortune and its attributed cause. In this way, identification is cultivated when Che makes explicit the connection he perceives between colonial oppression and "the struggle against backwardness and poverty" (378). Time and again, Che returns to this theme when he refers "to the struggle against the main culprits guilty of our backwardness" (384).

The implication of Che's ideological concerns is that, with the aid of communist leadership, there will be created "a new society that is rich and just at the same time" (378). The juxtaposition of "rich" and "just" suggests that material wealth is unfairly distributed on the planet, an idea presumably

shared by his impoverished audience. This perspective that Che utilizes to justify his actions makes more sense when considering Che's definition of socialism as the "abolishment of man's exploitation of man" (380). In Che's sense of aggression, the fight against imperialism is simply the lesser of two evils. Robert Heilbroner (1989) explains how Che's perspective expresses the humanitarian core of socialist ideology, a sentiment that is often neglected or overlooked in the tendency for First World nations to amplify the faults of socialism or to reduce it simply to ineffective economic planning:

"[Socialism] has always meant more than a system of economic organization. At its core, it has stood for a commitment to social goals that have seemed incompatible with, or at least unattainable under capitalism—above all, the moral, not just the material, elevation of humankind" (109).

Understanding this connotation of socialism helps to explain Che's perception of the parasitic relationship existing between the First and Third Worlds and his struggle to redefine that relationship. Early in his speech, Che explains to his Third World audience that the high standard of living in dominating countries "is based upon the misery of ours" (378). Che then utilizes the metaphor of the "imperialist tree" to illustrate how the oppressed nations are the branches of an imperialistic State (the trunk). On the branches, one imagines, are the leaves (the proletariat) which labor to collect the sunlight and transfer it into food and energy for the trunk to grow. In spite of the fact that the metaphor obviously breaks down at the literal level, Che argues that a "split" between the leaves and the trunk has advantages for the Third World.

Che's tree metaphor is a further example of his use of identification through division. Specifically, rhetoric, as a process, "speaks" to how people become separated from each other by nature of their symbol systems. People utilize rhetoric to mediate perceived differences among a discourse community to achieve a level of consubstantiality between the participants. Sometimes, however, a speaker has to create *that division* in order to archive a *different* identification among the perceptions of the audience. As Burke explains, "We must aim at congregation by devices making for segregation—*peace* is something we must *fight* for" (GM 370). Che's tree metaphor is his attempt to create a division in his audience so that he can promote identification with his Marxist justification for aggression.

As Third World nations begin to identify with Che's redescription and learn to think and act with a Marxist vocabulary, they will use violence to reject the dominance of oppressing First World imperialism. This action of self-assertion has two important consequences. First, the nations involved gain independence as they overcome the malignant influence of their European and North American oppressors. Second, and more important for Che's tree metaphor, the act of revolution gradually weakens the oppressive imperialist system as further of its resources are cut off. Therefore, Che can conclude, "A victory of any one country against imperialism is our victory, just as defeat for any one country is a defeat for all" (379).

While arguing for Third World independence, Che stresses the importance of solidarity among these nations. Indeed, Che speaks in terms that are specific for the identification process. He explains, "If there were no other



factors favoring unity, the common enemy would have to constitute it" (379). The metaphor he introduces to explain the Third World's rejection of First World influence is of a "painful birth." This birth is more substantial than an individual country's liberation, its separation or division from a previously established economic relationship. Indeed, Che makes it clear that economic liberation does not really "free" a nation, as class forces and oppression can appear in any section of the Third World unless precautions are taken and Marxist identification among the formally oppressed people can be achieved. Thus, an African-Asian bond is urged in this speech, and a Latin American bond is assumed. However, according to the Marxist program, consubstantiality does not stop with Third World liberation. Ultimately, a world socialist order is needed, an order based on a social redefinition of human beings that is "born" out of revolutionary struggle.<sup>6</sup> As Che explains, "Socialism cannot exist if a change does not take place in man's consciousness, that evokes a new fraternal attitude towards humanity" (379).

### Che's Economic Argument

Che's discussion of socialism and his emphasis on identification, solidarity, and struggle presents an incomplete picture of Che's revolutionary concerns. Establishing the immorality of the imperialist defined relationship between First and Third world nations was an important strategy in the early sections of Che's speech. Once Che's audience could agree that their current situation was grounded in a tyranny imposed by imperialist powers, they could then agree to reject that influence. But what alternatives were available for the Third World? To answer this question, Che, whose official capacity with the Cuban government was as Minister of Finance, introduces a discussion of Marxist economics. Particularly, Che denounces the "Law of Value" as "unequal exchange relations impos[ed] on backward countries" (379). To replace this system, Che proposes that foreign trade "be [made] subordinate to a fraternal policy towards the different peoples" (380). Lest a reader casually dismiss such remarks as those of a naive rabble-rouser without an appreciation for economic "reality," Gerassi brings to the reader's attention the following anecdote:

In the early days, when the United States and Cuba were still trying to find ways of interaction, Walter Sauer, executive vice president of the Export-Import Bank, an official arm of the United States Treasury Department, had occasion to talk with Che about finances. He commented later: "Guevara knows and understands foreign exchange, balance of payments, etc., and in fact he understands finance and economics, and he knows exactly where the hell he is going. . . . It was just like talking to another banker, except the son of a bitch is an orthodox Marxist" (15).

Since Donald McCloskey (1985) illustrated that economics was an argumentatively constructed field of inquiry, rhetoricians have been able to argue that finance is a rhetorical, and not a social-scientific activity. By seeing

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<sup>6</sup> The birth metaphor functions on two levels: physical liberation and transcendence to Universal Brotherhood. Che notes that physical liberation is a necessary prerequisite for transcendence. Transcendence comes from ideological education and embodies the *perfectibility* assumption.

economic matters through a historicist's lens, it becomes clear that economists do not match their theories with the "truth" of commerce, but, rather, utilize language to construct the ideological parameters of "commerce." As McCloskey explains, "Economics, like geology or evolutionary biology or history itself is a historical rather than a predictive science" (xix). In other words, by seeing economics as a historical discussion, it becomes reasonable to suggest that the oppressive economic constructs of capitalism and imperialism are nothing more than the result of human social contingency, a contingency that can be redefined, altered, or replaced.

Being historically constituted, economics and its study involves humanistic activity and reasoning, in spite of twentieth century attempts to scientize economics with the ideology of positivism. For instance, in his book, McCloskey wonders "whether the strident talk of science in economics, which served well in bringing clarity and rigor to the field, has outlived its usefulness" (3). In short, McCloskey argues that economics evolves through argumentation, and is thus socially constructed. As such, a Third World critique of First World economics has rhetorical viability. Again, as McCloskey explains, "A rhetorical criticism of economics can perhaps make economics more modest, tolerant, and self-aware, and improve one of the conversations of mankind" (53).<sup>7</sup>

The human power to define social objects through selection and ideological preference enables economic, political or any other conversation to occur and leads, ideally, to the emergence of a preferable, pragmatic way of life. However, as many nations of the Third World will contest, they have been systematically excluded from the social construction of their political and economic destinies. The First World's marginalization of the Third is the result of the function of *definition*. According to Burke, definition involves the propensity of humans to select and prefer one "way of seeing" over another. However, definition also implies *division* and *negation*, because "[a] way of seeing is also a way of not seeing—a focus upon object A involves a neglect of object B" (PC 49).

The distinction created by division and negation allows for the condition of rhetoric. Between human beings and their "perfect" consubstantiality in nature is the filter of language. In an important sense, this filter represents a "fall" which has taken humans out of "Eden" and into the condition of "Babel." Through language, human beings have forced dissociations upon each other and upon nature. For instance, the First World has created the conditions of the Third through economic and imperialist policies. The First and Third World are essentially in a negative, consubstantial relationship with the stronger First World living parasitically off the Third. Marxist rhetors like Che point out the inequity of this relationship and offer a redescription that has the power to redefine the economic and political relationships between the First and Third World. In this redefinition, new meaning and

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<sup>7</sup> From the perspective that social and economic institutions are socially created, Che's demand that international finance be more responsive to the needs of the Third World is reasonable. If, as McCloskey argues, economics is a "conversation," then the Marxist dialogue, one that calls for a more humane use of capital, can be a part of that discourse community.



consubstantiality can be cultivated. Speakers like Che are only made possible by conditions that force an artificial division upon human social communities. As Burke explains, "If men were not apart from each other there would be no need for the rhetorician to proclaim their unity" (RM 22).

In proclaiming his idea of Third World unity and Marxist economic viability, Che is operating from the same sort of ontological position as any First World economist. More specifically, both Capitalist and Marxist economic structures reflect ideological perspectives and imperatives that taint "objective" world perceptions. Explaining this idea further, I turn to critic James Kavanagh (1990), whose study of ideology in literature presents a critical rationale which helps explain how both Che and First World economists share similar ontological grounding:

[T]here is no such thing as a social discourse that is nonideological. . . . Ideology is a social process that works on and through every social subject, that, like any other social process, everyone is "in," whether or not they "know" or understand it (311).<sup>8</sup>

In other words, economic talk grows out of and extends from ideological perspectives. These perspectives result from social processes grounded in historical contingencies. Ideological perspectives involve the symbol-using animal's ability to select and emphasize certain characteristics of "reality" and to deflect others. In this sense, ideology is, in many ways, essentially rhetorical. This relationship between ideology and rhetoric is concisely explained by Burke:

[Ideology has come to represent] a system of political or social ideas, framed and propounded for an ulterior purpose. In this new usage, "ideology" is obviously but a kind of rhetoric (since the ideas are so related that they have in them, either explicitly or implicitly, inducements to some social and political choices rather than others) (RM 88).

The point drawn from this discussion of Burke and Kavanagh is that the question of "economics" implies the question of how to structure the social patterns of a community. In other words, economics involves strategic choicemaking at the societal level. Economists emphasize and deemphasize different aspects of "reality" in order to deduce corresponding ideological or political conclusions. Economists do this in much the same way as speakers do when they generate rhetorical discourse. While economics may not be reducible to rhetoric, it is epistemic in that it is constituted by linguistic functions and ideological considerations. Seen in this light, Che's Third World challenge to First World economics is simply an attempt to question the usefulness of the assumptions which ground finance. In questioning these assumptions, Che opens the conversation to a larger audience and raises the potential for constructive change.

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<sup>8</sup> Kavanagh further illustrates how the connection between ideology and rhetoric produces a type of meta-discourse with which to create and control social reality. He explains that ideology "has the function of producing an *obvious* 'reality' that social subjects can assume and accept, precisely as if it had not been socially produced and did not have to be 'known' at all" (311). This reality becomes socially justified through rhetorical processes such as *identification*, *amplification*, and *dissociation*.

Fundamentally, Che interjects into the ongoing economic conversation a moralist dictum. He asserts that answers to economic questions can be found along the lines of humanist concerns. Humanism, in Che's use of the term, serves as a heuristic for interpreting and creating economic reality. In this vein, Che argues that human beings can "begin a new era of authentic international division of labor based not on the history of what has been done until now but on the future history of what can be done" (381).

Che's critique of First World economics, then, is a way of rhetorically mediating the social fabric of the Third World to reconstitute the integrity and value of its citizens. Che is not the first thinker to consider this process. In his history of the humanist tradition, Ernesto Grassi (1980) explains that rhetoricity is the center of all attempts by people to redescribe themselves. Grassi writes, "Rhetorical language is the ground of historicity of man who develops himself in the society" (54). McCloskey reaches a similar conclusion when he states that "[a]ll science is humanism because that is all there is for humans" (57). In the sense that, as a Marxist, Che wants to make more human use of technology, his justificatory position is closely aligned with that of Grassi and McCloskey. The difference between Che and other humanists, such as Grassi and McCloskey, is that Che's effort is an attempt to redescribe the economic relationship between the First and Third world in a way that the First World is unaccustomed to accept.

### Che and the Justification of Hostility

In the previous section, *definition*, *division*, and *negation* were discussed in relationship to ideology and how this related to perceptions of economics. Che spent much effort in his speech to offer an alternative ideological framework to rework perceptions of economics among members of the Third World. His speech was an attempt to redescribe the world in terms more supportive of humanitarian interests. He criticized the First World for utilizing finance and technology in a way that unfairly distributed the workload on the planet and disproportionately dispersed the world's wealth. In Che's speech, the above were common Marxist themes. Che covered them but did not dwell on them because, as the history of First World oppression illustrates, the Marxist ideas of Che and others had already provoked an armed response by the First World. Thus, a more pressing issue than economic redescription facing the emergence of a Third World socialist identity was the threat of open hostility with the First World. The remainder of this essay studies Che's rhetorical mediation of the military threat posed by the First World.

This section explores how Che, a man committed to humanitarian goals, could advocate, design, and participate in overt revolutionary (violent) activity. For instance, one dominant way in which Che clearly does this is to create a strong We/They dichotomy and attribute to the First World blame for the insuing conflict between the First and Third Worlds. Che's example supports Ivie's (1980) observation that, "people strongly committed to the ideal of peace, but simultaneously faced with the reality of war, must believe that the fault for any such disruption of their ideals lies with others" (280). This was precisely the same rhetorical tactic that the First World imperialistic



nations utilized in justifying their violence toward the Third World. For example, Ivie points out that, in the Vietnam war, "[t]he enemy, not the United States, was associated with the physical devastation, atrocities, and personal tragedies that characterize any war" (281). Che engaged in a similar strategy in order to reconcile his pursuit of a united Third World, an activity which promoted humanist concerns while engaging in deliberate violence. In short, Che's pursuit of justice did not preclude the use of violence to achieve this end.

A closer examination of Che's reasoning reveals how his concepts of "justice" and "violence" are related to each other in his argument. For instance, central to Che's position is his assertion that International Law, a law frequently evoked against the struggles of the Third World, is unjust. Thus, because First World nations have formed a union, as represented by the political construction of International Law, it follows that the union of Third World socialist countries is necessary for mutual survival against First World oppression, an oppression that has been frequently sanctified by International "Law."

The union between the different nations of the Third World is necessary if a "just" Third World is to be created. This union may necessarily involve violence, as First World nations resist and protest their loss of oppressive power. In other words, by first distinguishing between an unjust International Law and the potentiality of a united Third World consolidated in its opposition, Che's discourse and aggressive policies work toward the day of "justice" when a "true" International Law can be erected, one which represents the interest of the Third World as well as the First. While Che's discourse and political policies can functionally take place on the political level, the threat of violence is evoked because hostile relations with the non-socialist world are unavoidable. Therefore, a socialist army is needed to establish national independence and national laws and to force the First World to comply with Third World national rights.

Che's technique for promoting the argument that force is morally necessary to resist the pressures of imperialism corresponds to Ivie's (1982) observation that "[p]rowar rhetors perform the ritual of victimage as they cultivate images of a savage enemy" (241). More specifically, Che's speech provides an excellent example of how prowar speakers evoke the ritualistic victimage that Ivie identifies:

Through analogical extensions, they articulate a theme of diabolism that, taken literally, goads nations into defending themselves against barbarians bent upon subjugating innocent peoples (241).

Che most clearly utilizes this technique when he attacks an International Law "that was created as a result of the conflicts among imperialist powers and not as a result of disputes among free, just peoples" (386). Such law, Che reminds his audience, leads to the unwanted establishment of First World foreign bases on Third World sovereign territory and to the accumulation of a tremendous foreign debt created by an imposed economic system.

An evaluation of Ivie's (1974) study makes Che's argument more pertinent. Ivie points out that what First World nations consider to be International

Law is little more than the establishment of the privileged rights of these nations. For example, America defines war “in purpose terms, with territorial invasion and commercial injuries interpreted as attacks against America’s rights” (343). Yet, as history illustrates, the United States has been seldom invaded but has been involved in countless international conflicts that were resolved through the use of the armed forces. This phenomenon can be explained by the U.S. practice of equating “territorial invasion” with “commercial injuries.” So-called commercial injuries, then, serve to justify American acts of aggression in defense of foreign owned property which, by proxy, have been transformed into an extension of American soil. Therefore, the confiscation and nationalization of industry and the collection of foreign owned or operated property, which automatically follows the socialist ascent to state power, is defined by the United States as a situation where military action is warranted even though there is no direct threat to the actual land or persons of the U.S. United States Marine Corps Major Harries-Clichy Peterson (1961) clearly details the application of this warrant:

[T]he precedent was established that [military action] did not constitute an act of war. Functions assumed by the Marines ashore after overcoming resistance and protecting the lives and property of U.S. citizens included the disarming of natives, the training of a constabulary, and the supervision of elections (xxii).

In other words, the property rights of the United States extends to foreign territory, territory that was taken by force in the first place. Notice, furthermore, how the U.S. precedent included not only the refurbishment of North American property in the Third World, but included also the disarming of such nations and the establishment of puppet, usually dictatorial, regimes. Had some nation, like Cuba, done this to Florida, the act would be regarded by the United States as an act of war. In terms of United States foreign policy, however, the use of aggression against sovereign Third World nations is justified. The rationale for such military action is cited by Peterson. He refers to a Marine handbook, the *Small Wars Manual*:

The use of the forces of the United States in foreign countries to protect the lives and property of American citizens resident in those countries does not necessarily constitute an act of war . . . (xxii).

The *Small Wars Manual*, in turn, attributes justification for this form of aggression “to international law, as recognized by the leading nations of the world . . .” (xxi). In other words, the First World imperialist nations, as exemplified by the United States, has posited a circular argument. Aggression against Third World nations is justified to protect First World interests, interests which depend upon forcing an economic system on the native population. This justification is based on First World domestic property laws which do not take into consideration the norms and customs of the Third World. Finally, the whole argument is rationalized by appealing to International Law—a code of ethics and behavior which reflects the interests of the First World.

As a result of the above discussion it should be clear that, when Che speaks against International Law, he is not speaking as a barbarian interested in anarchy and destruction for its own sake, but as a diplomat demanding



respect for the borders of his nation and for all Third World nations. Arguing from the premise that International Law is unjust, Che is free, as Ivie (1982) notices, to "establish a 'realistic' image of the enemy's savagery in order to eliminate peace as a viable alternative to war" (253). Because of the unreasonableness of the First World enemy to respect the natural borders and indigenous cultures of the Third World, the concepts of "justice" and "violence" become associated terms; the goal of justice becomes ultimately tied with prolonged struggle and violent reaction against the imperialist nations. Thus, justice *through* violence becomes a viable reasoning tool in Che's argumentative repertoire. In Che's speech, then, we find an example of Marxist rhetoric that provides rationale for a prolonged and hostile conflict with the First World. Ivie (1974) elaborates on how this process works:

As the individual justifies actions that have been questioned by significant others, he learns the answers that his society accepts as legitimate motives. Internalized, these answers form vocabularies of motives that influence the social actor's world views (338).

In other words, Che's objective in this speech, aside from the larger objectives of the socialist agenda, is to help his audience understand the reasons behind his Marxist policies. He does this by grounding his policies, particularly ones of aggression, in the motives of his audience. In naming these motives, he empowers them, gives them form and direction. This concept explains how the audience determines what is to be considered a persuasive appeal or even an argument. For example, a First World audience member who supports an imperialist foreign policy would not recognize Che's arguments as legitimate. Indeed, much global conflict since the Second World War can be reduced to the unrest generated between First and Third world political ideologies and their inability to recognize each other as legitimate.

From the perspective of rhetorical theory, it is clear that persuasion progresses from an established position in the minds of a particular audience. This position is modified by the persuader in a manner that continues to support the premises determined or accepted by that audience. In exactly this way, Che's oratory is constructed. Consequently, Che's rhetorical and political position should not be seen as an anomaly in world politics or oratory. Rather, Che and his Marxist informed discourse must instead be viewed as a clear expression of human social consciousness, a perspective determined and sanctioned by his Third World audience.

### Conclusion

Major Ernesto "Che" Guevara's speech, delivered to encourage political solidarity between Third World African and Asian countries, was studied for its techniques in justifying his socialist call to action, an action which involved concepts of *aggression*, *victimage*, and *purification*. In this sense, "The Death of Imperialism and the Birth of a Moral World" contained typical examples of themes and appeals found in much Marxist discourse of the time. More specifically, in studying Che's discourse, I have illustrated how he utilized processes of *identification*, *division*, and *perfectibility* to ground his assumptions and to aid in the acceptance of his argumentative appeals.

Of greater critical importance, however, is the value of this criticism in

relationship to a post-Marxist world. In actuality, Che's particular rhetorical strategies are of only limited interest to rhetorical scholars now that almost thirty years have passed since his death and the intellectual force of Marxist thought has been replaced in the academy by post-structuralist apoliticalism. Specifically, while Che, himself, may be of only marginal interest, his rhetorical stance, in relationship to imperialism, and his justification of that stance, is still quite important in a world where the Marxist challenge has diminished in importance.

The most important point to be drawn from the experience of this critique is extremely significant to the world culture which is emerging out of the progress and ruins of the twentieth-century. While the social influence of speakers like Che wane, and while Third World nations begin to struggle against the demands of the twenty-first century, demands which include feeding a bulging population, disease control, famine and deforestation, it remains important to consider the political and economic forces to which Che and his Marxist discourse were responding: First World oppression in the Third World. I faithfully submit that, when the question of oppression is finally answered, the struggles of the Third World can be moved a step forward toward a beneficial resolution.

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# SEX, SIN, SATAN, AND SWAGGART: CONFLICT-MANAGEMENT THROUGH COMPLIANCE-GAINING APOLOGIA

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## Abstract

The events surrounding Jimmy Swaggart's sexual relations with a prostitute made for an especially interesting case study which involved the integration of compliance-gaining strategies and elements of the genre of apologia. The Reverend Jimmy Swaggart endeavored to manage conflict, reduce dissonance, and institute damage control in an effort to repair his character and ministry by delivering a speech of apologia broadcast on February 21, 1988. In this speech, Swaggart effectively utilized several rhetorical strategies and avoided addressing any specifics of his sexual misconduct.

Several findings emerged from assessing Jimmy Swaggart's compliance-gaining apologia: (1) He went beyond the purpose of a true religious confession. (2) The speech evidenced an intent to persuade, manage conflict, reduce dissonance, and to implement damage control. (3) Swaggart applied strategies of compliance-gaining and apologia as manipulative rhetorical tools. and, (4) Finally, Swaggart's speech demonstrated the use of compliance-gaining apologia as a sub-genre. Swaggart's compliance-gaining apologia was initially successful, and his ministry survived his first sexual crisis. Subsequently, Swaggart was forced to resign from his ministry in October 1991 following his liaison with another prostitute.

The study of conflict and its management is diverse in that it involves many academic disciplines, sub-disciplines, and specific situations. One aspect of this diversity can be found in the revelations regarding television evangelists such as Jim and Tammy Fae Bakker, Oral Roberts, and Jimmy Swaggart. The speech selected for this evaluation was one delivered by pentecostal preacher Jimmy Swaggart whose 1988 fall from grace placed him in the position of an individual who must justify himself and re-establish his credibility with his constituency.

Knowing that televangelism is a multi-million dollar operation and that Jimmy Swaggart was at that time the backbone of Swaggart's television ministry, important questions surface: Was his public apology solely for the purpose of a religious confession? Was the purpose of the speech one of expressing regret to his congregation? Was money an issue? Did Swaggart sense that without a public apology his donations would continue to decline drastically? Or was it a speech aimed at apology and/or forgiveness with a final goal of compliance-gaining so that the ministry could continue its multi-million dollar operation?

Whatever his motivation, Jimmy Swaggart decided to speak to his congregation, and millions of television viewers concerning his involvement with Debra Murphree, a prostitute from the Big Easy, in an effort to manage

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conflict, reduce dissonance, repair his character, and rebuild the ministry which his sexual dalliances damaged.

The effects arising out of the publication of Swaggart's sexual relations with Debra Murphree make for an especially interesting case study that involves the integration of compliance-gaining strategies and theoretical aspects of the genre of apology. We contend that Swaggart fused these two rhetorical acts during his speech and formed a sub-genre of compliance-gaining apology; he applied these strategies with intent to persuade his audience. This study was a further investigation involving the subject matter of a previous article that posited the fusion of political apology and compliance-gaining. The present work examined compliance-gaining apology in a religious modality in order to add credibility to the previously proposed sub-genre concept.<sup>1</sup>

### Interrelating Elements of Genre: A Sub-Genre

The idea of genre, traditionally associated with literary criticism, has emerged as a concept associated with rhetorical discourse. Edwin Black helped to concretize the concept in the area of rhetorical theory. Black defined genre as "... congregations of rhetorical discourses that share similar strategies, situations, and effects."<sup>2</sup> Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson subsequently defined genre as "... a classification based on the fusion and interrelation of elements in such a way that a unique kind of rhetorical act is created"<sup>3</sup> and argued that a genre is given its character by a "... fusion of forms, not by its individual elements."<sup>4</sup> Rhetorical acts in a particular genre tend to be classified or categorized according to settings, reasons for production, and elements that are motivational precedents characterizing the specific genre. The rhetorical discourse exhibits the situational, or motivational features of the genre. Strategies, situational factors, overlapping functions, and the interrelation of elements play an important role in the effectiveness of a particular rhetorical act regardless of its genre.

This study contends that when an interrelationship and/or fusion of two distinctly different genre exists during one particular discourse, a sub-genre is formed. In Swaggart's rhetorical discourse, he exhibited motivational and situational features of two unique rhetorical acts, apology and compliance-gaining. The following discussion will examine the strategies and elements involved in apology and compliance-gaining, that merged together in this case study and formed a sub-genre. The analyses will include: (1) A review and discussion of the major works and strategies involved in the genre of apology; (2) A review and discussion of the major works and strategies of compliance-gaining discourse; and, (3) An assessment of Jimmy Swaggart's

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<sup>1</sup> Christa L. Arnold and Dean Fadely, "You're No Jack Kennedy: Bentsen Vs. Quayle." *Speaker and Gavel* 28 (1991): pp. 38-49.

<sup>2</sup> Edwin Black, *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method*, (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1978) p. 134.

<sup>3</sup> Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Form and Genre*, (Falls Church, Virginia: Speech Communication Association, 1976) p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> *Form and Genre*, p. 21.



nationally televised speech of apology<sup>5</sup> applying theoretical elements of compliance-gaining apology.

### Apologia

Ware and Linkugel argued that apologetical discourses constitute "... a distinct form of public address ... a strategic verbal defense where the rhetor fashions to extricate himself from the situation."<sup>6</sup> Subsequently, Noreen Kruse defined the genre of apologia as:

A grouping of speeches based on situations and circumstances surrounding a speech defending one's character, and mending of one's ethos ... Discourses can only be defined as apologia if the rhetor's actions have led to public criticism of their characters or if the rhetors believe their behaviors have caused people to consider them immoral or unethical.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Sponsored by Jimmy Swaggart Ministries, Baton Rouge Louisiana. Televised speech delivered by Jimmy Swaggart. Broadcast date, February 21, 1988. References to Swaggart's speech of apology are from a video tape recording of this speech.

<sup>6</sup> B.L. Ware and Will A. Linkugel, "They Spoke in Defense of Themselves: On the Generic Criticism of Apologia," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 59 (1973): p. 275.

<sup>7</sup> Noreen W. Kruse, "Motivational Factors in Non-Denial Apologia," *Central States Speech Journal* 28 (1977): p. 13. "The Scope of Apologetic Discourse: Establishing Generic Parameters," *Southern Speech Communication Journal* 46 (1981): p. 280. Noreen Kruse's research shed some insight concerning the fine line between a religious confession and a speech of apology: "It is conceivable, of course, that a religious confession can serve an apologetic function when the author is a public figure with a tarnished reputation, but the purpose of the true religious confession is not the attainment of pardon or acquittal from one's fellow human being. ... Implicit in the religious confession is the notion of God's absolution, not humanity's, and those who believe themselves to have been forgiven by God have no need to justify or excuse their behaviors to society." (Emphasis ours); For further evaluations and discussions of apologia, see: B.L. Ware and Wil A. Linkugel, "They Spoke in Defense of Themselves: On the Generic Criticism of Apologia"; B.L. Jackson Harrell, B.L. Ware, and Wil A. Linkugel, "Failure of Apology in American Politics: Nixon on Watergate," *Communication Monographs* 42 (1975): pp. 245-261; Edwin Black, *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method*; Campbell and Jamieson, *Form and Genre*; Ellen Reid Gold, "Political Apologia: The Ritual of Self-Defense," *Communication Monographs* 45 (1978): pp. 306-316; Bernard Brock and Robert Scott, *A Twentieth-Century Criticism*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1980); Robert L. King, "Transforming Scandal into Tragedy: A Rhetoric of Political Apology," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 71 (1985): pp. 289-301; Sonja K. Foss, *Rhetorical Criticism Exploration and Practice*, (Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waveland Press, 1989, pp. 111-121.) Suzanne E. Lindsey, "Saints Facing Scandal: A Rhetorical Comparison of the Apologia Employed by Aimee Semple McPherson and James Bakker," *Studies in Popular Culture* 13 (1990): pp. 1-16. Sharon D. Downey, "The Evolution of the Rhetorical Genre of Apologia," *Western Journal of Communication* 57 (1993): pp. 42-64. For an account of generic criticism in general and Apologia in specific, the reader is referred to Foss (1989).

Harrell, Ware and Linkugel (1975) discussed apologia as a strategic verbal defense in which the "rhetor fashions to extricate himself from the situation" (p. 246). These authors contended that personal legitimacy is most basically grounded in "perceived honesty, largely a moral perception of the rhetor drawn by the public" (p. 260). Ware and Linkugel (1973) suggested that questioning a man's moral nature and worth as a human being is qualitatively different from challenging his policies. Therefore, an attack on a person's character, moral nature, and reputation requires a direct response (p. 274). Usually this direct response is in the form of a public address involving elements such as self defense, apology, and an emphasis on the positive aspects of this person's character. Foss (1989) indicated that all rhetorical genres including apologies, are constellations containing three elements labeled situational requirements, substantive and stylistic characteristics, and organizing principles (pp. 111-112).

The varying strategies, situations, and circumstances surrounding apologia help make each one unique. However, regardless of the extent of their individuality, all apologies rely upon the use of four strategies: denial, bolstering, differentiation, and transcendence.<sup>8</sup> These strategies may be used separately, simultaneously, or they may overlap one another.

The discourse of denial consists of the "... simple disavowal by the speaker of any participation in, relationship to, or positive sentiment toward whatever it is that repels the audience."<sup>9</sup> Bolstering as a component of apologia is applied when a "... speaker attempts to identify himself with something viewed favorably by the audience."<sup>10</sup> Differentiation "... subsumes those strategies which serve the purpose of separating some fact, sentiment, object or relationship from some larger context within which the audience presently views that attribute."<sup>11</sup> It often surfaces in apologia when the accused requests a forbearance of judgment until after the questionable actions are examined from a different perspective. The final strategy of apologia is transcendence, which is the obverse of differentiation, and is transformative in the sense that strategies involving "... a change in cognitive identification and in meaning factor together as transcendence."<sup>12</sup> When implementing the above strategies, rhetors can assume any or all of the following four rhetorical tactics: absolution, vindication, explanation, or justification.<sup>13</sup> The tactic of absolution combines differentiation and denial strategies, with an objective of acquittal. The vindication tactic relies heavily upon transcendence and is aimed at preserving the speaker's reputation. It highlights the speaker's worth as a human being. With the explanation approach, the rhetor contends that if the audience truly understands *and believes* the speaker's motives and actions, then the audience will support acquittal. Finally, with the justification tactic, the speaker goes beyond addressing motives and actions and asks for complete approval.<sup>14</sup>

As apologia involves a rhetor's attempt to reverse the effects of a derogatory charge thus resulting in a more favorable view of the speaker's character, elements of manipulation and compliance-gaining appear in most speeches of apology. Accordingly, we should examine the characteristics, strategies, and situational appropriateness of the rhetorical acts of compliance-gaining.

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<sup>8</sup> Ware and Linkugel, "They Spoke in Defense of Themselves," pp. 276-282.

<sup>9</sup> Robert P. Abelson, *Theories of Cognitive Consistency*, (Chicago, Illinois: Rand McNally, 1969, pp. 344-345.) For an example of apologia using denial strategies see: Clarence Darrow's "They Tried to Get Me" speech in Arthur Weinberg's, *Attorney for the Damned*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957, pp. 494-531).

<sup>10</sup> Ware and Linkugel, "They Spoke in Defense of Themselves: On Generic Criticism of Apologia," p. 277. Effective usage of the bolstering strategy was applied in Senator Edward Kennedy's "Chappaquiddick" address.

<sup>11</sup> Ware and Linkugel, "They Spoke in Defense of Themselves," p. 278.

<sup>12</sup> Ware and Linkugel, "They Spoke in Defense of Themselves," p. 280. Psychologically speaking, transcendence moves the audience away from the particular and most likely negative charge at hand.

<sup>13</sup> Ware and Linkugel, "They Spoke in Defense of Themselves," pp. 282-283.

<sup>14</sup> Ware and Linkugel, "They Spoke in Defense of Themselves," pp. 282-283.



### Compliance-Gaining Strategies

Compliance-gaining strategies have developed as a specialized area of study in interpersonal communication research. However in this analysis, compliance-gaining strategies are useful in a specific public discourse situation. Compliance-gaining can be described as symbolic behavior aimed towards shaping or regulating the behavior and/or opinion of others.<sup>15</sup> Compliance-gaining techniques have also been described as a verbal choice-making strategies that can play a key role in communication. There are a variety of situations in which a speaker seeks compliance from the listeners. This compliance-gaining act may take the form of a request, or "favor asking," but, regardless of how the act is presented, the structure is self-serving.<sup>16</sup> Compliance-gaining, like apologia, is also a fusion of elements and strategies to form a created communication act. While compliance-gaining is dependent on individual circumstances and therefore may apply different strategies according to situational needs, compliance-gaining behavior centers upon an attempt on the part of the communication source to effect a pre-conceived response from the target or receiver of the persuasive effort.<sup>17</sup> Although the speaker may sometimes consciously choose a message strategy in order to receive a desired response, such is not always the case. As Schenck-Hamlin, Wiseman, and Georgacarakos have indicated:

While we cannot claim that goal specificity is a characteristic of all compliance-gaining episodes, we argue that it is an important determinant of effectiveness.<sup>18</sup>

Gerald Marwell and David Schmitt were pioneers in the investigation of strategies to be applied in compliance-gaining situations.<sup>19</sup> Together they developed sixteen compliance-gaining strategies. The strategies of compliance-gaining most relevant to this discussion extend beyond the dyadic encounter, and are geared more toward the group or large audience. These compliance strategies are based upon sanction (promise, ingratiation, positive esteem, aversive stimulation, and guilt), and need (altruism and explanation).<sup>20</sup>

Schenck-Hamlin, Wiseman, and Georgacarakos also helped define these specific compliance techniques. Strategies based on sanction have the commonality of reward and punishment—the proverbial carrot and stick. Promise consists of promising goods, and/or services in exchange for compliance,

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<sup>15</sup> Karen Tracy, Robert T. Craig, Martin Smith, and Frances Spisak, "The Discourse of Requests: Assessment of a Compliance-Gaining Approach," *Human Communication Research* 10 (1984): pp. 513-538.

<sup>16</sup> Tracy, et. al.

<sup>17</sup> Gerald R. Miller and Mark Steinberg, *Between People*, (Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1975).

<sup>18</sup> William J. Schenck-Hamlin, Richard L. Wiseman, and G.N. Georgacarakos, "A Model of Properties of Compliance-Gaining Strategies," *Communication Quarterly* 30 (1982): p. 93.

<sup>19</sup> Gerald Marwell and Davie R. Schmitt, "Dimensions of Compliance-Gaining Behavior: An Empirical Analysis," *Sociometry* 39 (1967): 350-364.

<sup>20</sup> Marwell and Schmitt, pp.357-358.

basically stating, "if you comply, I will reward you"<sup>21</sup>. Ingratiation is a strategy of sanction in which offers of goods and/or services precedes the request for compliance. The purpose of this compliance tactic is to manipulate the target's behavior by offering gift giving, supportive listening, love and affection, and favor doing in return for compliance.<sup>22</sup> The strategy of positive esteem constitutes a case in which the speaker promises an increase in the target's power, success, moral/ethical status, attention and affection, and competence.<sup>23</sup> Positive esteem basically states that people you value will think better of you if you comply. Unless the recipient is a masochist, aversive stimulation is a strategy of sanction which consists of punishment only—the stick without the carrot. The speaker continuously punishes target, making cessation contingent on compliance based on behaviors such as: pouting, sulking, crying, acting angry, whining, the silent treatment, and ridicule.<sup>24</sup> The final sanction strategy, guilt, consists of a situation in which the target's failure to comply with the speaker will result in automatic decreases of self-worth. The guilt strategy would basically be manipulated as: people will think you are inadequate if you do not comply. Areas of inadequacy might include professional ineptness, social irresponsibility, or ethical/moral transgressions.<sup>25</sup>

Although many compliance-gaining strategies are based on sanction, there are also strategies built on need. Altruism is a need strategy in which the speaker requests the target to engage in behavior designed to benefit the speaker rather than the target, (ie: "I need your compliance very badly, so do it for me). Intensity of the appeal may be manipulated by making the target feel unselfish, generous, self-sacrificing, heroic, or helpful. "It would help me if you would do this," and "do a favor for me," exemplify the direct approach of the altruistic strategy.<sup>26</sup> The final need strategy, explanation, suggests that: one of several reasons are typically advanced for believing or doing something. A reason may include: (1) credibility, "I know from experience." The reason for complying is because of trustworthiness, integrity, exemplary action, or expertise; or (2) inference from empirical evidence, "everything points to the logic of this step" therefore, comply.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Schenck-Hamlin, Wiseman, and Georgacarokos, p. 95.

<sup>22</sup> Schenck-Hamlin, Wiseman, and Georgacarokos, p. 95.

<sup>23</sup> Schenck-Hamlin, Wiseman, and Georgacarokos, p. 95.

<sup>24</sup> Schenck-Hamlin, Wiseman, and Georgacarokos, p. 95.

<sup>25</sup> Schenck-Hamlin, Wiseman, and Georgacarokos, p. 95.

<sup>26</sup> Schenck-Hamlin, Wiseman, and Georgacarokos, p. 95.

<sup>27</sup> For further discussion on compliance-gaining strategies see: Franklin J. Boster, and James B. Stiff, "Compliance-Gaining Message Selection Behavior," *Human Communication Research* 10, (1984), pp. 539-556; Michael J. Cody, and Margaret L. McLaughlin, "Perceptions of Compliance-Gaining Situations: A Dimensional Approach," *Communication Monographs* 47 (1980), pp. 132-148; Michael J. Cody, William J. Jordan, and Mary Lou Woelfel, "Dimensions of Compliance-Gaining Situations," *Human Communication Research* 9 (1983): 99-113; Mark A. deTurk, "A Transactional Analysis of Compliance-Gaining Behavior: Effects of Noncompliance, Relational Contexts, and Actor's Gender," *Human Communication Research* 12 (1985): pp. 54-78; James P. Dillard, and Michael Burgoon, "Situational Influences on the Selection of Compliance-Gaining Messages: Two Tests of the Predictive Utility of The Cody-McLaughlin Typology," *Communication Monographs* 52 (1985), pp. 289-304; Marwell and Schmitt, "Dimensions



The literature treating apologia and compliance-gaining indicates that the effectiveness of each strategy varies depending on individual and situational differences. With apologia, the sense of preserving one's character appears to be a primary motive, however, some apologetic rhetoric may go beyond self-preservation. Swaggart seemingly selected strategies for his speech with the intent to apologize and gain compliance from his audience in order to remain in his ministry. Therefore, the strategies of compliance-gaining and apologia may be effective in certain public discourse contexts.

### Compliance-Gaining Apologia: A Sub-Genre

Noreen Kruse suggested that a public oration of apology contains intentions not only to repair damaged ethos and morality, but is also an obvious step towards gaining respect and therefore compliance from the audience.<sup>28</sup> A rhetor may target compliance as the primary goal using a mixture of strategies such as denial, aversive stimulation, or the acknowledgement of error, fault, or even guilt (*mea culpa*), as a method of self-preservation. Is it possible that strategies of apologia and compliance-gaining overlap and therefore are mutually inclusive? The genre of apologia has a legitimate historical acceptance, whereas compliance-gaining is a reasonably new area of rhetorical analyses research.

We contend that the strategies and interrelating elements of apologia and compliance-gaining discussed in this paper constitute a particular form, or sub-genre, and we would argue that the previous discussion of apologia and compliance-gaining support this contention. Additional support for our position may be achieved through our evaluation of Jimmy Swaggart's public oration of apology focusing upon his strategies. There are distinct instances in Swaggart's oration where he combined compliance-gaining strategies such as aversive stimulation and guilt; while also using the apologia tactics of differentiation and transcendence in order to verbally acknowledge his sin while cognitively moving his audience away from further discussion of his sin. We offer such an assessment in Swaggart's speech in order to better understand the interrelationships between apologia and compliance-gaining discourses.

"GOD HATES THE PORNOGRAPHERS, AND THE ADULTERERS, AND THE  
FORNICATORS"

—JIMMY SWAGGART

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of Compliance-Gaining"; Schenck-Hamlin, et.al., "A Model of Properties of Compliance-Gaining Strategies"; Clark and Delia, "Topoi and Rhetorical Competence"; Karen Tracy, Robert T. Craig, Martin Smith and Frances Spisak, "The Discourse of Requests: Assessment of a Compliance-Gaining Approach," *Human Communication Research* 10 (1984): pp. 513-538; William J. Schenck-Hamlin, G.N. Georgacarakos, and Richard L. Wiseman, "A Formal Account of Interpersonal Compliance-Gaining," *Communication Quarterly* 30 (1982): pp. 173-180; M. Lee Williams, and Nancy K. Untermeyer, "Compliance-Gaining Strategies and Communicator Role: An Analysis of Strategy Choices and Persuasive Efficacy," *Communication Research Reports* 5 (1988): 10-18.

<sup>28</sup> Kruse, "The Scope of Apologetic Discourse: Establishing Generic Parameters," p. 279.

Standing before a church filled to capacity, and with his family, as well as millions of television viewers watching, Jimmy Swaggart began his confession with an admission of guilt: "I do not plan to white wash my sin . . . I have no one to blame but myself . . . Sin was done in secret, blessed be the name of the Lord." While there is no logical connection between sin, (whether it be done in secret or in public), and "blessed be the name of the Lord," there is a psychological relevance. Placing an emphasis on the Lord and carrying a bible in his hand helped differentiate Jimmy Swaggart the *human* minister, from Jesus Christ the *Lord*. (e.g., "I have had to come to the realization, this *Gospel* is *flawless* even though it is ministered, at times, by *flawed men*." [Emphasis Ours.] Swaggart continued his speech by bolstering the media, a tactic opposite his usual approach,<sup>29</sup> calling them fair, correct, and even objective. Although Swaggart obviously was confessing to having committed some kind of sinful activities, he neither admitted to, nor described, his specific sin. As his entire speech neither addressed the exact nature of his sin with a prostitute, nor how long he had been committing sin, Swaggart actually was using a *form of denial* in that he never directly commented upon the exact nature of his transgressions.

Alfred North Whitehead observed: "It takes a very unusual mind to undertake an analysis of the obvious." At the risk of belaboring the obvious, the concept of audience analysis inherent in our phrase "a form of denial" is important. Had Swaggart used denial *per se*, he would have said something akin to "I was not in that motel room to have sex with a prostitute, but rather, like our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, I was there to give her spiritual guidance." As Swaggart was constrained from using this form of denial, he chose, and wisely we would argue, to allude to having sinned but *not* to specify the exact nature of those wrong doings—wrong doings which would have been repugnant to his congregation. Thus, Swaggart adapted the strategy of denial, as well as the other strategies of apology, to fit his particular circumstances.

Swaggart addressed those whom he had wronged, beginning with his wife, Frances. During the speech, Swaggart looked directly at Frances, constantly bolstering and ingratiating her by stating that "God could not have blessed a man with a better woman than my wife." He let the audience know that Frances' redeemer was and is the Lord Jesus Christ, thus transcending the audience away from Swaggart and his sin in question.

Swaggart spoke to Frances saying: "I have sinned against you and I beg for your forgiveness." Frances, while not crying or smiling, did not look happy; she made a hesitant nod, certainly not an obvious gesture of compliance let alone complete forgiveness. However, by identifying his wife as an *ideal*, Swaggart made it difficult for her to react negatively. By idealizing his wife and marriage, he identified with highly esteemed audience values; thereby, not only bolstering her image, but, by association his own. Thus Swaggart transcended his breach of promise.

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<sup>29</sup> In the past, Swaggart had been a media basher, and his subsequent speeches exemplified a return to that tactic.



Extolling her character, he raised the plane of the speech to the even more lofty matters of spreading this Gospel "... to the great cities of the world and over this globe. It would not have been done without her strength, her courage, and her consecration to her Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ." When it came to the salvation of the world, who could be worried about Jimmy Swaggart's personal problems? His sin was minimized. Again, he had transcended the current situation. However, in the eyes of the church, Swaggart had committed a grievous sin; as evidence of his contrite heart, he repented and, in a highly emotional manner, acknowledged his sin against his wife and "begged" for her forgiveness.<sup>30</sup>

Swaggart continued to address those whom he wronged by admitting his guilt in having sinned against them. Those people included his son, Donnie, and daughter-in-law Debbie. During this portion of the speech, Donnie cried, mouthed "I love you" and nodded in obvious agreement to forgive his father. Debbie, while not crying, did hesitantly nod, perhaps in agreement—perhaps only in understanding. Like her mother-in-law, she too did not look happy.

As Swaggart continued his confession, he began to tear, cry, and quiver, a definite sign of aversive stimulation. This aversive stimulation allowed the audience to see Swaggart's sincerity and suffering, with Swaggart as the communication source (speaker) punishing Swaggart the sinner (target). The crying and begging for forgiveness during the speech produced a profound effect on his congregation. At times, members were clapping, crying, and standing up in ovation. Swaggart continued—begging for forgiveness from his church, the Bible college, (students and faculty), the Assemblies of God, and the television audience. This begging for forgiveness and forbearance was clearly a strategy of altruism, through which Swaggart sought to demonstrate his need for forgiveness and sympathy, while at the same time, using his connection with God to help justify his audience's compliance.

To each group he addressed there was a pattern, the end of which acknowledged harm, emphasized the gravity of the sin and enabled him to demonstrate a contrite heart. For example, in speaking "To the Assemblies of God, which helped bring the Gospel to my little beleaguered town when my family was lost without Jesus . . .," Swaggart said, "I have sinned against you, and I have brought disgrace, and humiliation, and embarrassment upon you. I beg your forgiveness." Only a person with a heart of stone, or the mind of a cynic, would be unmoved.

Swaggart followed this pattern with each person or group he addressed. The pattern of compliance-gaining apologia was: (1) Attention, (2) Attunement, (3) Reinforcement, (4) Transcendence, (5) Positive Affirmation, (6) Negative Affirmation, (7) Rapprochement, (8) Admission of Guilt, (9) Request for Forgiveness. For example:

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<sup>30</sup> Dean Fadely and Loraye Hughes, "I Have Sinned Against You: A Criticism of Jimmy Swaggart's Apology to the Assemblies of God Ministry." A paper presented at the 1991 Convention of The Speech Communication Association, Atlanta, Georgia. October 31-November 3, 1991.

- (1) "This church, this ministry, this Bible College, these professors, this choir
- (2) that have stood with me on
- (3) a thousand crusade platforms around the world, that
- (4) have labored unstintingly and tirelessly to lift up the great name of
- (5) Jesus Christ, to tell the weary He is rest, to
- (6) tell the sin cursed that Jesus is victory
- (7) You who have stood with me unflaggingly,
- (8) I have sinned against you and. I have brought shame and embarrassment to you.
- (9) I beg your forgiveness."

These elements may be explained as follows: (1) Attention represented an intonement identifying those to be addressed. (2) Attunement identified the relationship the addressed had to the speaker. In each case, Swaggart recalled a deep interpersonal bond, shared by the speaker and the group. This strategy called attention to a mutual deference system. (3) Reinforcement bolstered the relationship, expressing either how great or how deep their relationship was. (4) Transcendence pointed to the common cause in which they participated, a cause which was greater than any one of the individuals involved. (5) Positive Affirmation was a belief statement which served to bolster the speaker and audience's shared ideology—a statement of what the group believed to be the ultimate Truth(s) and was placed prior to the next element of the pattern in order to draw contrast. (6) The Negative Affirmation names what has been regarded as evil, what was an appeal which solidified the group by identifying what the group was against; whereas the positive appeal identified what the group was for. (7) Rapprochement was an enjoinment and reaffirmed the bond. It named the breadth of the personal tie of the speaker and audience. It served as a reciprocal ratification. There was an implicit admonition not to sever the tie. The speaker has depicted himself as belonging to the group ideologically in the affirmations and socio-emotively in the attunement and rapprochement. The group cannot judge the speaker harshly or cast negative aspersions without also condemning themselves. The speaker was so tightly identified with their common cause that the group must see his failure or sin as a fluke, an oddity. The speaker was "one of us" and what happened was an anomaly. Safe at this point, the speaker can (8) admit guilt and (9) ask forgiveness.<sup>31</sup> (If, however, the speaker continues to sin, the group will not view his transgressions as an anomaly, but rather will view him as unworthy to be a member of the group—let alone one of its leaders. Thus, as Swaggart was to discover, his rhetorical pattern had its risks.)

As the speech continued, Swaggart intensified his request for forgiveness by using the strategies of differentiation and transcendence in the context of using Bible verses, and confessing to God and Jesus Christ. Swaggart's confession to a higher power can be used as a justification for a forbearance in judgment on the part of his audience. Swaggart tried to achieve this goal by quoting bible verses and bolstering his audience's belief in God (tran-

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<sup>31</sup> Fadely and Hughes.



scendence). The desired result of this tactic was to change his audience's focus—moving their attention away from his sexual misconduct and toward their common religious ground. Swaggart used this particular combination of strategies throughout his address. Examples of his appeals to forgive his sin based on religious reasons included: My sin "... is in the seas of God's forgetfulness, never to be remembered against me anymore." "... through His mercy, His grace, and His love, the sin, of which I speak, is not a present sin. It is a past sin." "... sinners shall be converted ..."

With these strategies, Swaggart maneuvered his audience by establishing common ground through mutual belief in the Lord, thereby enabling the audience to answer in the affirmative the question: Should Jimmy Swaggart be forgiven? To achieve this desired answer, Swaggart used the following chain of reasoning:

- The Bible tells us that the Lord forgives upon confession.
- Jimmy Swaggart has confessed to the Lord.
- Therefore, the Lord has forgiven Jimmy Swaggart.
- The Bible tells us that we are to follow our God.
- Our God has forgiven Jimmy Swaggart.
- Therefore, we should forgive Swaggart.

Thus, by asking their forgiveness for his sin, Swaggart gave his congregation an opportunity, and a way, to demonstrate their faith—faith being a fundamental and essential element in the Pentecostal movement, particularly in the Assemblies of God denomination.

In addition to the aforementioned strategies, Swaggart also utilized the techniques of bolstering, esteem, promise, and explanation during the speech. Swaggart spoke about the ministry's successes around the world. He continued to bolster the ministry by mentioning the success of the college, the students, the faculty, the church, and their relationships with the Lord, thereby implying causality on the part of Jimmy Swaggart's ministry. Swaggart eventually bolstered himself and built his personal esteem by calling himself "... the vessel of the Lord." As Swaggart focused on the world-wide nature of the ministry, his audience could only be proud to belong to this great movement. Swaggart's terminology enabled his audience to transcend and be transported by the images, taking attention away from the here and now. When he referred to "... this movement in fellowship that circles the globe," the Gospel that combats the "darkness" of sin, the Gospel that saves "... hundreds of millions" from Satan, "... the Gospel is a beacon of light," And "... the seas of Gods forgetfulness," these phrases triggered elaborate fantasy themes within the audience he addressed.

How could the elders have been upset with him when he complimented them for upholding the standard of righteousness "... as missionaries on the front lines of darkness, holding back the tides of hell"? Again, this was a reaffirmation of the group's faith through the use of bolstering images, the use of idioms with which the audience could identify, and then transcendence to a higher plane—a plane far above his sin. Swaggart even bolstered himself and built his own positive esteem, by indicating his personal, if not his prophetic, relationship with God saying: "God has said to me, 'I will do

what I do before the whole world.' Blessed be the name of the Lord. [Emphasis Ours.]

Swaggart continued throughout the speech to combine bolstering and transcendence. By bolstering, he attempted to identify himself with those beliefs and values the audience viewed with esteem. By transcendence, Swaggart joined sentiment with some larger context which was not presently viewed as an attribute. Part of the reason he did this was to heighten paranoia. Are church leaders "holding back the tides of hell"? Are the "unsaved" trapped in "stygian" darkness? If he is not forgiven, will this darkness and hell take over the world? Will Satan win? Can the Pentecostal movement continue without him?

Brant Short has argued that the paranoid style is a form of transcendence.<sup>32</sup> Swaggart employed it in his apologia and throughout his sermons: Satan is powerful; he can tempt and destroy. Christian crusaders are needed to fight the forces of evil. For Swaggart, the world is a battle between Good and Evil, God and Satan, the forces of Light and the forces of Darkness. Richard Hofstadter described the politically paranoid person as one who "... finds the world directed against a nation, a culture, a religious group, a way of life whose fate affects not only himself but millions of others."<sup>33</sup> That Satan is ever present, ever evil, ever dangerous, is clearly evidenced in Swaggart's speech. This danger reaffirms group belief through fear appeals.<sup>34</sup>

The explanative address, as a strategy of apologia, maintains that the speaker will not be convicted if the audience truly understands the speaker's actions. Swaggart sought to punish himself thereby relieving his congregation of any obligation to convict or punish him. Swaggart made a promise to his audience concerning the "punishment" for his actions: "I will step out of the ministry for an indeterminate amount of time, which will be determined by the Lord." Again, Swaggart made the differentiation between the members of the Assemblies of God determining his punishment, versus the Lord sentencing him. He continued transcending his audience away from his personal sin and to the positive effects of Swaggart's leadership, his ministry and Bible college, by asking "Will this ministry continue?" And replying, "Yes, the ministry will continue . . . The Bible college will continue."

One clear cut stylistic device that Swaggart used to transcend his audience involved identification through the use of personal pronouns. Throughout the speech when referring to his sin, Swaggart spoke in the first person singular "I." "I have sinned against you." After he asked the rhetorical question: "Will this ministry continue," Swaggart switched to the third person plural "we." "We will continue." "We" was used to identify Swaggart with the more positive aspects of the ministry and its many functions. Implied in these statements was a persuasive plea which Swaggart made explicit in subsequent broadcasts: "Keep up your sacrificial support in the name of the Lord, for the work of the Lord." In other words: send money.

<sup>32</sup> Brant Short, "Comic Book Apologia: The 'Paranoid' Rhetoric of Congressman George Hansen," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 51 (1987): 189-203.

<sup>33</sup> Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965) 415-16.

<sup>34</sup> Fadely and Hughes.



Swaggart asked and his listener's complied. Prior to his apologia, Swaggart Ministries lost (1) television coverage when approximately 200 stations dropped his weekly program, (2) suffered ratings decline of sixty-nine percent, and (3) had a decline in revenues from 3 million dollars to one million dollars a week. Prior to his speech, Swaggart was asked to resign from his ministry. Following his speech, contributions and support resumed, the organization continued operations, and Swaggart remained in charge and in his pulpit. From that perspective, the speech was successful. However, in October, 1991, Swaggart was found in the company of Rosemary Garcia, another admitted streetwalker, and he was forced to seek "... professional counseling and medical care."<sup>35</sup>

As Swaggart was to discover, continued transgressions would cause the majority of his congregation to view his actions not as anomalous but the norm. Their defections would cause Swaggart Ministries the loss of national television coverage and reduce them to broadcasting on fewer stations and in locales such as Beaumont, Texas.<sup>36</sup> *Res ipsa loquitur. Res ascendent lumina rebus. Res judicata.* (Translation: The thing speaks for itself. One thing illuminates the other. The matter has been decided.)

### Conclusions

Swaggart's apology/confession revealed a definite intent to persuade his audience. Elements of compliance-gaining and apologia were interrelated and overlapped throughout Swaggart's speech. He effectively maneuvered these strategies and avoided addressing any specifics related to his sinful behavior. His speech also demonstrated the use of a sub-genre, specifically, compliance-gaining apologia as opposed to isolated compliance-gaining tactics, a confessional apologia, or an apologia of regret. Swaggart's successful use of compliance-gaining apologia strategies can establish a new perspective for analyzing rhetorical discourse used by other public figures in the future.

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<sup>35</sup> Nelson, Rob, "No Apologies This Time," *Time* (October 28, 1991): p. 35.

<sup>36</sup> Beaumont, Texas is one of the few places in the United States where the front page of a newspaper, the *Beaumont Enterprise*, carries a daily prayer.

# BOOKER T. WASHINGTON'S SHORT-TERM ELOQUENT STYLE ABETTING LONG-TERM SEGREGATION: THE CASE OF A METAPHOR GONE AWRY

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Booker T. Washington's Atlanta Exposition Address is prominent in the canon of American public address. Delivered on 18 September 1895 (and widely reprinted or anthologized thereafter), that speech "demonstrated many of the qualities that characterized his oratorical effectiveness and that won him recognition as a significant American speaker"; and to illustrate how its "eloquent language possessed a moving and graphic quality, metaphorically depicting truths that give dignity to labor, earth, and spirit," Danny Champion singles out a particular passage:

He showed adeptness by opening with a striking anecdote about a distressed sailing vessel blown off course by a storm and running short of drinking water. A passing vessel signaled for them to "lower your buckets where you are." They were unaware they were sailing in the fresh waters where the Amazon River flows into the Atlantic Ocean and had not yet become thoroughly mixed with salt water. The application was for all groups in the audience to take advantage of jobs, people, and opportunities there in the South. The short figurative theme "cast down your bucket where you are" (repeated in various forms eight times) provided unity to his message and gave Southerners a quotable premise upon which to build future racial relations.<sup>1</sup>

Another paean to Washington's oratorical prowess restates the same passage.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, so significant is this specific metaphor that four *different* volumes of *The Booker T. Washington Papers* containing correspondence or other materials about the Atlanta Exposition Address provide *separate* index entries specifically for "Cast down your bucket where you are."<sup>3</sup> This repeated figuration embodying "down" may exemplify the "exception principle" articulated by Phillip Tompkins about rhetorical criticism as "the process of explicating a specific attempt (whether successful or unsuccessful) to adjust ideas to people and people to ideas," namely that "the critic should report

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<sup>1</sup> Danny Champion, "Booker T. Washington Versus W.E.B. DuBois: A study in Rhetorical Contrasts," in *Oratory in the New South*, ed. Waldo Braden (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979): 187.

<sup>2</sup> Robert T. Oliver, *History of Public Speaking in America* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1964): 354-55.

<sup>3</sup> *The Booker T. Washington Papers*, ed. Louis R. Harlan (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972). See Volumes 1, 3, 4, and 5, hereafter cited as *BTWP*, followed by Roman numeral volume and page.



only those things that are *exceptional*—either qualitatively or quantitatively—in producing, or failing to produce, the desired effects.”<sup>4</sup>

Some metaphors engage people’s attention and memory as particularly apt if not eloquent. Recall Franklin Roosevelt’s “New Deal,” Winston Churchill’s “Iron Curtain,” and John Kennedy’s “New Frontier,” for examples. Despite any positive overtones resonating from the Biblical exhortation to “cast down your nets,” Washington’s analog of “Cast down your bucket where you are” was a figuration whose short term eloquence attained personal acclaim for the orator but nevertheless likely abetted long term segregation for his race. In so doing, his was a metaphor gone awry; and that critical assessment is predicated upon two criteria.

First, a metaphor reiterated eight times in an address derives “*emphasis*” from the axiomatic “added strength given to the stimulus by repeating it and in the consequent increase of our sensitivity to the stimulus,” for “repetition of a stimulus, up to a certain point, may have greater effect than a single stimulus, even if the latter is fairly strong.”<sup>5</sup> From the perspective of traditional theorists on style, repeating a specific word can have rhetorical effect. Consider the following Aristotelian observation in *The Rhetoric* (1414a) about the function and effect of stylistic repetition in parallel, like beginnings (*anaphora* or *epanaphora*) as used in a passage quoted from Homer: “Nireus from Syme brought three curved ships; Nireus, son of Aglaia and of Charopus; Nireus, most beautiful of all the Greeks who came to Troy, saving Achilles only.” As Aristotle advised, “if a good many things are said about a person, his name will have to be mentioned pretty often; accordingly, if his name is often mentioned, one has the impression that a good deal has been said about him. By the use of this fallacy, Homer, who mentions Nireus only in this single passage, makes him important, and has preserved his memory, though in the rest of the poem he says never a word more about him.”<sup>6</sup> Or, as the Greek critic Demetrius observes *On Style*, “Nireus is not himself important in the *Iliad*, and his contribution is even less so, three ships and a few men, but Homer makes him appear important and his contribution great. . . . although Nireus is mentioned only once in the action, we remember him. . . . If Homer had said: ‘Nireus, the son of Aglaia brought three ships from Syme,’ he might as well not have mentioned him.”<sup>7</sup> As more contemporary research also attests, “the probability of recalling a repeated word is just about twice the probability of recalling a unique word”; and that advantage accrues not only for spoken discourse but the words we read, whereby “thresholds vary inversely with frequency of prior usage” which is immediate within the communication event (and not the relative frequency

<sup>4</sup> Phillip K. Tompkins, “The Rhetorical Criticism of Non-Oratorical Works,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 55 (December 1969): 431-432.

<sup>5</sup> Jon Eisenson, J. Jeffrey Auer, and John V. Irwin, *The Psychology of Communication* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963): 239; Giles Gray and Claude Wise, *The Bases of Speech*, third ed., (New York: Harper and Row, 1959): 416.

<sup>6</sup> Aristotle *Rhetoric* iii. 12, in the translation by Lane Cooper (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1932).

<sup>7</sup> Demetrius *On Style* 61, in the translation by G. M. A. Grube (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1961).

with which these verbal stimuli appear in word counts of more probable lexical items generally).<sup>8</sup>

The second criterion applies to meaning thereby made emphatic, particularly as evoked by repetition of the word "down." In Michael Osborn's paradigm, some metaphors "place figurative value judgments upon subjects" so "immune to changes wrought by time" that the "meaning comes to us clearly across the barriers raised by time and cultural change."<sup>9</sup> For these "archetypal metaphors are grounded in prominent features of experience, in objects, actions, or conditions which are inescapably salient in human consciousness" and thereby embody "basic human motivations." Admittedly, high and low often complement light and dark metaphors. For instance, after Dunkirk in June 1940, Winston Churchill expressed hope for the future and progress toward "sunlit uplands" in contradistinction to "the abyss of a new Dark Age" in Nazi occupied Europe. Thus, what is conceptualized as high is good; and low is bad, as in the psalmic "valley of the shadow of death." Moreover, "vertical scale images, which project desirable objects above the listener and undesirable objects below, often seem to express symbolically man's quest for power." Applying this criterion to the metaphor repeated exceptionally in the Atlanta Exposition Address, my assessment of "cast down your bucket" also reflects the reminder that "our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature. . . . what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor."<sup>10</sup> For as George Lakoff and Mark Johnson demonstrate with extensive if not exhaustive examples, "orientational metaphors" about up and down predominate in "our physical and cultural experience" with myriad, metaphorical references to "up" linked inextricably to happiness, consciousness, health, life, having power or control over others, quantity, high status, virtue, or rationality. Conversely, figurations embodying "down" invariably characterize utterances about sadness, unconsciousness, sickness, death, being subject to control, insufficient quantity, low status, depravity, or irrationality and negative emotional conditions.<sup>11</sup> Actually, a "centrality" of these up-down orientations as "cultural presuppositions" may originate to some degree in physical experience: "We have bodies and we stand erect. Almost every movement we make involves a motor program that either changes our up-down orientation, maintains it, presupposes it, or takes it into account in some way. Our constant physical activity in the world, even

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<sup>8</sup> See for instance Nancy C. Waugh, "Immediate Memory as a Function of Repetition," *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior*, 2 (1963): 109; and Richard L. Solomon and Leo Postman, "Frequency of Usage as a Determinant of Recognition Threshold for Words," *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 43 (1952): 198. Nevertheless, the threshold of recognition also is more efficient according to "the relative frequency with which that word occurs in the Thorndike-Lorge word counts." See also Davis Howes and Richard L. Solomon, "Visual Duration Threshold as a Function of Word-Probability," *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 41 (1951): 410.

<sup>9</sup> Michael Osborn, "Archetypal Metaphor in Rhetoric: The Light-dark Family," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 53 (1967): 115-126, see especially pp. 116, 120-21.

<sup>10</sup> George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980): 1.

<sup>11</sup> Lakoff and Johnson, 14-19.



when we sleep, makes an up-down orientation not merely relevant to our physical activity but centrally relevant."<sup>12</sup> Thus, bearing in mind its archetypal, negative imagery in combination with the implications of metaphor as a way of thinking deeply rooted in physical experience, reconsider the repeated "cast down your bucket" in the context of praise for Washington's ostensible ability to adapt to racially distinct segments of his audience, black and white.<sup>13</sup>

For blacks in his Atlanta audience, Washington delineated discursively how they were to "cast down their buckets . . . in agriculture, mechanics, in commerce, in domestic service, and in the professions"; for he warned that in the South, "we may overlook the fact that the masses of us are to live by the production of our hands, and fail to keep in mind that we shall prosper in proportion as well learn to dignify and glorify common labour and put brains and skill into the common occupations of life." His metaphor thus complemented a prevailing national mood which Andrew King calls "the myth of heroic materialism"; for as America approached the turn of the century and later, Washington's theme was "a variant of Russell Conwell's familiar invitation to prosper in 'Acres of Diamonds.' . . . If you wish to be great you must begin where you are and with what you are now. . . . Greatness . . . consists in doing great deeds with little means and the accomplishment of vast purposes from the private ranks of life."<sup>14</sup> As a result of Horatio Alger stories reinforced through numerous biographies, countless dime novels, and what our historians proclaimed authoritatively, we believed that success was within the grasp of people willing to struggle arduously against adversity.<sup>15</sup> With repetitions of "cast down your bucket where you are" as "utterly commonplace affirmations of the American dream," Washington rehearsed "the American script" and reinforced for blacks "truths of one of the great communal visions" in this country.<sup>16</sup> And for blacks then who indeed were "down" in the American social hierarchy and lacked economic, political, and educational mobility because of racism and segregation, striving *where you are* seemed a realistic, reasonable view of their situation.

Washington's papers indicate he knew in advance the metaphor would appeal to blacks. "Cast down your bucket" was *not* coined by Washington for the Atlanta address; he had used it already several times after hearing the metaphor originally in an 1893 Thanksgiving sermon by Hugh Mason Browne at the Lincoln Memorial Church in Washington D.C. For examples, in an April 1894 *A.M.E. Church Review* article, Washington used the lost ship illustration with its "cast down your bucket" advice and attributed the material to "a recent speech in Washington" by "Professor Hugh Browne"; and in an Emancipation Day address on 1 January 1895, in Montgomery, Alabama,

<sup>12</sup> Lakoff and Johnson, 56-57.

<sup>13</sup> See for instance Karl Wallace, "Booker T. Washington," in *A History and Criticism of American Public Address*, Vol. I, ed. William N. Brigance (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1943): 407-33.

<sup>14</sup> Andrew King, "Booker T. Washington and the Myth of Heroic Materialism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 60 (1974): 322-327.

<sup>15</sup> Ronald H. Carpenter, "America's Opinion Leader Historians on Behalf of Success," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 69 (1983): 111-126.

<sup>16</sup> King, 325-27.

Washington used the same metaphor—with this favorable reaction from blacks, reported in the *Indianapolis Freeman*, 26 January 1895:

This is the fifth or sixth time we have celebrated the greatest of all great days to the Negro, and I can say without fear of contradiction that every year doubles its interest. The address was delivered by that scholarly and deep thinking gentleman, Prof. B.T. Washington of the Normal school at Tuskegee. The address was as usually delivered by the speaker plain and instructive. The speaker told how a vessel out at sea had thrown up its signal for help from another vessel not far off, saying help, save us or we perish for water, and the captain of the other vessel's reply was, cast down your buckets where you are, and finally after several attempts to get help, and every time hearing the same command, cast down your buckets where you are, decided to try, and in so doing the buckets were drawn up with clear, cool, sparkling water from the mouth of the Amazon. Right here the speaker impresses us to cast down our buckets in the same manner, and they would come up as merchants, manufacturers, scientists and men of all skillful advantages. The speaker tried to impress his hearers to apply their time and money in giving their children an industrial education through which medium we as a race will gradually grow stronger and independent.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, to many blacks, “cast down your bucket,” delivered “plain and instructive,” helped evince the speaker’s *ethos* as a “scholarly and deep thinking gentleman.” Washington was satisfied with the illustration and metaphor. Although much of the Atlanta Exposition address was delivered from memory, his autographed manuscript for the event contains several deletions and emendations before delivery; but “cast down your bucket” material remained unchanged.<sup>18</sup> In using a figuration whose favorable response from blacks was ascertained earlier, Washington conformed to his predilection for relying on what was tested out on others—either in speeches or in securing prior reactions to texts he intended to utter.<sup>19</sup>

For whites in his immediate Atlanta audience and nationally thereafter, the repeated “cast down” metaphor—in discourse influencing race relations for decades—could evoke meanings less favorable for blacks in a society condoning lynching, disenfranchisement, and segregation in any and all its insidious forms. Whites then “were almost single-mindedly committed to the Darwinian struggle”; the age “was not charitable and did not call for a synergistic relationship among social groups”; and thus as Robert Heath also observes, “white people were placed under no obligations except whatever ‘cast down your bucket’ might mean.”<sup>20</sup> As a potential labor force in a South turning toward commerce and industrialization, blacks only were competition for whites moving from their increasingly deficient agricultural economy base to other ones improving their financial lot.<sup>21</sup> Casting “down” to draw from that black labor force would be unappealing, in both the South

<sup>17</sup> *BTWP*, III, 410, 413, and 496; V, 50.

<sup>18</sup> *BTWP*, III, 578-585.

<sup>19</sup> Wallace, 417-18.

<sup>20</sup> Robert Heath, “A Time for Silence: Booker T. Washington in Atlanta,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 64 (1978): 385-99.

<sup>21</sup> Ronald H. Carpenter, “On American History Textbooks and Integration in the South: Woodrow Wilson and the Rhetoric of *Division and Reunion 1829-1889*,” *Southern Speech Communication Journal*, 51 (1985): 1-23.



and North. After all, slavery earlier had been anathema in the North not only as a moral evil but also for any economic implications that might accrue from factory owners acquiring slaves to work rather than employing whites. More insidiously pervasive than those economic implications, however, was the prevalent racism viewing blacks as unworthy. Thus, what Washington's repeated metaphor likely "might mean" for those whites could reinforce aforementioned archetypal "figurative value judgments . . . immune to changes wrought by time . . . grounded in prominent features of experience, in objects, actions, or conditions which are inescapably salient in human consciousness." Because "vertical scale images . . . project desirable objects above the listener and undesirable objects below," repetition of "cast down" likely reinforced at some level of awareness, however subtle, "basic human motivations" among whites that blacks were lower and thereby deserving of segregation.

In this context, consider another of Washington's figurations for his Atlanta Address, one whose stylistic form as an antithesis conduced to memorability for its content as a simile: "In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress." As Edward W. Blyden attested on 24 September 1895, this "so apt and expressive" line was one of "several sentences in your address that ought to be printed in bold letters and set up as mottos in various parts of your Institute; for it seems to me that they are really the maxims which have guided your life work."<sup>22</sup> But why not assume people "down" or lower on a vertical scale *should* be separate and hence segregated? After all, this "frequently quoted passage, known as the persuasive hand analogy" bestowed upon Washington "the mantle of 'leader of the Negro people' . . . not because he had just initiated a new proposal, but because he had phrased it so well for a national audience"; for as Champion also proclaims, "the 'separate but equal' idea, implied in the Atlanta speech, became the yardstick of American race relations for the next half century."<sup>23</sup>

As we now know, "separate but equal" was grossly unequal, and perhaps no metaphor—with whatever repetition—could have bridged the gap between races then. But segregation likely was served by a figuration repeating and thereby reinforcing archetypal meaning suggesting that blacks were lower than whites on a hierarchical scale. For as an anthropological perspective maintains, long term "social functions" of metaphors reflect how well they aptly epitomize a society's "truth of things" and a "prescription for action" answering the question "what shall we do about this?"<sup>24</sup> Moreover, such metaphor "does not just express the pertinence of certain cultural axioms to given social conditions, it provides the semantic conditions through which actors deal with that reality" thereby providing a "futureness to the past and a pastness to the future."

<sup>22</sup> BTWP, IV, 27.

<sup>23</sup> Champion, 188-89.

<sup>24</sup> J. Christopher Crocker, "The Social Function of Rhetorical Forms" and J. Fernandez, "The Performance of Ritual Metaphors," both in *The Social Use of Metaphor: Essays on the Anthropology of Rhetoric*, J. David Sapir and J. Christopher Crocker, eds., (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977): 33-66 and 100-131.

To conclude, by advocating eloquently the values of hard work, education, and striving for success by blacks where they were (even if “down”), Washington placed his race in the mainstream of progress toward fulfilling the prevailing American dream. But he should have sensed an inappropriateness of his “cast down” metaphor for whites; for at some level of awareness, he appreciated the hierarchical imagery of verticality. After all, Washington’s autobiography was not entitled “out of slavery” but “up from slavery.” For the Atlanta Exposition Address, an orator more truly that “*rhetorically sensitive person . . . willing to undergo the strain of adaptation*” well might have been more astute stylistically in phrasing the line repeated so often.<sup>25</sup> Eschewing any impulse simply to be content resonating Biblical phraseology, Washington could have omitted the word “down” and said, for instance, “cast your buckets and draw the water where you are” or “cast your buckets and drink the water where you are.” For when coupled with the oft quoted “separate as the fingers” simile, repetition instead of “cast down your bucket” only might reinforce archetypal “basic human motivations,” then among many whites, that blacks were below them and thereby deserving of segregation imposed by people “up” or “higher” in power. Admittedly, such a rhetorical effect indeed would be subtle, but that metaphor repeated for whites only would make more emphatic an already perceived, widely accepted, and totally tragic disparity between the races. In thereby emphasizing through repetition that unfortunate social hierarchy, Washington’s was a metaphor gone awry.

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<sup>25</sup> After Roderick Hart and Don Burks, “Rhetorical Sensitivity and Social Interaction,” *Speech Monographs*, 39 (June 1972): 75-91.



## SYMPOSIUM ON POLICY DEBATE

### ARGUMENTATION AND DEBATE: LEARNING TO THINK CRITICALLY

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Based on the critiques of current pedagogical/androgogical practices and suggestions for improving the ways in which we teach critical thinking skills, we take another look at the traditional Argumentation and Debate class. Despite the plethora of "new ideas" about how to best learn critical thinking, we conclude that the traditional course provides a learning environment in which all the skills of critical thinking are taught; supplies a forum in which those skills can be integrated and refined; and is unique among the disciplines in developing students' skills in communicating their ideas to others.

Let her and falsehood grapple; who ever knew truth put to the worse in a  
free and open encounter?

—Milton

Recently we were asked to make a presentation to a national conference on Critical Thinking. The majority of presenters and attendees were from English and Philosophy. Few attendees and fewer presenters were from Speech Communication.<sup>1</sup> We were surprised since we envision our discipline as centrally concerned with teaching critical thinking. Our curiosity aroused, we looked for other indications of others' perceptions of Speech Communication's contributions to the teaching of critical thinking. The State of California requires that all undergraduates complete at least one approved course which teaches critical thinking. We counted the courses in communication which fulfill the critical thinking requirement in the California State University system. No course in Speech Communication fulfills the requirement on five of the twenty California State University campuses; and only one communication course meets the requirement on another five (Report of the Department Chairs, 1992). This is not the picture we expected. Have we not been teaching critical thinking skills for a couple of thousand years? Perhaps we have taken-for-granted an identity which others do not recognize.

Our purpose in this essay is to reframe the arguments for the argumentation and debate course as a *primary* means of teaching critical thinking. First we will look at the components of critical thinking. Next, we examine the notion of a "cognitive apprenticeship" (Resnick and Klopfer, 1989, p. 9), a learning environment fundamental to the integrated learning of critical

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<sup>1</sup> The notable exception at the 1991 Sonoma Conference was Dr. Kathleen Hall Jamison.

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thinking. Finally, we offer our arguments for the special role of argumentation and debate courses in developing the essential skills of citizenship. The essence of our argument is that the argumentation and debate course teaches all the skills of critical thinking and supplies a forum in which those skills can be integrated and honed, where students learn to translate individual skills into messages to reach others.

### Critical Thinking

A society such as ours rests on the shoulders of its citizens. If we think those shoulders are sagging under the burden of information too difficult and too complex for many to sort, it is not a lack of native ability that is at fault. It is our failure, generally as a culture and specifically as teachers, to invest the time, energy, and pedagogical creativity needed to foster the development of critical thinking skills in our students. In this section we will look at the skills which leaders of the critical thinking movement say constitute critical thinking. Then we will look at the question of teaching: what pedagogical methods are best to develop critical thinkers?

#### *The Skills of Critical Thinking*

In discussing the importance of critical thinking to maintaining a free society, R. W. Paul<sup>2</sup> (1989) makes explicit critical thinking's multiple skills which include knowledge of "how to isolate and distinguish issues, premises, assumptions, conclusions, and inferences, and . . . argument assessment" (p. 4). Beyond the basic skills lies the more difficult task of learning *emancipatory reasoning*, a set of skills which are "ultimately intrinsic to the character of the person and to insight into one's own cognitive and affective processes" (p. 3). Paul describes two components of emancipatory reasoning. The first is the recognition of human tendencies to seek uncritically support for prior assumptions and desires, and to seek justificatory reasons for attaining personal advantage. The second component of emancipatory reasoning is the application of critical thought to the messy problems of the real world.

Of course Paul is right. Critical thinkers are those who are able to construct and analyze arguments, recognize their own sources of bias, appreciate the power of emotion and values in shaping our judgments of "good reason", and apply those skills to real-world messy problems. How can we foster such development?

#### *The Pedagogical Challenge*

The ease with which we can list the skills of critical thinking masks the difficulty of learning to be critical thinkers. Just as knowledge of the techniques for any task does not insure the ability to perform the task, teaching our students what the components of critical thinking are does not recreate

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<sup>2</sup> Richard Paul is Director of the Center for Critical Thinking and Moral Critique, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California.



them as critical thinkers. Resnick<sup>3</sup> and Klopfer<sup>4</sup> argue that in order to assist our students' progress toward becoming critical thinkers we must: (a) Provide *learning contexts* which require reasoning and problem-solving; (b) develop students' *motivation* to put to use the skills of critical thinking; and (c) create in our students the *habit* of critical thinking. They argue further that this best happens when pedagogical practices require *social interaction*, for in such interaction critical thinking may be modeled and honed, and in such settings students learn that the habits of critical thought are socially approved. Resnick and Klopfer (1989) call the learning environments in which such learning is nurtured a "cognitive apprenticeship" (p. 9). Cognitive apprenticeships, like trade apprenticeships, have three characteristics: a real task, contextualized practice, and opportunity to observe others doing the tasks (p. 10).

This brief review of the perspectives on critical thinking from those outside the communication discipline suggests the following components are basic to teaching and developing critical thinking skills: (a) basic skills of argument construction and analysis; (b) self-reflection and a commitment to idea testing; and (c) an environment in which real problems, practice, and observation come together to foster learning. In the section below, the argumentation and debate class is examined for its capacity to supply those three components.

### Argumentation and Debate

Argumentation and debate courses offer students training in the multiple stages of critical thinking. The study of argumentation teaches students analytical skills: the varied requirements of proof for propositions of fact, value, and policy; kinds of evidence and warrants required for ethical support for each claim; the pitfalls of fallacious reasoning; and the diverse forms of reasoning found in political, social, and interpersonal contexts. Debate then places those skills into an interactive context which requires students to use their reasoning skills in advocacy. The two, argumentation and debate, support each other.

What should be made clear is the way in which argumentation and debate courses differ from many courses in logic or quantitative reasoning. We would expect any course in critical thinking to teach the basic reasoning tools; they are "skills which can be tacked on to other learning" (Paul, p. 3). But not all courses in reasoning will supply the same contexts for application of those tools. A course in physics, for example, should prepare the student to understand, analyze, and use those skills as they are applied to the specific reasoning appropriate in science. The tools which a course in argumentation provides are the tools of rhetorical rather than formal, scientific, or mathematical logic. The focus is on reasoning which is encountered in everyday discourse. Students are taught to look for that which is assumed in the

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<sup>3</sup> Lauren Resnick is Professor of Psychology and Director of the Learning Research and Development Center, University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

<sup>4</sup> Leopold Klopfer is Professor of Education and Senior Scientist at the Learning Research and Development Center, University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

arguments of advertisers, editorialists, politicians, friends, lovers, and physicists and to assess critically those assumptions. They are alerted to the ways in which practical arguers make inferences and learn to evaluate the quality of those inferences. They learn to examine the kinds and quality of evidence offered in efforts to influence decision-making. Our role as teachers of argumentation and debate, then, is to provide the basic skills of critical reasoning in the context of everyday experience. These are the tools which prepare individuals to participate as active citizens and ethical advocates. Jensen puts the lessons of argumentation and debate training well: "Indeed, [argumentation and debate] teaches us that most issues have more than two sides. One learns to disagree without being disagreeable, to challenge ideas and not the person" (1981, p. 8).

Courses in argumentation and debate provide students with the basic skills of critical thinking. Yet possession of these skills only prepares students to become active and critical thinkers. Paul (1989) is right that the basic skills are not enough. For students to be critical thinkers, they must develop the emancipatory reasoning skills so "essential to the free, rational, and autonomous mind" (p. 3). Debate, as a structured activity is ideally suited to the development of thinking persons.

### *Emancipatory Reasoning*

Debate is an oral activity which results from serious research, careful analysis, and considered construction of arguments. Debating takes students beyond argument construction requiring them to present their arguments to others for analysis and refutation. Like an argumentative essay, debate requires the presentation and reasoned defense of a claim. Unlike an essay, debate requires that the arguments which support the claim, and the claim itself, be subjected to analysis and refutation by others. Moreover, debaters work together to examine critically a proposition appealing to the judgment of an audience for a decision about the effectiveness of their advocacy. It is participation in that process that assists students in integrating the skills which they learn in the study of argument.

The immediacy and complex demands of debate are summarized by Daniel Rohrer (1987): "The process of debate, therefore, becomes as important as the issues contained within it. Debate must be more than an argument spoken rather than written, or a case on its feet; it must be an experience in intellectual confrontation with an immediate clash that nonverbal activities cannot duplicate easily. The debater should seek to persuade, but primarily through the use of logic, for the true skills of argumentation are those of reasoning" (p. 9). It is by this process that we believe that emancipatory reasoning can be promoted.<sup>5</sup>

Students entering a debate have already thoroughly researched the proposition in dispute. The position which a student accepts, prior to the re-

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<sup>5</sup> We are speaking here about classroom debating rather than competitive debate. It is not our purpose to engage the disputes about the effects of speed of presentation, generic disadvantages, and "bodies on the flow" on critical thinking. We support competitive debate and we recognize its warts.



search, is irrelevant to the activity. Whether students prepare to argue either for or against the proposition, or prepare on both sides, they are in a context where their friends and colleagues are arguing a range of positions on a particular proposition. Students trained in argumentation and debate learn that there is seldom a single position on any proposition which is true and right. They learn that there are good reasons available for many positions and beliefs on any topic. They learn to see the legitimacy of opposing ideas and so learn to respect both the ideas and persons with whom they disagree. Debate encourages students to test actively their ideas and the ideas of others before, while, and after they develop reasoned commitments.

In the argumentation classroom, debaters speak to an audience, usually their classmates, who assess the relative persuasiveness of the arguments presented. The debaters are opponents only in form. They appeal to an audience to judge the arguments on their ability to withstand critique. This promotes two equally important goals. First, debaters offer *ideas* to be evaluated. They know, as does their audience, that their personal beliefs may or may not be reflected in their presentations; their job is to provide the best defense possible for the position they take in the debate. Second, the audience is the ultimate judge of the quality of the reasoning offered. So the audience is involved in critical thinking as well as the debaters. All learn how to listen carefully for what is said and what is left unsaid; for what is attacked and defended; and, what is left to stand without comment. It is in the immediacy of the exchange, the clarity of the clash of opposing positions, the directness of refutation and rebuttal that students draw upon all of the skills which they initially learned in studying argument. These demands are most immediate for the debaters but are placed upon the audience as well. Debate, then, provides the unique opportunity for students to "apply the principles of critical thinking not only to problems that emerge in the relative leisure of research . . . but also to problems that arise in the stress of debate" (Freeley, 1986, p. 22).

One of Paul's strongest criticisms of the ways in which critical thinking is taught is the use of abstract or purified problems to be analyzed using the basic skills of reasoning. If for no higher reason than the need of the instructor to be able to maintain interest in a number of debates over a term of work, students in argumentation and debate classes are usually asked to consider real world problems which have no clear or "right" answers. They are encouraged to examine the human as well as the theoretical and technical issues involved in such problems. Arguments include the most technical and the most value-laden. In the classroom, students may debate propositions which are relevant to their campuses; they may debate personal choices; they often debate current topics of local or national interest. These questions are as real and as messy as issues can be. One cannot spend a term researching various positions and their justifications without coming to see the value commitments which underlie each suggested solution, without coming to recognize the intricate ways in which each proffered solution implicates other policies and other values, and without having to face one's own personal and political commitments.

We believe that those who study argumentation and debate are far better able to understand and participate in public decision-making. Paul (1989)

argues that emancipatory reasoning calls for “dialogical reasoning, for thinking critically and reciprocally within opposing points of view” (pp. 9-10). In classroom debate one can create an arena in which dialogical exchanges may occur.

### *A Cognitive Apprenticeship*

We believe that the contribution that debate makes to learning critical thinking is that it has all three of the characteristics of a cognitive apprenticeship: real tasks, contextualized practice, and opportunity to watch others doing the same tasks.

Debaters argue propositions which are real. The task of the debaters is to advocate particular policies and values which address important contemporary problems. Resnick and Klopfer (1989) suggest that for the task to be real the advocacy should be addressed to someone other than the teacher who assigns a grade. Debate provides that other audience. Students debate in front of their classmates as well as their teacher with the goal of persuading the whole. When conditions permit students debate for interested members of the campus community or the community at large. Now their goal is to persuade by elucidating a complex issue for the benefit of the community.

The second characteristic of a cognitive apprenticeship is “contextualized practice of tasks, not exercises on component skills that have been lifted out of the contexts in which they are to be used” (Resnick and Klopfer, p. 10). Here they offer the example of debate as one such contextualized activity. For debate requires that the learners bring to bear all the basic reasoning skills in analyzing the arguments as they are presented.

The third characteristic of a cognitive apprenticeship is the opportunity to see the task modeled by others. Such modeling provides standards for effective and ineffective performance. Modeling helps to make the mental activities required in the performance of the task overt. Modeling encourages building upon each other’s experiences. The learning of critical thinking takes place in a social not just solitary context. Since all students in an argumentation and debate class participate as both audience and as debaters, they have frequent opportunities to see how the task can be managed. They observe, as audience, the successful and unsuccessful strategies; they practice their skills in context; and, they provide feedback to others who are debating and they receive feedback on their own performance as debaters. The feedback is not limited to the teacher’s grade but is provided by the larger audience.

Thus far, we have argued that courses in argumentation and debate teach the basic skills of critical thought; that debate provides a forum in which the skills of emancipatory reasoning are developed; and that debating is a pedagogical strategy which creates the cognitive apprenticeship called for by Resnick and Klopfer. Framing the arguments for argumentation and debate in the language of critical thinking scholars may win us a larger audience than we are currently seeing. Yet, we would be remiss if we did not offer an additional line of reasoning which is too often missing from critical thinking descriptions: debate is a *communication* activity.

What we often find missing from discussions of the teaching and learning of critical thinking is a recognition of the importance of communication skills



which we believe are fundamental to the thinking person. The ability to communicate one's thoughts, no matter how well reasoned, is not an automatic outcome of possessing the skills of critical thinking. Indeed, while speaking well requires thinking well, the reverse seems not to hold true. In learning to debate, students learn the skills required for communicating ideas to others. The structure of a debate encourages development of communication skills. Time is limited for each speaker. What needs to be said must be said with clarity and force within the time constraints. What needs to be argued is presented with the knowledge that one's opponent and one's audience are actively and critically listening. The claims, warrants, and evidence must be concise and persuasive. In the classroom, at least, the presentations must be audience-centered and the debaters must be able to translate the technical into the accessible and the complex into the understandable. They must be able to move outside the realm of all they know to that which their audience needs to know.

Courses in argumentation and debate do not produce articulate, critical thinkers all on their own. No course can hope to do so. But argumentation and debate courses teach the basic skills of critical thinking and create a cognitive apprenticeship which cultivates emancipatory reasoning by providing real tasks which motivate critical thinking, and encourage the development of the habit of critical thought. They assist students in developing the communication skills necessary for active participation in the community of decision-makers. As Patterson and Zarefsky (1983) put it: "As arguers, we must know the methods of gathering information as well as its analysis. We must observe, classify, hypothesize, analyze, experiment, sample, and generalize. We must then apply these methods to all of the available evidence that our research and investigation can produce and examine the motives and values held by ourselves and society that are involved in reaching a decision on the basis of such evidence" (pp. 313-314). We would simply add that as arguers we must also be able to communicate our ideas to others so that they too can judge their efficacy. A course in argumentation and debate provides the opportunities to develop all of those skills.

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## THE PROMISE AND PERILS OF "THE CRITIQUE" IN ACADEMIC AND COMPETITIVE DEBATE

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For most of this century, debaters in both academic and competitive circles have crafted the rules of argumentation and deliberation based on rational models of communication. As children of the Enlightenment, debaters have made the assumption that humans are rational creatures, capable of discernment, sensitivity, and judgment.<sup>1</sup> Debates have been organized around the belief that when members of the public or their surrogate policy makers have at their disposal a wealth of research and credible evidence, that they can forge pragmatic policies to cope with significant social problems. We have at times disagreed about the specific *form* of this rationality or the specific criteria to be employed, but have rarely questioned either the pedagogical or heuristic value of finding the essential principles that guide our practical reasoning. Whether our individual proclivities have attracted us to the works of Plato, Aristotle, or the Sophists, we have shared a belief that by shifting through the evidence supplied in argumentation we can improve ourselves, the academy, and the community in which we reside.

In recent years, these tacit assumptions of modernity and its rationalistic models have been interrogated by a plethora of postmodern and post-structural approaches. Commentators in the past several decades have assaulted our modern epistemological "cathedrals" of learning, and have been increasingly unwilling to engage in the quest for universal, foundational principles that govern the construction of social relationships.<sup>2</sup> Many Western critics began to question some of the essentialist goals of rational thinking, often complaining that the rules of reasoning and rational deliberation that were traditionally circulated within the academy were based on canons of logic crafted by elites (usually rich, white, and dead) who had little understanding of the needs of postmodernity. With the rising power of women and people of color in the public domain, the older standards of evaluation and hierarchy no longer seemed adequate. Since the end of the 1960s, the halls of many universities have been filled with the voices of teachers and students commenting on the late works of "postmodern" liberal writers. As

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Jurgen Habermas's continued defense of the Enlightenment project and his criticism of some postmodern theories of knowledge. Jurgen Habermas, "Modernity versus Postmodernity," *New German Critique* 22 (1981).

<sup>2</sup> We borrow the notion of the "cathedral" of knowledge from John Nerone's insightful essay, "Theory and History," *Communication Theory* 3 (1993): 148-57.



Daniel Conway has recently observed, we seem to be working within "an academic climate dominated by deconstruction, genealogy, Lacanian analysis, Foucaultian archaeology, and other subversive strategies for exposing claims to authority."<sup>3</sup> By the early 1990s, some of these ideas had surfaced in the policy debate community, and now advocates found in their hands a new weapon to add to their arsenal—"the critique" (kritik).<sup>4</sup>

The critique has come of age in modern intercollegiate debate, and deserves further examination. In this essay we are concerned with both theoretical and practical issues that need to be addressed by debaters interested in the "critique." Both the promise and the peril of the critique come from its use as a method of questioning some of the assumptions behind "policy" debate itself. We believe that in order to engage in a critique debate, debaters have to be willing to question some of the taken-for-granted and basic assumptions behind traditional debate. Yet at the same time, we believe that there are theoretical and practical limits that are placed on these critiques by the nature and function of competitive debate.

Our intent is not to suggest that we rigidly lock debate into a process that defends traditional policy perspectives. We applaud approaches that attempt to perpetuate the debate community's interest in intellectualism, novelty, and adaptability. However, as we argue below, some forms of totalizing critiques devolve into nihilistic exercise which have little to do with invalidating the assumptions behind policy debate.<sup>5</sup>

There are some interesting parallels between the work of the Critical Legal Studies movement (CLS or Crits) in judicial argumentation and the move towards the "critique" in competitive debate. Just as debaters employ deconstructive, rhetorical, and other language tools to systematically question some of the assumptions behind policy debate, the early members of CLS wanted to interrogate the taken-for-granted within the empire of the "Rule of Law."<sup>6</sup> The weapons deployed by the CLS in their critiques included painting verbal pictures of utopian visions (Unger), crafting revisionist histories (Gordon), employing Burkean analysis (Frug) and pointing out some

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<sup>3</sup> Daniel W. Conway, "Nietzsche and Autonomy in Communication Ethics," *Communications* 12 (1991): 217-230, 217.

<sup>4</sup> The arguments in support of this position are found in William Shanahan, "kritik of thinking," in *Health Care Policy: Debating Coverage Cures*, ed. Roger E. Solt and Ross K. Smith (Winston-Salem: Wake Forest University, 1993), A-3. For another interpretation of the importance of "the critique," see the debate between Darren Summerville and Joe Bellon, "Deconstructing Debate: To Critique or not to Critique?" *Policy Caucus Newsletter* 4 (1992): 3-6.

<sup>5</sup> While this essay provides a theoretical rationale for the rejection of the critique, more pragmatic arguments for rejection can be found in Edward Panetta and Dale Herbeck, "Argument in a Technical Sphere: Incommensurate Rhetorical Visions," in *Argument and the Postmodern Challenge: Proceedings of the Eighth SCA/AFA Conference on Argumentation*, ed. by Raymie McKerrow (Annandale VA.: Speech Communication Association, forthcoming).

<sup>6</sup> This included a critique of realistic methodologies, including legal "doctrine," formalistic reasoning, and progressive legal reform. See "Round and Round the Bramble Bush: From Legal Realism to Critical Legal Scholarship," *Harvard Law Review* 95 (1982): 1669-90, 1671; Duncan Kennedy, "The Stakes of Law, or Hale and Foucault!" *Legal Studies Forum* 15 (1991): 327-65.

of the contradictions that existed in formal legal systems (Kennedy).<sup>7</sup> Some members of the CLS were even willing to “trash” the entire modern legal structure.<sup>8</sup>

The early Critical Legal studies essays were as innovative as the first critique arguments presented within the debate community. They were filled with arguments about the incoherence, the indeterminacy, and the politics of any social order. Just as debaters would later begin to question the “whys” of policy debating, the first Crits attacked the notion that we needed any formulaic system of laws to govern the way in which social actors engaged in deliberative discourse. These first critiques we call “totalizing” critiques because they adopt the perspectives that only by engaging in the complete deconstruction of the older system can we truly question existing frameworks of “rights” or “duties.” These pathbreaking critiques in the legal academia brought into question the use of traditional legal paradigms, orthodox rules of evidence, and the very existence of “rational expertise.”<sup>9</sup> Many of these totalizers believed regretfully that “trashing” was both necessary and “simply the best available academic posture.”<sup>10</sup> This theoretical annihilation of the modern legal rules was justified on the basis that we needed to demystify the law.

Yet in later years, the theories espoused by members of the CLS were assailed not only by defenders of the traditional legal system, but by sympathetic members of the left who felt that the total annihilation of the judicial system meant a denigration of the incremental improvements that had been made in the area of civil rights or unionism.<sup>11</sup> Modified forms of legal critiques were created, that began to look at the ways that radicals could combine the constructive aspects of language without trashing the existing legal frameworks. We call these approaches “partial” critiques in that they attempt to appropriate the language of empowered communities rather than completely removing vocabularies.

It is our contention that the best approach that can be taken in order to fulfill the promise of the critique is to encourage debaters to engage in “partial” rather than “totalizing” critiques. We take this stance not because we are interested in ossifying the rules of policy debate, but because we feel that the best way to engage in critical inquiry is to avoid protracted theory debates that are disengaged from concrete social, political, or economic policy. Far too often in the early critique debates, we see this stance

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<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Roberto Mangabeira Unger, *The Critical Legal Studies Movement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986); Robert W. Gordon, “Critical Legal Histories,” *Stanford Law Review* 36 (1984): 57-125; Jerry Frug, “Argument as Character,” *Stanford Law Review* 40 (1988): 869-927; Duncan Kennedy, “The Structure of Blackstone’s Commentaries,” *Buffalo Law Review* 29 (1979): 211-382.

<sup>8</sup> Mark G. Kelman, “Trashing,” *Stanford Law Review* 36 (1984): 293-98.

<sup>9</sup> Kelman, “Trashing,” 296.

<sup>10</sup> Kelman, “Trashing,” 297.

<sup>11</sup> This led to the development of feminist critiques, critical race theories, and other perspectives that appropriated some of the language and methodologies of the CLS. For an example of what we consider to be a “partial” critique, see Martha Minow, *Making All The Difference: Inclusion, Exclusion, and American Law* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).



employed as a substitute for critical engagement. Instead of having rounds that systematically question some of the basic assumptions of policy debate, we sometimes have debates that stop and end at the stage of questioning the fundamentals of policy debate itself. The language deployed in defense of the critique in these kinds of debates have at times served to defeat some theoretical goals of the critique—in place of emancipation, we have domination. These “totalizing” critiques use the inherent ambiguity of deconstructive approaches as a means of evasion of the substantive issue rather than a novel way to question the assumptions behind particular political stances. By watching some of the experiences of the members of the Critical Studies movement in their attempts to delegitimize the judicial quest for foundational knowledge, we can see some of the arguments that could be used in critique debates without gutting policy debate.

The remainder of our commentary will be divided into three parts. First, we discuss some of the possibilities revealed by “the critique,” second, we present some of the hazards for the debate community if it takes the deconstructive turn, finally, we briefly discuss the implications of “the critique” for practical policy deliberation.

### The Promise of Deconstruction

In academic circles, the rise of deconstructive approaches to history, literature, philosophy, and rhetoric has provided teachers and intellectuals with new ways to think about the creation of social relationships. Instead of perpetuating existing social inequities and hierarchial relationships, defenders of deconstruction techniques attempt to empower ordinary human actors by demystifying the knowledge structures that grant authority to privileged elites both within and outside of educational institutions. Intellectual champions of deconstruction perspectives usually claim three advantages of the “the critique”: (1) it is supposedly non-essentialist; (2) dialogical in nature; and (3) more inclusive than traditional scholastic approaches.

For many academicians, many of the benefits of the “new” deconstructive perspectives come from their ability to undermine some of the *essentialist* assumptions built into traditional theories of argument and communication. From at least the end of the eighteenth century, Western theorists have vociferously defended a classical liberal model of education based on the claim that the “progress” of civilization depended on a growth of information, clear thinking, and an exchange of some of the foundational ideas that guide civic action. Many of these essentialist forms of argument assume that knowledge of human “nature” or behavior exists independent of culture and social relationships, and that given enough time and effort knowledgeable people can “discover” the universalizing principles that guide civilization. From within modern variations of this ancient theme, social reforms and progressive change come gradually as members of the polity are emancipated and allowed to share in the fruits of intellectual and industrial labor.

Within the deconstruction literature, many of the orthodox methods of obtaining knowledge—from social scientific investigation to the search for artistic canons—are believed to be problematic in that they serve to *inhibit* rather than facilitate radical change. The “texts,” rules of evidence, and the

standards for judgment in classical liberal thinking are treated by postmodernists as human constructs that hide racism, sexism, and other pernicious ideological structures. Writings that might seem to be seminal or authoritative in traditional circles become examples of hidden oppression and illegitimate power in postmodern works. The goal of deconstructionists is therefore to illuminate the power struggles, motivations, or other tensions that exist at the time of the construction of “essential” material. For many postmodernists, those intellectuals who are truly interested in helping liberate an individual, community, or “the people” need to work on deconstructing the discourse that is used to dominate human beings.

Another advantage often alluded to by deconstruction advocates is that it provides critics with a *dialogic* rather than a closed approach to learning and understanding. The classical liberal model of communication is often *speaker* oriented, where learned rhetors are imbued with wisdom that needs to be dispensed to a spectator public. From a deconstruction perspective, modern legislative and judicial forums are based on *univocal* models of communication, where dispassionate judges or advocates are said to “settle” a particular controversy or policy by appealing to universal rules, standards, or principles.<sup>12</sup> Within modern paradigms, disputes between contending parties can be resolved through reasonable debate and argumentation, and representative parties negotiate the feasibility of particular policy alternatives. From the perspective of postmodern critics, no texts are dispassionately constructed, and no issues are ever really “settled.” For deconstructionists, it is *audiences* as well as *speakers* who are constantly creating texts, and therefore there are an almost limitless number of readings or interpretations of any discursive construct. Unequivocally, thus becomes a myth that needs to be replaced with dialogic communication.

Finally, the third advantage that is usually raised in defending the deconstructive perspective is its *inclusiveness*. The goal of removing essentialized texts is believed to be the first step in providing the marginalized around the world with the opportunity to speak. Deconstructionists within the academy contend that if societies want to eradicate racism, sexism, colonialism, and other oppressive power relationships, then they must shed some of the language that keeps them imprisoned in destructive ways of thinking. By attacking the privileging of any textual interpretations, postmodernists propose to clear the ground for *alternative* readings of texts provided by women, people of color, the poor, and the disenfranchised. Many deconstructionists claim that by moving away from the quest for absolute or foundational principles of “truth,” “justice,” or “rule of law,” we can begin to expand our horizons and deal with a fragmented postmodern world. Intellectuals

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<sup>12</sup> For those interested in reviewing the literature that is available on the relationship between deconstruction and legal practices, see the work of some of the members of the Critical Legal Studies Movement. The best bibliography of literature relating to law and communication can be found in Duncan Kennedy and Karl E. Klare, “A Bibliography of Critical Legal Studies,” *Yale Law Journal* 94 (1984): 461-489. See also the seminal work of Roberto Mangabeira Unger, *The Critical Legal Studies Movement* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1986).



following Foucault or Derrida thus become active participants in the interrogation of the taken-for-granted assumptions come under scrutiny.

The arrival of "the critique" into the debate community in 1991 meant that debaters had to cope with some of the same tensions that plagued the larger academic community. The alluring promise of deconstruction provided incredible temptations for sensitive debaters searching for novel means of disarming opponents. Although still in its infancy, the appearance of "the critique" now forces debaters to reassess the arguments that are used to legitimize the activity itself. If postmodern critics are correct in their assault on classical liberal thinking, then debate as an activity—with its emphasis on evidence, lines of argument, and other formalistic trappings—becomes an object of interrogation itself.

To this point many of the critiques used have called for the annihilation of basic assumptions in an effort to win the competition. Three of the more popular critiques are the post-humanist, statist, and normative critiques. These arguments question the centrality of humans in the planet hierarchy, the existence of the state as a method of control, and the use of rhetorical assumptions in argument construction. Often such systematic critiques seem to be only peripherally competitive with the policy option outlined by an affirmative.

Defenders of "the critique" deploy many of the arguments that are marshalled by academic deconstructionists in their attacks on modernity and liberalism. Three primary arguments come to mind in discussing the promise of "the critique"; (1) consistency; (2) innovation; (3) inclusiveness.<sup>13</sup>

Many debate coaches and judges are familiar with the arguments of the deconstructionists, and some debaters could claim that the introduction of "the critique" into academic debate will provide intellectual *consistency* by extending this knowledge into the debate world. Rhetoricians and communication scholars have appropriated some of the arguments and texts of the deconstructionists, and questioned some of the totalizing schemes of essentialists. Why should coaches, judges, and other scholars write and discuss the importance of deconstruction, while at the same time continuing to support a debate forum built on modern rules of evidence, time constraints, and other potential symbols of hierarchy? If teachers are constantly questioning the existence of neutrality and impartiality in epistemic scholastic debates, why shouldn't debaters learn to do the same? Wouldn't learning the work of the deconstructionists and other postmodernists provided a pedagogical bridge that would prepare undergraduate debaters for graduate work?

A second argument that debaters have or can raise in defense of "the critique" is that it is *innovative*. Debaters in recent years have claimed that the activity at times seems to be stagnating, as advocates rehash arguments in theory debates. If debate is to evolve as an activity, then it needs to constantly expose itself to fresh and insightful ideas that challenges both participants and judges. Negative teams armed with the possible use of "the

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<sup>13</sup> One should not confuse the implicit rationale we outline here with the three forms of the critique (thinking, rhetoric, and value) outlined by Shanahan.

critique" would force affirmative teams to create with fresh responses that could not be "blocked" due to the infinite variety of potential critiques. Debate as an activity would no longer involve massive amounts of evidence marshalled in an effort to create winners and losers—now argument would be "edifying," "conversational," and "dialogic." Theoretically, participants would be constructing knowledge together, rather than finding "truth" in the jungle of the marketplace. Rather than discoverers of knowledge, now debaters could be innovative by creating information.

Finally, debaters could claim that in the long run, "the critique" expands the number of participants involved in the debate activity. Deconstruction theories, with their focus on *who* gets to speak as well as what is said, would move debate away from policy oriented argumentation. There would be less need for evidence from informed experts, because this form of research involves the circulation and perpetuation of illegitimate hierarchies. Now the subject feelings of the participants would be just as important as the alleged dispassionate opinion of agenda setters. Autonomy and liberation for the debaters would depend on deviation from consensus or norms that have been established by empowered representatives or institutions. Debate may have to dismantle itself for the sake of emancipation.

### The Peril of "The Critique"

In spite of its innovative potential, the use of "critique" also has some limitations. We will discuss the academic issues first and then move to the problems for competitive debate.<sup>14</sup>

Academically, there are a myriad of objections that could be raised against the deconstruction movement, but we will concentrate on three: its nihilism, incoherence, and counterproductivity. One argument forwarded by adversaries is that deconstruction is either nihilistic or utopian. It is considered to be nihilistic in that it accepts no "foundation," policy or value that can provide guidance and direction for scholars and the general public. By asking scholars to constantly engage in self-reflection and interrogation of subject positions, deconstructionists focus attention on the *negative* power of symbolic constructs. Some believe that the quest called for by many postmodernists is utopian in nature, in that few members of the public will have either the capacity or will to engage in constant negative critique. Ironically, when taken to an extreme, deconstructive perspectives can be employed by critics who deny the substantive power of rhetoric.

A second criticism that scholars have of deconstruction perspectives revolves around the contention that some of the postmodern literature is incoherent and inconsistent. Written with the European accent of French and German scholars, much of the deconstruction literature is difficult to fathom in the first place. The demystifications that are attempted of seminal

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<sup>14</sup> We view this essay as a "theoretical" addendum to the pragmatic objections raised by Shors and Mancuso. See, Matthew Shors and Steve Mancuso, "The Critique: Skreaming Without Raising Its Voice," in *Health Care Policy: Debating Coverage Cures*, ed. by Roger E. Solt and Ross K. Smith (Winston-Salem: Wake Forest University, 1993), A-18.



texts often leave readers and audiences with works that seem to have simply replaced one form of exclusivity—essentialist centers—with another form of exclusivity—decentered peripheries. Rather than emancipating critics, these new “webs of signification” ironically entangle scholars in epistemic and ontological arguments that undermine the act of evaluation and criticism itself.

Perhaps the most serious flaw of deconstructive approaches stems from its attempts to “decenter” texts and forms of subjugation. By taking a perspective that is unwilling to defend any center of gravity, deconstruction becomes a process of continual critique and infinite regression, where little evaluation or comparison takes place between policy alternatives. Very little political involvement or consciousness raising can take place without creating some public space and defending some principles. By completing erasing the privileging of texts, calls into question the benefits of any social, economic, political, and moral reforms. All social change is illusory, and power is merely redistributed in limitless polysemic ways.

Pragmatically, the use of “the critique” in policy debate means a virtual abandonment of many of the cherished assumptions of policy decision making. Rather than evaluating competing plans or counterplans, debaters are now going to have to ask judges to oversee “conversations,” “discussions” or attempts at mere “edification.” Instead of reviewing the quality or quantity of evidence that can be marshalled in a typical NDT round, referees may be invited to contemplate the possibility of having no winner in the round, for that power may itself be considered “illegitimate.” In place of cross-examination, we would now have “interrogations” and “self-reflexiveness.”

One of the major strategic problems with the use of “the critique” in debate rounds would be its inherent assumptions. It is the negative team that would gain from the introduction of the critique, in that an almost infinite number of potential objections could be raised against any policy advocated by the affirmative. It is not unusual for a negative team to present a post-humanist critique when an affirmative advocates a policy that saves lives. During the 1993-1994 debate season, cases that advocated a change in nuclear strategic doctrine (Defense of Last Resort and Nuclear Predelegation) often confronted critiques that called for rejection of the plan because attention to nuclear war privileges the continued existence of humanity. While such changes in doctrine are significant, the critique reduced them to simply efforts to extend the “life-line” of humanity. In this and other instances, negative stories could easily paint the affirmative cases as examples of centrist positions, and negative debaters would take on the persona of deconstructionists who need not introduce any case takeouts, counterplans, or overwhelming disadvantages.<sup>15</sup>

Besides its inherent asymmetry, “the critique” may not be that innovative. Its purported novelty may be little more than a reductionist rehash of the old communication debate between the Platonists and the Sophists. Many

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<sup>15</sup> Even proponents of the critique admit that this strategy is biased toward the negative. See, for example, Derek Jinks, “Rethinking Critique Arguments,” in *Health Care Policy: Debating Coverage Cures*, ed. by Roger E. Solt and Ross K. Smith (Winston-Salem: Wake Forest University, 1993), A-14.

postmodern works have their philosophical roots in antiquity, where foreign teachers and students found themselves looking for ways of attacking the central teachings of Athenians and other Greeks. The works of Heraclitus, Protagoras, and Gorgias were themselves written as negative critiques of truth-seekers.<sup>16</sup> Pedagogically, the introduction of the critique would allow debaters to learn about some of the tensions that exist within the communications field without having to apply “the critique” to any practical case examples.

Besides its inherent unfairness and lack of novelty, “the critique” also suffers from the problem of being *politically* irrelevant and counterproductive. Debate is not supposed to be an eristic activity—it is supposed to have some consequential value. In our traditional debate forums students and judges are given the opportunity to test some of the policies advocated by decisionmakers, but with the introduction of “the critique” there is no position that is placed at risk for evaluation. In many ways, debating is an inherently rationalistic activity. It asks its participants and audiences to take seriously the notion that particular policies in the form of plans or counterplans have consequences outside of the “text” that alter moral, political, economic, and social relationships. The professional visibility of policy debate alumni points to the utility of this exercise for improving public life.

#### Implications for Debate: Moving Beyond “The Critique”

On balance, many of the arguments that have been used in both the academy and debate forums to justify the use of “the critique” are unpersuasive. While sympathetic listeners, we feel that on balance the perils of “the critique” outweigh any advantage that would come from unleashing such potent devices in the debate community.

Yet there are some aspects of the deconstruction perspective that we find appealing and insightful. We therefore feel that it is possible to selectively appropriate some of the postmodern arguments to improve debate without totally adopting a decentered approach to academic and competitive debate. In place of totally deconstructing “debate” as an activity, we would suggest an alternative “rapprochement” between traditional critical social theorists and postmodernism.<sup>17</sup> Rather than accepting a dichotomous position of having to choose between modern and postmodern perspective, we believe that it is possible to combine the *reconstructive* and *deconstructive* elements of each. There are some valuable lessons that debate can learn from some of these critical perspectives that might provide debaters with some positive, reflexive tools. For example:

##### 1. *Expand the Horizons of Source Credibility*

Instead of quoting the same influential policymakers or institutional forums, debaters and their coaches might consciously ask judges to begin

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<sup>16</sup> Shanahan’s own reading of Heidegger points to the traditional rather than revolutionary nature of these insights.

<sup>17</sup> See for example the work of Mark Poster, *Critical Theory and Poststructuralism: In Search of a Context* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989) 1.



listening to the arguments crafted by commentators who are traditionally given very little public voice (the current feminism debates reflect such a transformation). The problem we confront here is that the line between bad evidence and evidence from tenable alternate viewpoints is often blurred. This would allow the negative critique of existing power structures while at the same time highlighting some of the policies advocated by the marginalized.

## 2. *Cloth Particular Policies in Alternative Language Forms*

Deconstructionists and other postmodernists have sensitized us to the multiple forms of discourse and the power of particular language configurations. Perhaps debaters could learn to understand, deploy, and evaluate forms of argument that go beyond the traditional logic of evidence and formal argument. Narratives and other discursive units may provide policymakers with alternative perspectives. In short, we may need to assess the implications of the "tech speak" and attending standards of rationality that dominate policy debate. Many "traditionalists" have been calling for such a reform in practice for the better part of two decades (in the form of the unevidenced argument).

## 3. *Replace Notions of "Falsification"*

If we live in a postmodern world, then we may need to re-evaluate the way in which we approach the notion of "truth" and "falsehood" in the evaluation of debate policies. Rather than attempting to prove one's point conclusively by falsifying an opponent's argument, we may come to realize that the choice between two "plausible stories" often involves aesthetic, ideological, and instinctive judgments that do not pivot on a truth claim. Our own observations of post-debate "judge baiting" seem to reflect an implicit acceptance of a "truth" standard, while overtly rejecting such a standard, by debaters.

In place of the traditional dichotomy that exists between reason and passion, objectivity and subjectivity, perhaps there can be a position where debaters engage in the quest for a middle ground, where people intersubjectively create their social realities and come to realize the range of plausible alternatives unearthed in such a discussion. Such an approach might go a long way toward reducing the tension and anxiety exhibited by members (debaters and coaches) of our community.

In sum, we believe that the use of "the critique" has limited potential as presently conceived. On balance, nihilistic critiques that "trash" policymaking are as reductionist as the totalizing schemes that they wish to replace. Placing debaters in a forum where argument is reduced to mere dialogue or conversation transforms a pragmatic intellectual activity into a game for dilettantes. Absent a commitment to a *reconstructive* as well as a deconstructive rhetoric, the capacity of policy debate to improve our world will be diminished. A commitment to only a deconstructive rhetoric, creates an environment of suspicion and apathy at the very point in history that we should be repudiating such a tact. We agree with Wood and Cox, who have recently challenged communication scholars to look for ways of finding a

critical voice that will be able to cope with the “materiality” of discourse—that alters the way that we think about the environment, food and health care—or the lack thereof.<sup>18</sup> Over the years, debate has survived as a competitive and social activity because of its practicality and ability to prepare students for the trials and tribulations of the real world. “The Critique” taken to its extremes, only provides us with a means to avoid these challenges.

We therefore approach the potential contributions of the critique with guarded optimism. We believe that as an analytic tool that complements policy debate, it has a great deal of merit. The deployment of partial critiques would still allow debaters to inject the issues of the political nature of evidence, the inherent ambiguity of language, and the mystification of expertise without totally repudiating the tenets of policy debate. Used effectively, this type of systematic inquiry into the very foundations of debate has a great deal of promise and potential. If the critique is going to develop into an effective pedagogical tool, then its advocates in debates need to recognize that there are inherent limitations placed on them because of the competitive nature of policy debate.

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<sup>18</sup> See, Julia T. Wood and J. Robert Cox, “Rethinking critical voice: materiality and situated knowledges,” *Western Journal of Communication* 57 (1993).



# THE POSTMODERN DECISION MAKING PARADIGM: MOVING BEYOND FORCED CONSISTENCY (BECAUSE IT IS GOOD AND BECAUSE IT IS BAD)

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I call people of this sort 'ironists' because their realization that anything can be made to look good or bad by being redescribed, and their renunciation of the attempt to formulate criteria of choice between final vocabularies, puts them in the position which Sartre called 'meta-stable': never able to take themselves seriously because always aware that the terms in which they describe themselves are subject to change, always aware of the contingency and fragility of their final vocabularies, and thus of their selves.<sup>1</sup>

Does this remind us of anyone, perhaps even of some current parties in the academic debate community? Why is it that we believe advancing only one consistent position is the best way to debate? Are we sure that in doing so we have not been following "a foolish consistency [that] is the hobgoblin of small minds"?<sup>2</sup> An examination of current policy debate theory discloses several reasons for forcing consistency, ranging from maintaining credibility, improving style, and increasing validity. However, each of these justifications depends not on their own merits, but on philosophical foundation which are rooted in metaphysics. With the works of Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida, and Habermas, to name only a few, it is about time that academic debate theory begins to take note of, and benefit from, the modern philosophical and rhetorical theory which engulfs other fields of communication. In initiating this conversation, this paper begins with a brief examination of the philosophical and historical rationale supporting forced consistency; it then attacks these rationale and defines, justifies, and gives examples of how to use a new paradigm for evaluating and accepting inconsistent arguments. We call this the Postmodern Decision making Paradigm (PDP).

## I. Status Quo Presumption for Forced Consistency

The value and expertise derived from learning and mastering the art of argumentation has been long recognized. In *Phaedrus*, a mature Plato describes the value of reasoned debate as "a universal art of winning the minds by arguments, which means not merely arguments in the courts of justice,

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press 1989), p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Self Reliance* (New York: American Book Company, 1893).

and all sorts of public councils, but in private conference as well."<sup>3</sup> Individuals use inquiry, advocacy, research, and reasoned judgment everyday and in most professions. Mastering these processes enables an individual to crystallize the concerns of his audience and thereby influence their decision making process.

Because argumentation imparts obvious and significant benefits to its masters, philosophers, rhetoricians, and statesmen have been concerned with the practical and theoretical implication of its persuasive techniques.<sup>4</sup> To a large extent, these concerns about consistency have been carried over into academic debate where they have been grounded in the principles of advocacy; as methods of building and maintaining ethos; as fairness to the opponent; as permissible strategic devices; and as ways of increasing the validity of one's claims. Each of these principles takes for granted the notion that we should not argue inconsistent points of view. In a world where advocacy skills have become exceedingly important, however, this need not be the case.

Why have we believed that arguments need to be consistent? Why is it that we worry about the ethos, pathos, and logos of the speaker and their arguments? In their own way, each of these elements contribute to the speaker's persuasiveness. Speakers gain credibility by showing that they, and their arguments are honest, trustworthy, and reliable. Pathos is enhanced when speakers build momentum towards one particular desired outcome. And, in the same way, we believe that a speakers position is enhanced when his evidence and his proofs do not undermine one another. However, individuals may be able to increase these persuasive elements by showing objectivity, open mindedness and impartiality. This increase can occur by successfully arguing inconsistent positions, so long as they are well reasoned and explained.

We believe the modern evolution of both fields, argumentation and debate, are better served by allowing the use of inconsistent positions within an overarching argumentation strategy. C.H. Perelman states that "the only discursive methods available to us stem from techniques that are not demonstrative—that is, conclusive and rational in the narrow sense of the term—but from argumentative techniques which are not conclusive but which may tend to demonstrate the reasonable character of the conceptions put forward."<sup>5</sup> Only through examining the evolution of rhetorical and argumentative theory can we adequately find answers and justifications for a new paradigm, and foster its acceptance and application.

## II. Historical Antecedents

If we are at all concerned that we are now seeing things in a limited way, then we would want to ask ourselves how it is that we have come to see

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<sup>3</sup> Plato, *Phaedrus* page 261 quoted in Freely, Austin J., *Argumentation & Debate: Critical Thinking For Reasoned Decision Making* (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Press, 1993), p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. Plato, "Gorgias," *Dialogues of Plato*, ed. Reginald Allen (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984).

<sup>5</sup> Perelman, Chiam, *The Idea of Justice and the Problem of Argument*, trans. John Petrie (New York: Humanities Press, 1963), p. 86-87.



things the way we do. Any answer to this type of question necessarily implies some historical invention to make the past intelligible in the context of this article. One popular way of doing this has been to return to the practices of the early Greek sophists like Gorgias and Protagoras in order to show how their philosophical choices directed us toward what we now believe: that inconsistent arguments should not be advanced by the same debate position.

One of the first rhetoricians in Athens, Gorgias of Leontini argued that it was improper to construct arguments founded on reasoning from consistency. As Guthrie points out:

To show up the absurdity of Eleatic, and particularly of Parmenidean, logic (the absurdity of arguing from 'it is' and 'it is not' as such) was of the utmost importance both to common sense and to the theory of rhetoric. Gorgias would hardly wish to deny the existence of everything in the sense in which the ordinary man understands existence; his aim was to show that, by the sort of arguments that Parmenides used, it was as easy to prove 'it is not' as 'it is'.<sup>6</sup>

What remains of his sophistic argument can be found in *On the Non-Existent*, where Gorgias "maintains that nothing exists, that even if anything does exist it cannot be apprehended by man, and even if it were apprehensible it would be impossible to communicate".<sup>7</sup> Gorgias claimed that if one uses Parmenidean logic to prove the truth (a metaphysical project) or the existence (an epistemological project) of something, one could also use the same methods to prove its untruth or nonexistence; these methods could be commonly used in academic debate to permit refutations from inconsistent positions. In fact, this strategy is currently being used by negative teams in the case of hypothetical counterplans and from within hypothesis testing paradigms:

All such permanent 'natures' would be abolished on Gorgias's thesis, but the form of his arguments shows that their irony was aimed especially at Parmenides and his followers, to demonstrate that on their own reasoning it is as easy to prove the contrary of  $x$  as  $x$  itself.<sup>8</sup>

What Gorgias and other Sophists opened up was the possibility that the world could be conceived without a "normative natural order." Once possible, the Greeks used this idea to differentiate their understanding of reality into scientific-like manipulable parts, each of which could be studied independently. As the Sophists began to differentiate the functions of oratory, prose, and drama from each other, they realized the persuasive effects each could have when humans are indecisive and abandon what logic—what was called above Eleatic or Parmenidean logic—seems to tell them. Emotion could be separated from logic and science could be separated from philosophy. As they learned to differentiate more of these parts, their vocabularies grew and so did their ability to theorize about their world. While others developed these into sciences, Gorgias expressed his doubts about the 'com-

<sup>6</sup> W.K.C. Guthrie, *The Sophists* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 194.

<sup>7</sup> George A. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), p. 31.

<sup>8</sup> Guthrie 194.

municability of this kind of knowledge: interpretations of the way things are' and the degree to which one could *know* them:

The doubts found in the treatise *On Not Being* reappear in the *Helen*, where Gorgias reveals a very vivid sense of the state of ignorance and uncertainty which is habitual for the human psyche, the resulting tendency for the psyche to be guided by mere opinion, and the way virtually anything one sees or hears can cause the abandoning of the opinion for another. The powers that *logos* as a creator of opinion has are correspondingly immense: it can make the spectators at a tragedy weep as if the sufferings evoked by the dramatists' words were their own; it can use philosophical discourse to transform completely an audience's conception of the universe; it can overturn from one minute to the next in the course of debate the hearer's conception of what is valid and not valid; and it can charm and persuade a whole throng, even when untrue.<sup>9</sup>

If humans could believe a thing to be either true or not true simply by stating arguments eloquently, how far back might the subjectivity of knowledge go? More importantly, what end does and should *knowledge* serve in such a system? Undoubtedly the idea of a full exploration of the limits of reason and knowledge scared certain Greeks who then discouraged further exploration of these questions. Some have argued that:

Skepticism about the attainability or communicability of knowledge, such as is maintained in Gorgias's *On Not Being*, or relativism of the kind usually assumed to lie behind Protagoras's famous assertion that man is the measure of all things, might, if consistently maintained, have removed some of the inhibitions that operate in traditional societies to prevent full exploration of all of rhetoric's possibilities.<sup>10</sup>

It is interesting to speculate about what either they and our society would be like if the Greeks had come to accept all knowledge as relative, reason and logic as incomplete, truth as nonexistent or incommunicable, and human activities as without normative meaning to higher beings. But, they did not pursue these notions.<sup>11</sup> Instead, their scientific successes led them to believe that knowledge could be gained, that reality could be uncovered with better reason, and that this knowledge could be communicated. They believed

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<sup>9</sup> Thomas Cole, *The Origins of Rhetoric in Ancient Greece* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), p. 146.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.* at 145.

<sup>11</sup> See e.g., *id.* at 152-53. Cole writes, "Gorgias's skepticism, like Protagoras's relativism, obviously shared the rhetorician's recognition of the problematic character of human communication. But having recognized the problem, both men choose, by and large, to circumvent it rather than seek a solution along rhetorical lines. Their main activity appears to have been directed toward the study and presentation of those arguments, themes, and techniques whose occurrence was sufficiently widespread that their overall usefulness was independent of the changing tastes of audiences, or the changing availability and communicability of truth in various circumstances. To proceed further than this toward the production of a genuine art of rhetoric would have required precisely those disciplines of which there is no trace elsewhere in Protagoras, Gorgias, or any of their contemporaries: a systematic psychology that would countenance the possibility of constructing a particular piece of persuasion according to preset plan and an epistemology that would make possible the idea of an unmediated verbal rendering of reality by reference to which rhetorical deviations can be identified, characterized, and put to conscious use."



that truth would be naturally persuasive and that it could eventually be more fully realized as humans learned to reason and philosophize with fewer errors:

Gorgias' idea that "[o]nly knowledge, based on unshakable proof, could withstand the attacks of *peitho*, and there is no such thing . . . was, in Plato's eyes, the arch-heresy which he must do his utmost to destroy. He must show, first, that there is such a thing as true and false opinion. Next, because if they are *only* opinions the true one will be as vulnerable as the false to the wiles of the persuader, he must restore the criterion of judgment and demonstrate how opinion can be converted to knowledge by 'thinking out the reason.'"<sup>12</sup>

The Greeks, following Plato, proceeded to develop deeper scientific morphologies of their world, built on presumably stable foundations called knowledge and reason. Another way of saying this is that as a result of Greek philosophical choices, we continue to believe in the goal of acquiring knowledge through clear logic and reason, each of which are dependent on the ability to eliminate contradictions and inconsistencies. In academic debate, this translates into a view that there is only one way to argue properly and that this way is based on rigorous logic and use of the scientific method. In the social sciences where this is not always possible, the attempt to mimic logic and scientific methods is highly praised. The development of logic, like the system of mathematics which we all have come to accept as standard, is based, all the way down, on the same principles.

At present, the only way to argue inconsistent positions is through convoluted and easily misunderstood vocabulary: the hypothetical syllogism, permutations in counterplan theory, and hypothesis testing. Modern theory does not endorse and strongly disfavors the presentation of contradictory positions without such qualification. This disfavor can be traced to the Platonic fear that the human psyche can be easily swayed if we permit ourselves to accept, justify, or even consider alternate formulae for logos.

### III. The Way Things are Done Now, and the Way They Could Be Done

Modern debate theory holds steadfast to the notion that "... if the two advocates in an academic debate allow themselves to present contradictory or inconsistent arguments, the effect is almost certain to be defeat."<sup>13</sup> Contradictions are believed by many to upset the natural checks and balances in an argument or refutation strategy. However, as postmodern theory would suggest, a distinction must be drawn between an inconsistency and a contradiction. Outside the world of academic debate, the two may appear similar, but where an inconsistency may be unintentional, a contradiction is both unintended and undesirable. For example, affirmative teams are more often held to stricter advocacy requirements than are negative teams. The

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<sup>12</sup> Guthrie 273.

<sup>13</sup> Freely, Austin J., *Argumentation & Debate: Critical Thinking For Reasoned Decision Making* (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Press, 1993), p. 206.

affirmative is expected to justify a policy option where initially the negative had the option of choosing whether or not to present their own coherent policy.

This approach evolved as comparatively smaller, yet credible affirmative advantages require negative teams to present their own policy options, and effectively out compete the affirmative policy option with their own advantages. Consequently, allowing negatives to advocate alternative plans, while at the same time defend the status quo, has become common practice; while prohibiting, punishing, or even penalizing the introduction of inconsistent, but not contradictory statements, continues. This practice makes no sense from either the perspective of rhetorical theory or academic debate.

Academic debate has gone through many transformations since its inception. Since the first National Debate Tournament at West Point in 1947, academic debate has incorporated various tactics and strategies for success. Affirmatives were required to meet the basic *prima facie* requirements and to solve a problem in the status quo. Negatives were responsible for defending the current system and began with the presumption of validity. As clash rose and the procedural requirements mentioned above began bearing down on both sides, debate witnessed a shift in the negative's burden: from defeating change to the status quo to arguing that the affirmative was wrong. Until the introduction of counterplan, neither side made much use of presumption. Affirmatives would respond to counterplans with alternative justifications for the affirmative resolution and the comparative advantage case. Not until the introduction of conditional counterplans and hypothesis testing did the playing field become much more theoretically complicated. As the community decides between these new approaches and the more formalistic approach of policy systems analysis, modern debaters and judges who like to think of themselves as *tabula rasa* have begun accepting arguments which move between paradigms as frequently as they find it practical to do so. The net weight of accrued advantages on either side seem like they make underlying policies less relevant. Even in the weighing which is usually performed at the end of the round—which sounds something like “the affirmative's nuclear war occurs before the negative's”—there is an inherent disregard for the actual plan. This may not be so bad if the plan is seen as a tableau on which debaters and audiences can test their argumentative and persuasive prowess with multiple media: policies, potential consequences, argument theory, etc. Somewhere, debaters need to learn how the world of argumentation fits together, because beyond academic debate there is little protection from the diversity of potential responses.

Debate has undoubtedly taken on a different role than it had in the late 1800's when Harvard or Yale would bargain for a contract debate with another school. The focus of debate must be viewed in a different context today. Debate still educates and trains individuals in the art of persuasion and argumentation, and it still requires the development of invaluable know-how. Debate also continues to be one of the greatest avenues for acquiring knowledge on diverse but timely issues. One must not forget the notion that debate is fundamentally an intellectual exercise with a competitive slant. It is with this spirit in mind we believe there is both a place and a need for PDP in academic debate.



#### IV. Justifications for, and Execution of PDP in Academic Debate

Justifications for the use of PDP can be found in the very professions which argumentative and debate strategies are the most useful, politics and law. The first of these is political discussion and the legislative process. Politicians are often forced into the position of answering to various constituents, critic, media and supporters. From the early stages of a political campaign, to debates against opponents, to communicating with constituents after elected, politicians must walk a very delicate line between appearing to be inconsistent. The art to being a successful politician centers around the ability to tell the right story, maintain a credible image, and offer the right solutions.

Without referring to any one particular individual over another, many politicians have taken their knocks for appearing to be inconsistent; only to rebound in popularity and gain credibility and influence when able to distinguish these apparent contradictions. This talent and skill is crucial to surviving a political campaign.

For the politician who desires to influence policy, the ability to argue inconsistently is a valuable skill to have. Whether a reformer or preserver of particular legislation, the nature of the process requires the usage of inconsistency to be successful in gaining or defeating passage. In committee hearings the sole purpose of the "hearing involve[s] controversy over policy. Controversy leads to refutation, but refutation is blunted because claims are made through a questioning process."<sup>14</sup> Similar to the various attacks which form a partisan attack against a particular bill in debate on the floor, this questioning period in hearings involves pre-known facts, but enable the opposition to develop a strategy to counter the policy. This form of argumentation is also true in the legal arena.

For years, citizens have understood the importance of seeking the assistance of seasoned and experienced individuals, trained in the art of advocacy, learned in the area of law, and successful in their pursuit for justice. Argumentation in law can vary according to the particular type of case, however, the need to clearly identify the legal issues and principles involved, explain the specific claims asserted, and construct a coherent and sound case have always been considered paramount. The main difference between the two major areas of law, criminal and civil, has been the required standard of proof of the argument. In criminal cases, the argument needs to cross the threshold of a "reasonable doubt." In contrast, civil cases are only required to demonstrate a "preponderance of the evidence." In both instances, a typical and accepted practice of answering claims is "arguing in the alternative."

In Common law tradition, a party was unable to plead hypothetically or in the alternative.<sup>15</sup> The Court strongly discouraged and reacted harshly to individuals that even inadvertently advanced alternative claims, much the

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<sup>14</sup> Rieke, Richard D., *Argumentation and Critical Decision Making*, (New York: Harper, 1993), p. 240.

<sup>15</sup> Friedenthal, Jack H., et al, *Civil Procedure*, 2ed., (St. Paul, Minn: West Publishing, 1993), p. 266.

same way debate does today. Even if a pleader could prevail under an alternative legal theory, that option was unavailable if the wrong course of action was originally chosen. Judges began to recognize the need and fairness for individuals to be able and win their case under a coherent legal theory, even if it may contradict other arguments in their favor. This was done by simply maintaining requirements of clarity and simplicity through separating, designating and numbering the arguments. Stated concretely:

The theory is that on the trial the proof will determine on which set of facts, if any, the plaintiff is entitled to recover. Where the pleading is in the alternative in different counts, each count stands alone and the inconsistent statements contained in a count cannot be used to contradict statements in another count.<sup>16</sup>

The higher goal of truth-seeking in justice outweighs a traditional notion of consistency. For lawyers, judges and the people, “sound policy weighs in favor of alternative pleading, so that controversies may be settled and complete justice accomplished in a single action.”<sup>17</sup>

Recognizing the practical application of PDP in modern professions, we believe there are several traditional justifications used for participating in academic debate which also endorse PDP. These include critical thinking skills, mental dexterity and freedom of thought. Critical thinking is described as the:

Understanding of the relationship of logic to logic, which would lead to the ability to analyze, criticize, and advocate ideas, to reason inductively and deductively, and to reach factual or judgmental conclusions based on sound inferences drawn from unambiguous statements of knowledge or belief.<sup>18</sup>

Being able to argue inconsistent positions or explain the difference between contradictions, draws upon and enhances each of these. The ability the argue PDP requires fast thinking and problem-solving skills in order to analyze and reason quickly, answers to a contradiction objection by your opponent, thus demonstrating strong mental dexterity. Likewise, the ability to take different and inconsistent views at the same time, and to switch back and forth between “incommensurate paradigms,” is the hallmark of a truly flexible and conceptual thinker.

The marketplace of ideas has always been believed to exist in academic debate, if anywhere. Escaping presumptive rules of fashion, style and etiquette has recently come to exist in an effort to increase this notion of truth seeking. If this is true, arguing inconsistently is the *only* way to get ideas and thoughts out which would reveal a sought after solution to any particular question. The marketplace is well served from a well-defined, and practically implementing PDP.

Academic debate has also been credited with serving as the training grounds for future lawyers, politicians, and public speakers. So, what of the concern of bad training that might result from permitting inconsistent arguments?

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<sup>16</sup> Urnest v. Sabre Metal Products, Inc., 22 Ill.App.2d 172, 159 N.E.2d 512.

<sup>17</sup> McCormick v. Kopmann, 23 Ill. App.2d 189, 161 N.E.2d 720.

<sup>18</sup> Freely, referring to a California Executive Order, p. 1.



Here lies the best answer and perhaps the best justification for permitting inconsistent argumentation. The debater who can more quickly recognize asserted contradictions from their opponent and who is more agile at balancing the substantive and procedural aspects of the round, as they relate to the contradictions, should be rewarded. The same is true for a public speaker who can effectively mold a speech to appeal to one audience with numerous viewpoints, for the politician who can appease various members of a diverse audience, and the lawyer who has the duty to provide a zealous defense of a client who is most likely guilty. Being able to understand the traps and misunderstandings that surround the use of inconsistent argumentation should be seen as a goal of academic debate when it is so clear that in each of these professions the debater would be better off. Being versed in the ability to argue and fully appreciate the *device of inconsistency* is not only permissible (in contrast to what Plato would have us believe), it should be necessary (as Gorgias might argue). Only someone who has gained expertise in this form of argumentation is prepared to respond to others when they either intentionally or unintentionally advance them. So what exactly is PDP? How would debaters successfully argue it? How would judges incorporate it into their philosophies?

There is no simple answer. Subjectivity and overall acceptance from the community may be stumbling blocks. The seasoned debater, however, could get the task done. We believe three things are paramount for this new paradigm. First, the theory behind the paradigm should be explained at the beginning of a debate, to provide a clear understanding of the strategy and serve as fair warning to the opposing side. This is more critical until such time as the paradigm is argued, modified, perfected and accepted through the course of debate practice evolution, much the same way the "Critique" took hold in NDT rounds.

Second, the benefits of the strategy should be clearly articulated for that particular round. This serves the dual purpose of increasing the credibility of the approach, while avoiding the appearance that positions just happen to contradict. As we state earlier, contradictions should continue to be discouraged, and strict penalties assessed against teams failing to justify inconsistencies in argumentation.

This brings us to the third rule, clarity and distinction for the critic and audience. There should be a greater penalty, like less acceptance of the position, for teams that are unable to present and utilize the paradigm, and merely confuse all the participants. We believe this can easily be done through the course of even the most sophisticated debates; and after the paradigm has gained acceptance, help debaters argue positions and judges decide those close cases, where contradictions and inconsistencies exist.

An example of how debaters could execute PDP would be arguing over the value of human life. Suppose the issue is health care, and the affirmative argues the current system fails to provide enough care to save lives. Countering this, the negative may advance the position that the status quo already saves enough lives to answer the affirmative case harm. While at the same time advancing a different value system, under malthus, which argues against saving lives in the short run. The test is whether an explanation for an apparent contradiction exists. In this case it does. Life is important, lives are

being saved now, but if some people slip through the system that is not necessarily bad. Population growth may be slowed, and the survival of future generations is preserved. The justification for allowing PDP in this instance is simple: the need to test various value systems. Without knowing the exact moral outlook of a judge, debaters are forced to run a multitude of arguments, attempting to find the special issue or “hook” the judge will grab onto. Arguing inconsistently enhances this process.

Another example may be an economy debate. The negative argues that the economy is stable now, not necessarily growing, but that if it were to fall into a depression, it would be good. They might at the same time arguing that health care spending is bad for the economy in the long run. A simple, but articulated distinction between growth cycles and government spending, long waves and soft landings, inward type depressions and constrained monetary recessions would help to ease the contradiction. On face these distinctions may be awkward or contain considerable tension, but a little savvy could reconcile these positions, and the different decision-trees employed to consider these tensions engenders considerable conceptual flexibility.

The trap to avoid is obvious contradictions which have no explanation for reconciliation. Stating the economy is currently growing, and claiming it’s stable now, would fail this test. A reasonable standard of clarification will help harmonize an acceptable standard for inconsistent arguments, and the possible evidentiary contradictions they may entail.

Even though debaters may try out PDP, and the general debate community accept this form of argumentation, the key will still be for judges to become receptive to the idea and usage of PDP. This should not require a Herculean effort, since modern debate theory has partially embraced most of the principles warranting PDP. By clearly defining PDP’s dimensions and role, everyone can prosper. Remember that the role of a judge is:

... not to choose sides and then ignore the other half. Nor is it to try, however tempted, to adjudicate the dispute, decide who is right and then simplify. He need join neither the Chamber of Commerce nor an Eastern religion. His job rather is to describe the conflict accurately, to insist on criteria condign to each side. Such criteria, such coordination, more readily come to hand for serious reality than for the rhetorical view, but neither side is, in principle, more difficult to understand. We must, that is, rehearse again the quarrel between philosophy and rhetoric. And this time around, we must do more than use philosophy to debunk rhetoric, as the scientific world has done. This debunking ends in that thinning of reality’s texture, that ontological discomfort, those tremors of nonexistence, so familiar to us now as science’s last best gift to a grateful mankind.<sup>19</sup>

Academic debate provides the perfect testing ground for students of communication and rhetoric to become experts in recognizing, defending, and dealing with both contradictions and inconsistencies. Just as Protagoras’ belief—that arguing both sides of a resolution gives one an informational and tactical advantage over one’s opponent—survived and triumphed over

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<sup>19</sup> Lanham, Richard, *Motives of Eloquence, Literary Rhetoric in the Renaissance*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), pp. 34-35.



strict rules of argumentative conduct a few decades ago, so should the methods of arguing inconsistencies. Without creativity in strategic policies as well as strategic theories, stagnation in debate—and worse yet, in the minds of debaters—would be guaranteed. Debate has always been known for its revolutionary ideas and principles, not to mention a long history for breaking with tradition. This is so, not because debaters like to be contentious, but also because debaters love the games. Why artificially limit the size of the playing field?

## COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES ON POLICY DEBATE JUDGING PHILOSOPHIES

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A key feature of year-end national debate championships, notably the National Debate Tournament (NDT), has been the availability of judging philosophies to guide the development and adaptation of arguments before a panel of judges. With the wide variety of perspectives on how issues should be resolved, on what issues are useful and germane to the topic, and on the acceptability of different practices within the round, philosophies have attempted to provide insight into a particular judge's unique worldview. The philosophy forms of the 1980s included sections on Decision-Making Paradigms, Topicality, Counterplans, Add-ons/Turnarounds/Disco, and Style. Some anecdotal evidence suggested that the forms were outdated and did not reflect current concerns. Most judges, for instance, do not have any problem with the theoretical concept of teams using turnarounds as part of their strategy. Beginning with the 1993 NDT, a new form was developed attempting to more accurately reflect issues and practices of competitive policy debate in the 1990s. The new categories include Theory, Topic Specific Arguments, the use of Evidence, and Style.

The shift to a new philosophy form offered an opportunity to assess community attitudes and feelings toward judging philosophies in general and the specific changes in particular. The survey was supported in part by the Policy Caucus and its continuing efforts to maximize community input into the future of policy debate. It was designed to assess the scope of current usage, to rate the utility of particular sections of the philosophy, and to explore reactions to various policy options for revising or changing the approach to judging philosophies. In addition to quantitative data, which are presented in abbreviated form in **Appendix 1**, written comments were also solicited, and are reproduced in **Appendix 2**.

This report, a service of the Policy Caucus, hopes to present valuable information to debaters about adapting to judges on the basis of their philosophy, to judges about constructing their own philosophies for maximal effectiveness, and to the community for determining the future of the judging philosophy process. The first section provides a summary of the results, the second section offers implications and thoughts about the future of judging philosophies. For those interested in researching or finding out more about judging philosophies, a partial bibliography of writings on policy debate judging philosophies is offered in the select bibliography.



## Results

### *Demographics*

Out of approximately 250 surveys distributed at the 1993 NDT, 74 were returned, including the input of 12 program directors, 28 coaches, 30 debaters, and 4 others (mainly hired judges). The sample included a wide mix of programs, with different levels of activity in policy debate. In regional competition, 20% of the respondent's programs rarely reached elimination rounds, 17% frequently did, and 62% almost always reached the elimination rounds. At national tournaments, 55% of the programs rarely made the elimination rounds, 16% frequently did, and 28% almost always qualified for the elimination rounds. At the extremes, then, 20% (15) rarely reached the elimination rounds of regional tournaments, while 28% (21) almost always reached the elimination rounds of national tournaments. All respondents together averaged 8.19 years of participation in debate; program directors averaged 19.5 years experience in debate, coaches 7.6 years, debaters 4.5 years, and other respondents 5.75 years in debate.

### *Use*

In the specific areas of using and marking philosophies for adaptation in the rounds, 97% (71 of 73) indicated that they read or marked the philosophies immediately before the rounds started. The average number of rounds that respondents had read or marked philosophies for during the past year was 9.75. In adapting in the round, 99% (70 of 71) claimed that they had used the philosophies to adapt particular arguments for the judges, and had done so an average of 9.71 rounds during the last year. Eighty-three percent of the coaches and program directors (34 of 41 responding) agreed that they had used the philosophies to coach their teams for particular rounds (and had used philosophies for an average of 9.70 rounds during the last year).

In assessing the scope of usage, 100% (71 of 71) marked that they had used the philosophies at the NDT, 71% (17 of 24) indicated they had used philosophies at the American Debate Association (ADA) Championships, and 90% (47 of 52) reported that they had used philosophies prior to the NDT. Somewhat at odds with this last question, when asked if their school summarized, used, or adapted judging philosophy during the regular season, only 69% (42 of 61) responded affirmatively.

### *Usefulness*

One very interesting result is the generalized difference between perceptions of how useful the philosophies are and how accurately they reflect judges' decisions. Comparing the responses on a 5 point scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree) between whether philosophies are useful (mean of 4.27, Standard Deviation = .56) and whether they accurately reflect actual judge decision-making (mean of 3.25, SD = .98), philosophies were rated significantly more useful than accurate ( $t(146) = 5.45, p < .001$ ). Many of the comments also indicated some suspicion about accuracy, but further emphasized the ultimate utility of having the judging philosophies available.

Examining the shift from the old judging philosophy form, the categories of the new judging philosophy form were generally accepted and approved. On this same five point scale, the Theory section received a mean rating of 3.96 (SD = .79), Topic Specific Arguments rated 4.14 (SD = .87), Evidence rated 3.79 (SD = .76), Style rated 3.89 (SD = .87), and the section asking judges about the number of tournaments attended rated a 3.55 (SD = .98). As indicated here, the topic specific arguments seem most important, with evidence and number of tournaments less important. The comments provide additional support for this ranking, as some of the respondents wanted more emphasis on topic specific issues, perhaps including a question on the critique strategy and on philosophical decision criteria like deontology. There was concern expressed in the comments about finding out the amount of research or reading done by the judge, which is arguably more important for adaptation purposes than the number of tournaments judged.

The function of judging philosophies was also surveyed, yielding relatively predictable results. Respondents were asked to rate (again on a SD to SA scale) whether philosophies should list positions judges refuse to listen to, strong biases, evidence reading policies, pet peeves, and stylistic preferences. These items were then ranked by respondents in order of importance. In order of priority, positions judges refuse to listen to came first (response mean of 4.56, SD = .77, mean rank of 1.45), followed by strong biases (response mean of 4.6, SD = .67, mean rank of 2.03), pet peeves (response mean of 4.24, SD = .74, mean rank of 3.72), evidence reading policy (response mean of 4.25, SD = .68, mean rank of 3.75) and stylistic preferences (response mean of 4.26, SD = .75, mean rank of 4.09). Style again ranked last in the set of those categories considered important for discussion in the judging philosophy, but it nonetheless received a mean score of 4.26, somewhere between Agree and Strongly Agree.

Finally, it is apparent that at a general level the new philosophy form was much preferred to the older form, a finding consistent with the move to make the categories more appropriate for policy debate as it has evolved into the 1990s. In testing the difference between ratings for the sections on the old and the new philosophy, the perceived utility of the new philosophy (mean response of 3.67, SD = .85) was significantly greater ( $t(145) = 4.5$ ,  $p < .001$ ) than the old philosophy (mean response of 2.75, SD = .97). Much of the commentary also indicated a preference for the new philosophy, with a few significant suggestions for further improvement.

### *Policy Options*

Several options were presented on the survey, including providing philosophies at the beginning of the season, providing them at major tournaments, abolishing them, changing the categories, setting no guidelines for the philosophies, using objective questions, and using stricter enforcement mechanisms for guaranteeing that judges provide philosophies. Some options not specifically surveyed did arise in the commentary, including shortening the philosophies, and providing a forum during the year to generate suggestions for categories on the philosophy form.

On the same 5 point scale (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree), the most



support generated was for collecting and disseminating philosophies at major tournaments (mean of 3.86,  $SD = .87$ ), followed by collecting and disseminating philosophies at the beginning of the season (mean of 3.76,  $SD = .91$ ), and then by providing no guidelines and letting judges say what they want (mean of 3.16,  $SD = 1.21$ ). There was virtually no support for abolishing philosophies (mean of 1.39,  $SD = .6$ ), or for using objective questions (mean of 1.71,  $SD = .74$ ). There was slightly more support, though still not substantial, for stricter enforcement on providing philosophies (mean of 2.33,  $SD = 1.1$ ), and for changing categories on the form (mean of 2.91,  $SD = .7$ ).

### Implications

The first point which arises from this survey is that philosophies are indeed an important part of the national tournaments, and that most participants take them seriously both in writing them and in using them to adapt arguments to the judges. Of the 24 respondents providing written commentary on the question of how seriously they take their own judging philosophy, 10 used the phrase "very seriously" in explaining the importance of the process. Several important points were made about the importance of judging philosophies in general which deserve mention. One debater commented that "judging philosophies are a must for small schools who don't travel the national circuit and don't know many judges well." Another remarked that "they are very helpful in allowing me to adapt to a particular judge. In particular they point me in the right direction in terms of what arguments to stress." One program director advanced a very different view of the utility of the judging philosophies:

... [T]he statements served to advance theory, strategy, and the pedagogy of both, in as much as we all seem to spend some time figuring out how our colleagues think (and write about their thinking). I take my own thinking fairly seriously. It's always interesting to see who shares this sensibility and who would just as soon mask his/her preferences with abstractions and generalizations that do not really commit him/her to anything. I think we could do without written judging philosophies, but I don't think we will. But I also think we should be honest about all that we use them for: testing degrees of openmindedness, literacy, and intellectual rigor.

The idea of philosophies contributing to the evolution of debate theory and practice seems an obvious point, but is one which deserves reiteration for judges considering the (re)construction of their philosophies for next year.

This larger view of the function of judging philosophies is borne out by the difference between perceptions of the utility and the accuracy of judging philosophies. This seemingly contradictory result (if they are not accurate, why are they useful?) lends some support to the idea that the philosophy currently gives a general sense of knowledge about the topic, general openmindedness, and intellectual rigor.

Which leads to a second major point, the consideration of reconstructing the judge philosophy form. Alternative possibilities for categories or for a general approach to the form for generating philosophies were suggested in the commentary. One program director argued that the "debate community would get more written response if it didn't force the coach/critic into pigeon-holing theoretical, practical, and tactical predispositions into

categories.” While there was some support (mean of 3.16) for eliminating guidelines for judging philosophies (an “open” philosophy), there was considerable spread in the responses on this question (Standard Deviation of 1.21). This variance might reflect concerns that given such a free form, there would be little basis of comparison among the diversity of judges. If one of the purposes of the form is to reduce the uncertainty of debaters and coaches, the functionality of the form would be reduced. The community indicated other areas of priority that a specific form could more forcefully direct responses toward (i.e. Topic Specific Arguments, Evidence). Several comments queried about a category for the critique, a specific strategy questioning the assumptions of the resolution now enjoying some prominence, which might be included on the next judging philosophy form (indeed that category was added to the 1994 form). Perhaps in a larger sense the suggestion for a forum soliciting different categories should be considered, maybe every other year, so that some parts of the form evolve and adapt faster than the old judging philosophy form, which was a standard for almost a decade.

The community also might want to consider categories for inclusion that more fully address familiarity with the topic (amount of reading and research), and specific theoretical preferences (valuing links or impact more, thresholds for link acceptability, etc.). Absent community actions to revise the form, judges should be aware of the information need that is being expressed here, which includes more specific decision criteria preferences, along with specific skill capacities like flowing tags or evidence or both. A program director summed it up this way:

What debaters want to know is whether the judge is an intelligent, judicious listener, whether the judge has much of a background on the topic, whether the judge has much of a background in debate, and what sorts of arguments the judge would likely coach his or her team to run against the aff/neg.

That, coupled with the high ratings and rankings of specifying positions a judge refuses to listen to, judge biases, and pet peeves, may be the surest guidelines in constructing a judging philosophy, and in shaping the philosophy form for future use.

Finally, it is worth addressing the possibility of making philosophies available either at the beginning of the season, or at major tournaments. Of the 70 participants responding to these two questions, 67% (47) either Agreed (34) or Strongly Agreed (13) that philosophies should be collected and disseminated at the beginning of the season, while only 7% (5) either Strongly Disagreed (2) or Disagreed (3) with this option. An even higher percentage, 71% (50) either Agreed (35) or Strongly Agreed (15) that philosophies should be collected and disseminated at major tournaments, with only 4% (3) either Strongly Disagreeing (2) or Disagreeing (1). One debater suggested “distributing philosophies at the beginning of the year, amending them for Wake, and amending them for the NDT. This would give debaters an idea of how their judge feels about the topic. Naturally, as the year progresses, judges need to change their philosophies because ‘pet peeves’ may develop.”

One interesting comparison in the data is between the debaters and coaches and program directors. On the option of providing philosophies at major



tournaments, the debaters mean response (4.1) statistically was not significantly greater than the combined mean for coaches and program directors (3.68), but it was very close to being significant ( $t(68) = -1.1, p < .13$ ). Likewise, the debaters mean response (4.03) on providing philosophies at the beginning of the season was significantly greater than the combined mean for coaches and program directors (3.55), but not quite at a 5% significance level ( $t(68) = -1.29, p < .09$ ). These tendencies may reflect a greater concern with procedural difficulties among program directors and coaches, or it may just be that debaters feel the need for philosophies more sharply than their coaches (or perhaps both).

There are, of course, many logistical difficulties to implementing such a system. Judges may not know they will be attending tournaments until the last minute, many hired judges do not want to bother with writing a philosophy, and a change such as this could create significant burdens for tournament directors. It seems difficult to conceive of the NDT Committee overseeing a process to collect and disseminate judging philosophies either at the beginning of the season or at major tournaments. It also seems unlikely that tournament hosts will voluntarily collect and distribute these philosophies. Perhaps the community could explore the viability of other organizations managing this task, or of building the judging philosophy into the process of tournament submissions. While there will always be gaps, and difficulties, the community does seem to feel that the judging philosophies fill an important role in audience analysis and adaptation, and this role should be further explored by the NDT Committee, by the Policy Caucus, perhaps by the districts in their meetings, and by other interested individuals.

Appendix 1. Table of Survey Results

Question	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Rank	Yes	No
Use of Judging Philosophies (JPs)						
Read/Mark judging philosophies before tournament started?	73				52	21
Read/Mark JPs before rounds started	73				71	2
# times read/marked this year?	64	9.75				
Use JPs to adapt to judge?	71				70	1
# times used to adapt to judge this year?	56	9.71				
Use JPs to coach teams?	41				34	7
# time used JPs to coach teams this year?	27	9.70				
Usefulness of Philosophy Sections						
Theory section useful?	73	3.96	.79			
Topic Specific Argument section useful?	73	4.14	.87			
Evidence section useful?	73	3.79	.76			
Style section useful?	71	3.89	.87			
Number of tournaments sections useful?	68	3.55	.98			
New judging philosophy more useful?	69	3.67	.85			
Old philosophy sections useful?	69	2.75	.97			
Judging philosophies useful?	70	4.27	.56			
Judging Philosophies accurately reflect decision-making?	71	3.25	.98			
Scope of Usage						
Used at the NDT?	71				71	0
Used at ADA Nationals?	24				17	7
Used prior to the NDT?	52				47	5
Adapted/used during the regular season?	61				42	19
Functions of Judging Philosophies						
Should include positions judges won't listen to?	70	4.56	.77			
Rank of positions refuse to listen to?				1.45		
Should include strong biases?	70	4.60	.67			
Rank of strong biases?				2.03		
Should include evidence reading policy	68	4.25	.68			
Rank of evidence reading policy?				3.75		
Should include pet peeves?	67	4.24	.74			
Rank of pet peeves?				3.72		
Should include stylistic preferences?	66	4.26	.75			
Rank of stylistic preferences?				4.09		
Policy Options						
JPs collected/disseminated at beginning of season?	70	3.76	.91			
JPs collected/disseminated at major tournaments?	70	3.86	.87			
Abolish judging philosophies?	69	1.39	.6			
Change categories?	69	2.91	.7			
Set no guidelines?	69	3.16	1.21			
Shorter and more objective questions?	70	1.71	.74			
Stricter enforcement on providing philosophy?	70	2.33	1.1			



Appendix 1. Extended.

Strong Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Use of Judging Philosophies (JPs)									
Usefulness of Philosophy Sections									
1	1.3%	2	2.7%	12	16.4%	42	57.5%	16	21.9%
2	2.7%	2	2.7	5	6.8%	39	53.4%	25	34.2%
1	1.3%	2	2.4%	18	24.6%	42	57.5%	10	13.7%
0	0%	7	9.8%	11	15.4%	37	52.1%	16	22.5%
3	4.4%	5	7.3%	21	30.8%	30	44.1%	9	13.2%
1	1.4%	2	2.8%	27	39.1%	27	39.1%	12	17.4%
8	11.5%	17	24.6%	28	40.6%	15	21.7%	1	1.4%
0	0%	0	0%	4	5.7%	43	61.4%	23	32.8%
4	5.6%	12	16.9%	20	28.1%	32	45.1%	3	4.2%
Scope of Usage									
Functions of Judging Philosophies									
1	1.4%	2	2.8%	0	0%	21	30%	46	65.7%
1	1.4%	0	0%	1	1.4%	22	31.4%	46	65.7%
0	0%	0	0%	9	13.2%	33	48.5%	26	38.2%
0	0%	1	1.5%	9	13.4%	30	44.8%	27	40.2%
1	1.5%	0	0%	6	9.1%	33	50%	27	40.2%
Policy Options									
2	2.8%	3	4.3%	18	25.7%	34	48.6%	13	18.6%
2	2.8%	1	1.4%	17	24.3%	35	50%	15	21.4%
46	66.7%	19	27.5%	4	5.7%	0	0%	0	0%
2	2.8%	12	17.4%	47	68.1%	6	8.7%	2	29.0%
6	8.7%	18	27.1%	13	18.8%	23	33.3%	9	13.0%
32	45.7%	26	37.1%	12	17.1%	0	0%	0	0%
19	27.1%	23	32.8%	15	21.4%	12	17.1%	1	1.4%

Appendix 2: Written Commentary

Key: pd = Program Director, c = Coach, d = Debater, o = Other

*What do you think of the new judging philosophies?*

*Are they accurate? Useful?*

pd. Accuracy is marginal but enough to be useful. I don't think most judges pay much attention to the categories on the form.

c. They are o.k. The specific argument section is much better.

pd. About the same.

d. Provide interesting information and give a general background. Most of the time they are useful, but not always accurate. I think that they can give a place to start from in understanding the judge, but I do not think they are a 100% accurate.

pd. I have not noticed a difference.

pd. Much better—the old form was antiquated.

c. Much better than before.

c. Yeh. They are useful. . . . sort of even accurate. Its really the little things like no international fiat allows, or I don't get it with critique/kritik, etc.

d. They're accurate and very useful and they should be made available at all tournaments.

d. New judging philosophies are fine. Most give info you want although sometimes judges do not reflect on topic specific issues which they have biases on.

c. Are very useful. Sometimes not very accurate, but extremely useful.

c. Sometimes, but they are rarely useful when looking at bias to schools/regions.

o. What new philosophies?

d. Judging philosophies help us to figure out strategies before rounds. They also help us to learn/figure out what the judges like to hear (or what helps them to decide) in the final rebuttals.

o. Entertaining at times.

pd. Are they new? Not much difference from the old ones. The big problem is that few people actually judge in accordance with what's claimed on the philosophy. Most "judges" use the philosophy form to be (or appear to be) clever, cranky, deeply theoretical, etc. These forms are an excuse to posture in the guise of appearing to be helpful.

d. Any insight into the philosophy of a judge is useful. For the most part, the philosophies which I've read this year have been accurate. Philosophies should be distributed at the beginning of each year, then amended by Wake, and amended for the NDT.

d. I think that they are very helpful in allowing me to adapt to a particular judge. In particular they point me in the right direction in terms of what arguments to stress.

pd. I really don't notice much difference between the two. Some people follow the guidelines, some people don't.



c. I consider the new questions an improvement. They are as accurate as one could expect them to be.

d. Yes.

c. Too much overlap between views on general theory and topic specific arguments.

pd. Neither better nor worse than old ones.

d. I like them. They seem more germane to the rounds as they are debated. Obviously, we use them a lot and find them helpful.

pd. The new philosophies seem to continue to emphasize matters of specialized interest to upper level debaters, possibly even increasing that focus. As a director of a small program, with primarily inexperienced debaters, much of the material in the philosophies is irrelevant to their range of skills. The major issues of how the judge resolves contradictions, of levels of acceptable significance, of how the judge calculates impacts from probability and risk, and other "basic" info become much more important bits of information for our development.

d. More useful, but should include additional categories (critique/deontology/philosophy).

d. They're totally fresh, smooth, and ribbin' with an R & B tip.

d. Yes—it always helps to know people's positions—especially on issues which biases are strong.

c. Not really—people are still stuck in the old paradigms which as a community we've abolished.

pd. The new ones are better than the old ones. Topic-specific preferences are much more useful than abstractions and generalizations about paradigmatic/decisional criteria. I think debaters need some notice of what triggers reactions from a judge—especially in the case where the judge would like to let them avoid wasting time (or embarrassing themselves). It can also even the playing surface when a team is less familiar with a judge than their opponents. I'm not sure this needs to be done on paper. I don't mind it too much personally, but tournament directors (of all sorts) are having a tough time getting judges.

d. Actually, didn't really notice. Not really. I think they should include pictures so we can kiss up to people.

c. I like them. They seem accurate and useful.

c. They're fine—no complaints.

d. They are helpful.

d. They're just fine. Judging philosophies are a must for small schools who don't travel the national circuit and don't know many judges well. Their accuracy is dependent on how well you can read and interpret them.

*What improvements would you suggest?*

c. Debaters need to know this is what judges will do.

pd. That you begin the collection process before district tournament weekend.

- c. There should be a philosophy book put out first semester.
- d. Different questions like disclosure policy, and strong bias should be put in the book. Further, they should be made available at all tournaments. No debater should ever wonder who an adjudicator is.
- d. A topic specific section on the knowledge/biases a judge has towards issues on this topic.
- c. Less structure, just have judges say what they like.
- c. I think they are fine generally. I like them to be as specific as possible though.
- o. Don't use the back side of the page.
- d. The other judges take them a little more seriously and take the time to figure out what is important to them in a round.
- o. Print them on fine parchment with gold leaf and decorative endpaper, with a mahogany leather binding sporting the NDT log and embossed seal.
- pd. Judges might say if they 1) do research on the topic and how much, 2) flow tags, quotes, both, neither, 3) value links or impacts more, 4) have a threshold for what constitutes a disad (or turn) link, and 5) are a pussy—unable to pull the trigger for a non-rep team. Also, it's inexcusable that so many judges at this year's NDT did not provide philosophies. It's inexcusable that most of the judges we got were the ones for which no philosophies were available.
- d. I suggest distributing philosophies at the beginning of the year, amending them for Wake, and amending them for the NDT. This would give debaters an idea of how their judge feels about the topic. Naturally, as the year progresses, judges need to change their philosophies because "pet peeves" may develop.
- d. That more emphasis is placed on telling what judges think about certain issues and how much explanation they require for an argument.
- c. That judges be more open to arguments—this activity is for the students. Let them at least try to defend their position in an open forum without restrictions.
- d. Condense some judges' sheet. The 3000 word philosophy takes too much time to read. Many judges are vague on their arguments.
- pd. An open forum with suggestions for categories to include.
- c. It might be useful to ask how much reading a judge has done on the topic, or how much research.
- c. Let the judges say what they want. If I don't have strong biases, I shouldn't have to discuss them. Also, there may be biases that don't fit the pigeon holes.
- d. I would look for a way to incorporate more topic specific opinions on the forms (i.e. critique). Also, I would like to see a stronger enforcement in having judges' give their honest opinion as to the issues.
- pd. Debaters should be encouraged to make specific inquiry about what some statements mean.
- d. CRITIQUE/DE-ONTOLOGY/PHILOSOPHY—a new category.



- d. Good enough now—just get everyone to turn every one in.
- c. 1) Have an open format—let judges say what they want and not encourage the “old issues” which aren’t useful at all. 2) Get someone competent to put the book together. E.G. I was notified only 24 hours before the philosophies were due that mine had not been received.
- pd. The debate community would get more written response if it didn’t force the coach/critic into pigeon-holing theoretical, practical, and tactical predispositions into categories. What debaters want to know is whether the judge is an intelligent, judicious listener, whether the judge has much of a background on the topic, whether the judge has much of a background in debate, and what sorts of arguments the judge would likely coach his or her team to run against the aff/neg. Make the “form” more open-ended, providing suggestions (based on students’ real needs) instead of categories. I’d also suggest that they be reducible to 150 words for folks who don’t want to take the time to identify their feelings about theory and paradigms.
- d. Hire more judges who buy anarchy.
- o. Leave it open to begin with—no categories. Judges who have judged a lot will know what to put—and how they put their answers will be reflective of how often they’ve judged and will thus serve as an indicator to debaters of that judges experience on the topic, or debate in general.
- d. Distribution at other national circuit tournaments. Make sure everyone hands one in.

*How seriously do you take your own judging philosophy?*  
*How much time do you take to write it?*

- pd. I spent about an hour. I take it very seriously. I distribute it in every debate (either orally or in writing), not just at the NDT. I strictly enforce the rules enunciated in my statement.
- c. Very seriously. Being a first year coach it is often the only exposure debaters have to how I might view the round. I took a few hours to think about the philosophy and a few hours to write and re-edit it.
- c. Was rushed and simply revised from last year.
- pd. Pretty seriously—1 hour.
- c. Very seriously.
- pd. Very seriously. 2 hours.
- pd. Very seriously—revise over a couple of days.
- c. Rather seriously—try to accurately present my own judging views.
- c. Serious enough . . . a couple of hours . . . I think about how do I judge . . . then try to put it down . . . try to give helpful ideas . . .
- c. Fairly seriously, it takes about 20 minutes to do it.
- c. Very serious. More than necessary!
- pd. I take a lot of time to write mine but I’m guilty of the posturing criticism I make above. I also don’t believe that debaters or coaches ever read and adapt to my philosophy.

- c. If I take the time to write it, that is what I believe.
- pd. Very seriously—I have developed it over several years.
- c. Pretty seriously. A couple of hours.
- c. Very seriously. Actually writing time is short, but I think about it a lot (too much).
- pd. Very seriously. About 2 hours.
- pd. Generally, I try to give fair warning. This year, selected “late” (Tuesday before the NDT), I didn’t make the philosophy a high priority. I didn’t do it until Friday morning. When I did it, I spent about an hour adapting last year’s philosophy. While judging this tournament, I’ve tried to be governed by the philosophy.
- d. I’m a debater, cousin!
- c. I take it quite seriously. 1 hour or so.
- pd. Very seriously. And quite a bit of time. I think that the statements served to advance theory, strategy, and the pedagogy of both, in as much as we all seem to spend some time figuring out how our colleagues think (and write about their thinking). I take my own thinking fairly seriously. It’s always interesting to see who shares this sensibility and who would just as soon mask his/her preferences with abstractions and generalizations that do not really commit him/her to anything. I think we could do without written judging philosophies, but I don’t think we will. But I also think we should be honest about all that we use them for: testing degrees of openmindedness, literacy, and intellectual rigor.
- c. Its usually a rush job before the NDT. I think if they were disseminated throughout the year they’d be more accurate since certain rounds trigger things I’d like to include but do not remember by the time I do it for NDT.
- c. As seriously as possible. I took a long time to think about it. The actual writing process took about 15 minutes.
- c. I usually take an hour to gather my thoughts—it’s very difficult to summarize a generalization about how I put a round together.

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