

Volume 35, 1998 Speaker and Gavel

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Speaker and Gavel

Hazel O'leary and the Post-Cold War DOE:
Dissociation and Cold War Human Radiation
Experiments

Theodore O. Prosis
Adam L. Waugh

Jones v. Clinton and the Apologetic Imperative
Robert A. Vartabedian
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The Dark Side of Debate:
The Downfall of Interpersonal Relationships
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Assisted Research in Intercollegiate Debate
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The Ideal Citizen and the Public Sphere:
Pedagogy and Public Argument from Vico to
Habermas
Brian R. McGee

Journal of
DELTA SIGMA RHO—TAU KAPPA ALPHA

Speaker and Gavel

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Speaker and Gavel

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National Honorary Forensic Society

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HAZEL O'LEARY AND THE POST-COLD WAR DOE: DISSOCIATION AND COLD WAR HUMAN RADIATION EXPERIMENTS

Theodore O. Prosis
Adam L. Waugh

Abstract

This essay considers Hazel O'Leary's December 7, 1993, statement regarding Cold War nuclear tests. The essay draws on Bitzer's rhetorical situation and Craig Smith and Scott Lybarger's rearticulation of Bitzer's position as a framework to understand O'Leary's rhetorical strategy. We contend that O'Leary, in response to a failing public trust in her department, employed a rhetorical strategy to symbolically construct a post-Cold War DOE through argumentative dissociation. O'Leary's rhetoric is an example of the strategic use of a fundamental change in a situation and political context. O'Leary ideologically and temporally dissociated her organization from the secrecy characterizing the Cold War DOE and in this way she responded to the principal obstacle to the DOE's programs.

Introduction

The Cold War was a rhetorical construction and an ideological struggle of some significance. The end of World War II marked the United States' rise to a position of dominance in world affairs. Russia, a former ally in World War II, was "quickly" cast as the Soviet enemy (Scott 3). The rhetoric of the post war world characterized the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union as a struggle between two superpowers poised on the brink of nuclear war. Lynn Hinds and Theodore Windt, Jr. argue that the Cold War was "a rhetorical war" forming a "consensus" that bound American national purpose in opposition to the Soviet Union (1). From this Cold War rhetoric, "[a] new political reality developed" (3). This Cold War discourse became increasingly central to American purpose and identity for decades. Discussing the inception of Cold War rhetoric, Hinds and Windt suggest that as contexts change the definition of a new political reality arises through the following three conditions; "(1) a 'raw' event and/or events or its corollary, confusion about events; (2) a rhetoric that clarifies and assigns meanings to these events; (3) publicity for the rhetoric as oth-

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ers share it at the time" (7). The end of the Cold War presents rhetors with similar conditions, opening the discursive space for agents to define and understand a new political reality. The generally shared understanding that the world had recently gone through a profound political/historic shift with the end of the Cold War presents an opportune premise to redefine the purpose and persona of governmental agencies.

In December of 1993, Hazel O'Leary, the Secretary of the Department of Energy, made some startling announcements about American Cold War nuclear experiments. The government, she confessed, conducted 204 secret nuclear tests and sponsored or participated in human radiation experiments on over 800 U. S. citizens. The public statement was startling to many, but this official admission of questionable Cold War nuclear acts met with considerable media approval. That the U.S. government had participated in human radiation experiments "was hardly new" (Sea 37). A 1986 government hearing had reviewed many of these experiments (United States). Eileen Welsome's *Albuquerque Tribune* series on 18 individual subjects of Cold War human radiation experiments broke in November of 1993, but "no one in the national media seemed to care" (Kurtz G1). It was O'Leary's acknowledgment that "projected" the issue "into the national headlines" (Sea 37). Indeed, she triggered "a media firestorm" (Mann 470). In general, her "forthright admissions" (Sea 37) won her wide praise (Lee). Arjun Makhijani, writing in *The Bulletin of The Atomic Scientists*, claimed that "[t]he shaft of light Hazel O'Leary has shone into the darkness of the nuclear establishment's human experiments has revealed a reality as awesome as the first secret, blinding flash of the atomic explosion in the New Mexico desert on July 16, 1945" (18). Soon after O'Leary's announcements, survey data suggested a marked upswing in public trust in the DOE (Loomis; Scanlon). The Coalition on Governmental Information quickly awarded O'Leary the James Madison award honoring individuals who have "championed" and "promoted ... the public's right to know" (Spade). This first step in the DOE's four-part "openness initiative" (Spade) captured the nation's attention and eventually led to the revelation that over 16,000 Americans were subjects in government-sponsored human radiation experiments (*Facts*).

Why would O'Leary release prominently potentially damaging information? Her revelations could have increased media and public skepticism of the federal government and her organization. In light of her December 7 comments and the subsequent favorable media attention, this essay explores O'Leary's rhetorical strategies as an effort to gain public trust and enhance the DOE's ability to accomplish its organizational goals. This strategy was premised on the shared social recognition that Americans now live in the post-Cold War world. We argue that O'Leary's rhetorical strategy dissociates temporally and ideologically the post-Cold War DOE from the Cold War DOE. By highlighting the historic shift from the Cold War to the post-Cold War world, O'Leary presented the public with a new post-Cold War DOE. Furthermore, by releasing controversial infor-

mation about the Cold War past, she performatively enacted this dissociation by breaking from the traditionally secretive behavior of the head of the DOE.

In order to understand O'Leary's announcement, we turned to the notion of the rhetorical situation. Lloyd Bitzer's "rhetorical situation," in its time, provided a useful model to understand whether a rhetor's actions were fitting. For Bitzer, the situation calls for a response determined by a controlling exigency, the audience, and the rhetor's constraints. Scholars have criticized his perspective for failing to account adequately for rhetorical agency and the dynamics of rhetorical action. Recently, however, Craig Smith and Scott Lybarger reconstruct aspects of Bitzer's rhetorical situation in a way that preserves the elegance of Bitzer's terminology of exigency, audience, and constraints, while allowing for a more adequate and informed understanding of the contemporary dynamics of rhetorical action.

The primary problem with Bitzer's notion is its emphasis on the "controlling exigence" that organizes both the "audiences to be addressed and the change to be effected" (7). A central limitation is that agency is subordinate to the situation. Smith and Lybarger recast the rhetorical situation in an effort to maintain the strengths and resolve the weaknesses of Bitzer's concepts. Their goal is to enhance the sophistication of a rhetorical critic's analysis of the dynamics of contemporary rhetorical situations by recognizing the importance of rhetorical agency. Rather than advancing a single rhetorical discourse, rhetors construct multiple discourses in their appeals to diverse and distinct audiences. In short, rhetors actively engage and indeed construct multiple exigencies, audiences, and constraints (Smith and Lybarger 197-98, 210). We found Smith and Lybarger's revision of Bitzer's position useful in our analysis of O'Leary's discourse.

We proceed, first, with a brief discussion of the obstacles confronting O'Leary and the DOE's organizational interests. Next, we consider the rhetorical strategy of dissociation. We then analyze O'Leary's press conference, focusing on her strategy of dissociation and her construction of audiences. Finally, we conclude by suggesting some implications of O'Leary's strategy.

Organizational Interests and Nagging Exigencies

Initially, an exploration of O'Leary's expected role provides a better understanding of her rhetorical strategy. The notion of role implies that people are often "captives of their jobs" and that their "verbal strategies" are partially imposed on them (Hart 272). An institutional role defines a set of rhetorical parameters, or constraints, that influence the speaker's discourse. Kenneth Burke frames this issue in terms of identification; the link between individual identity and a communal or occupational identity (Cheney 11). George Cheney argues persuasively that we live in an organizational society. Therefore, exploring how identity, rhetoric, and organizational commitments function together is an important consideration to an

adequate understanding of contemporary rhetorical practices.

A rhetorical persona is a rhetor's public image (Hart 272-73). Organizations are personified in complex ways. The organizational rhetoric must, after all, manage "multiple identities" (Cheney 2, 4-7). Establishing a positive public persona for an organization through communication and identification is an important concern for organizations that deal with controversial issues. For Denise Bostdorff and Steven Vibbert, "an organization's image or persona serves to identify the organization for publics and also guide their responses to it" (146). Organizations attempt to establish positive public personas via rhetorical identification.

People necessarily associate the DOE, as a name and an organization, with particular meanings and feelings. Based on the organization's persona, people characterize the DOE, for example, as a trustworthy or untrustworthy entity. As O'Leary is the highest official of the organization, her purpose is consubstantial with the DOE's purpose and this necessarily constrains her rhetorical moves. This is not to say, however, that O'Leary's particular rhetorical strategy is determined by these issues.

In order to understand and explicate O'Leary's rhetorical strategy and the implications of her discourse, it is also helpful to explore the larger context of the DOE as an organization. The DOE was a central component of United States' nuclear policies in the Cold War and the guiding ideology of the Cold War was closely tied to the DOE's purpose. Although the post-Cold War world presents an opportunity to redefine the DOE's organizational persona, the problems confronting the DOE are certainly not all new. One of the primary problems confronting the DOE for some time has been the lack of public trust in its nuclear policies.

The implication of the lack of public trust is significant considering the DOE's responsibilities. The transportation of radioactive waste, the "selling" of waste storage sites to local communities, and the clean-up of contaminated areas are difficult projects in light of public feelings about nuclear energy and radioactive substances. "National public opinion polls taken through the 1980s consistently reveal hazardous wastes at or near the top of the public's agenda of serious environmental concerns" (Kasperson, Golding, and Tuler 163). As fears of radioactive substances grow, so does the difficulty of finding communities willing to participate in transportation and storage of the waste (Kasperson, Golding, and Tuler 174). J. Samuel Walker points out that "public fears about the risks of radiation exposure have been fueled by recent revelations about radiation released into the environment from nuclear weapons plants" (664). People's fears of nuclear waste, in part, stem from a lack of understanding. "Nothing triggers fear like the unknown" and "radiation has never been clearly explained for most people," Stuart Price alleges. "Add an undesirable term to this mystery and we are confronted with an ominous concept — Radioactive Waste" (32).

These are impressive pragmatic concerns for the DOE considering that public fear often triggers widespread "protests" in "opposition" to "haz-

ardous facility siting" (Kasperson, Golding, and Tuler 175). Michael Kraft, Eugene Rosa, and Riley Dunlap argue that "developments in the late 1980's and early 1990's" demonstrate that "public acceptability can be a vitally important and even a determinative force in the nuclear waste policy process" (4). Anxiety about nuclear waste is a large concern for the public and the distrust in the DOE compounds the problem. The DOE, as an organization, has to resolve nuclear waste issues and clean up nuclear sites. Dunlap, Kraft, and Rosa provide substantial evidence in their book *Public Relations to Nuclear Waste* that the public is highly critical of the DOE's handling of nuclear policies. Public distrust of the DOE is widespread and an impressive constraint to the fulfillment of the DOE's organizational goals (see Kraft and Clary 89, 93, 100; Rosa and Freudenburg 40-41; Slovic, Layman, and Flynn 68, 76).

The DOE is responsible for waste control and clean-up. But, it is also responsible for the promotion of nuclear energy. Indeed, since the DOE's inception, one of its roles has been the promotion of "civilian nuclear power activities" (Kraft, Rosa, and Dunlap 15). "Concern over radioactive waste stands at the top of public misgivings about nuclear power" (Kasperson, Golding, and Tuler 162) and public skepticism and opposition also threatens these DOE efforts. Furthermore, DOE research projects require public expenditures and are thus dependent, at some level, on public perception and opinion. In general, a lack of public trust "impedes the promotion of nuclear energy" (Corn 822). Enhancing the credibility of the DOE's nuclear programs will ultimately determine the success of future policies. In light of the failing public trust and the negative associations made with the DOE, the persona of the organization needed to be renegotiated. The organizational persona, the associations flowing from the name DOE, must be recasted to increase viability of the organization's goal achievement.

This goal is increasingly important considering two salient, large-scale DOE projects. One controversial DOE program is the proposed high-level nuclear waste site at Yucca Mountain, Nevada. The Yucca Mountain proposal has had little credibility from the beginning and public trust has steadily eroded (Kasperson, Golding, and Tuler 176). Indeed, "public opposition in Nevada has delayed, if not stymied, the national program for high-level waste disposal" (Kasperson, Golding, and Tuler 162). This project has erupted in greater controversy as the safety of the proposed storage facility has been increasingly questioned both within the DOE as well as from external public sources (see Broad; Johnson; "U.S. Inquiry"). Despite widespread opposition, the Yucca mountain storage option is the *only* plan the DOE is pursuing for the permanent storage of high-level radioactive waste, including weapons grade plutonium (Moore).

Another controversial DOE program is the National Ignition Facility. The NIF is designed to study "very small" nuclear ignitions ("Bang" 97). The program is being marketed publicly as a "peaceful energy program" (Beers 48). At the same time, its primary purpose is a military one. The "Science Based Stockpile Stewardship ... would be the crown jewel of a

post-Cold War nuclear weapons complex" (Davidson 51) and "a major component of the Administration's program for stockpile stewardship without nuclear testing" (Payne and Zacha 64+). O'Leary, confronted with such difficulties, had to find a way to make these and other DOE policies more palatable to an increasingly skeptical public.

Both of these programs were prominent concerns for O'Leary, along with a host of other nuclear waste and research issues. O'Leary's role is defined, in a general sense, as the spokesperson or public relations representative of the Department of Energy. Her discourse is partially a product of the need to both increase public trust in the DOE and to reassure the military and scientific communities that the DOE would serve their interests as well. Given the exigencies and the organizational/rhetorical constraints, O'Leary crafted a dissociative argumentative strategy.

The Post-Cold War as an Invitation for Rhetorical Dissociation

The Atomic Energy Commission, later The Department of Energy (established in 1977), has not existed outside of the controlling ideology of war. "The AEC was given unprecedented power" and "became ... a quasi-government and private corporation in one" (Makhijani 20). The Manhattan Project was a most secret program in World War II and nuclear policies were subsequently surrounded in "the cloak of Cold War secrecy" (Larson A8). Formed in 1946, the AEC assumed responsibility for the nation's nuclear policies. Stephen Hilgartner, Richard Bell, and Rory O'Connor document the AEC's and later the DOE's repression of information about nuclear weapons and energy. These organizations discursively obfuscated public nuclear knowledge. The AEC controlled the dissemination of nuclear information strictly and later the DOE continued this effort. "The power of the Department of Energy to restrict the flow of information is awesome. Whatever the DOE declares secret remains secret until the DOE determines it no longer is secret" (Hilgartner, Bell, and O'Connor 57). Formulated during World War II and extending into the Cold War, the organizational directives shaped the DOE in terms of military priorities. The Cold War was marked by intense organizational commitments to governmental secrecy and the ideological struggle with the Soviet Union consumed the attention of administrations of the Cold War era.

The Clinton Administration, the first full administration in the post-Cold War, has partially the responsibility of coming to terms with many of the extreme policies of the Cold War. Coming to terms with decades of policies based on nuclear deterrence and global ideological conflict is no simple task. President Clinton, early in his first term, had expressed a desire for the declassification of Cold War secrets (Culver 29). Indeed, Bruce Sanford and Henry Hoberman, First Amendment counsel for the Society of Professional Journalists, saw very positive signs of a commitment to relaxed information flow from the government to the public in the early days of the Clinton Administration (10). We contend that new rhetorical definitions are called for as the guiding ideology of the Cold War rivalry is

obsolete. O'Leary may have perceived Clinton's rhetorical commitment to a new policy of openness as an opportunity. She could begin the rhetorical commitment to openness and declassification ostensibly to come to terms with the policies of the Cold War (and enhance the credibility of the post-Cold War DOE). One of the practical ways in which rhetors can generate new political/historical definitions is through rhetorical dissociation.

Chaim Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca outline dissociation as an argument through redefinition. Dissociation first "assumes" an "original unity of elements comprised with a single conception and designated by a single notion" (411-12). This unity is then broken and "[t]he dissociation of notions brings about a more or less profound change in the conceptual data that are used as the basis of argument" (412). As a rhetorical strategy, dissociation involves the articulation of two distinct aspects of a previously unified thing. David Zarefsky writes "a seemingly unitary concept is divided by pairing it with two philosophically opposed terms, one of which is a value generally thought to be preferred over the other. The original term, with all its heritage and connotations, thereby takes on a different referential meaning" (9). Dissociation can be rhetorically powerful because of its potential to change, shape, and craft new social meanings.

Dissociation is commonly considered as a strategy to separate philosophical pairs. For Edward Schiappa, the philosophical orientation of dissociation is limited by ordinary language use, but "dissociation," nonetheless "plays an important role in restructuring a community's linguistic understanding of reality" (81). Practical forms of dissociation can use forms of the social authority from a shared sense of history, time, and ideology to redefine a political reality. For example, Michael Weiler, in his analysis of the political discourse of Senator Gary Hart and President Jimmy Carter, suggests that the rhetors of neo-liberalism emphasized a qualitatively new and indeed an unprecedented political package. The new persona of liberalism was articulated as distinct from traditional liberalism in an attempt to shed the negative connotations associated with traditional liberalism. Concluding, "the most important development," according to Weiler, "is the movement from the negative ... image to a positive one made easier through redefinition" (375). For O'Leary, the shared sense of social change, from the Cold War to the post-Cold War world, allowed her to define a new DOE temporally and ideologically.

O'Leary's Temporal and Ideological Dissociation

O'Leary was clearly concerned with the lack of public trust in the Department of Energy. She explicitly expressed concern in her opening statement about a 1992 survey suggesting that the public's trust and confidence in the DOE was near the "bottom of the barrel." She wanted the DOE to be "on top" of the public's confidence list. To accomplish this goal, O'Leary associated the past DOE with secrecy and the present DOE with openness, rhetorically dissociating the DOE past from present. O'Leary crafted a new persona for the DOE, isolating her organization from policies of govern-

mental abuse during the Cold War.

O'Leary began her statement by defining the purpose of the press conference. The press conference was a performative step toward the DOE's "new commitment to openness." She identified a new political context, declaring that "the Cold War is over." Therefore, as an organization, the DOE must now "talk about coming clean." The opening move in her statement sets up a temporal and ideological framework from which she discusses subsequent issues.

Understanding the history of the Atomic Energy Commission is a vital consideration if we are to understand where the DOE stands today, O'Leary suggested. The early work of the AEC was necessary: the historical context of World War II demanded it. "We were in a struggle for survival as a nation," O'Leary opined, and "national security was at the heart of everything." Continuing, she stated that "[t]he work to produce that atomic bomb was thought to be — and most of us understand was the core ... to ending World War II." She extended the justification for atomic science and secrecy through the end of World War II. The main force propelling the DOE then was nuclear superiority: "all that came after was to keep the nuclear deterrent in place ... to stay technologically ahead and superior." O'Leary claimed that the young DOE "was shrouded and clouded in an atmosphere of secrecy," even "repression." For O'Leary, then, the need for secrecy characterized the Cold War and in this context that secrecy was warranted.

The end of the Cold War renders the reasons and justifications for the restriction of information less relevant. O'Leary claimed that the entire DOE shared the view "that there is much information that can be declassified." With the "falling of the Berlin Wall" the efforts toward declassifying material must now commence. She celebrated the unprecedented organizational commitment to openness. The "big deal," according to O'Leary, was the declassification of "the largest amount of information in the history of the Department of Energy." O'Leary, implicitly, asked the audience to postpone judgment on the current DOE in light of its "new commitment to openness." She framed the issue as a study of "the legacy of the Cold War." The DOE will now expose "the impact of the Cold War." The end of the Cold War now allows the current administration to "serve people better." As an organization, the DOE is now fully committed to "overhauling our Cold War policies."

In this way, O'Leary highlights a historic shift from the ideology that had dominated the actions of her department since its inception. She associated the contemporary DOE with disclosure, governmental accountability, and with a commitment to public access to information concerning the past actions of the government. She made an organizational commitment to gaining the public's trust and a commitment to two-way communication. The "original unity of elements" of the DOE is characterized in a new light through the dissociation of the past from the present organizational persona. With the transition from the Cold War to the post-Cold War world as a widely shared understanding, O'Leary symbolically split the DOE into

two distinct organizations. In other words, the DOE of the past was characterized with words like secrecy and repression, and the present character of the institution was described with words like openness and disclosure. These opposing concepts symbolically split the organizational persona, suggesting to audiences that they view the organization as two separate entities, distinguished by time and ideology. Because secrecy and openness are opposing concepts, O'Leary made it difficult for the audience to associate her institution and its new commitment to public information with the secrecy of the DOE of the Cold War. O'Leary used the public awareness of the perceptual change in a political reality — that we are now in the post-Cold War world — to remove nagging criticisms from sticking to the “new” DOE.

Audiences, Organizational Purpose, and O'Leary's Role Enactment

O'Leary's overarching strategy is clear. However, the complexity of her rhetorical situation is substantial. O'Leary must define the new DOE and also account for several important audiences. There were several implied audiences (Black 112). First, there were the military and scientific audiences. O'Leary reassured these audiences that the central scientific and military mission of the DOE was alive and well in the post-Cold War world. Another audience was the public. This included those directly concerned with the DOE's nuclear policies as well as the general public. The final and most immediate audience was the media. This audience was a conduit for the subsequent dialogue between DOE officials and the public at large.

Several audiences are identified in O'Leary's articulation of the initial benefits of the DOE's new “openness.” The first audience is composed of the military and scientific communities. O'Leary opined that the openness is a continued commitment to the Clinton Administration's leadership in non-proliferation efforts (while at the same time weapons research can continue). The DOE's declassification efforts will enhance U.S. non-proliferation leadership. In this way, O'Leary, in the post-Cold War world, redefines the value of security in terms of openness (as opposed to secrecy). In addition, research for both nuclear fusion energy and for military weapons testing will continue with the DOE's full support. O'Leary tied her broader openness efforts to these audiences while assuring them that the DOE would continue to serve their research interests. O'Leary also presented the declassification efforts as a boon to the scientific research and development of hot fusion energy. She repeatedly referred to the fusion research that the DOE would continue to perform. O'Leary's commitment to the administration's non-proliferation efforts and to continued research on both nuclear weapons and nuclear energy reassured important audiences. This efforts was in concert with her general message about the DOE's new commitment to openness.

The second “benefit” of the new openness, for O'Leary, was that the nation will be able to consider the implications of the recent past. “We've got to expose the impact of the Cold War,” O'Leary stated, “both in terms

of its environmental health and safety impacts and also the impacts on, if you will, the psyche of the nation." O'Leary aligns the organization's goals with citizens interested in the legacy of the Cold War. O'Leary defined particular audiences, referring to them generally as the DOE's "stakeholders." These audiences included those interested in issues of non-proliferation, historians, ordinary citizens, and workers concerned with safety and the health hazards of nuclear policies. O'Leary defined the DOE's organizational purpose in relation to these stakeholders. The DOE's goals were consubstantial with the public's interests (Burke 21). As a nation, she stated, we must "grapple with the problem in a very public way." Opining that the nation must consider the legacy of these actions, O'Leary affirmed the value of exploring the recent past in order to reconcile the public's fears in governmental organizations. In sum, according to O'Leary, we must examine recent history and understand its implications for us all.

Consistent with her commitment to openness, O'Leary crafted a symbolic role for herself as a servant of the identified stakeholders. O'Leary portrayed herself as a servant-leader. She said she was willing, in Ronald Wendt and Gail Fairhurst's words, "to listen to and act upon the input of followers," and to "establish a 'moral dialogue' which will guarantee a voice for all stakeholders" (183). To "build public trust," O'Leary released information about 204 previously unannounced nuclear weapons tests, acting in a manner performatively consistent with her overall message. The reason for the dissemination is two-fold, according to O'Leary. First, the release of this information demonstrates a commitment of the Clinton Administration's leadership in worldwide non-proliferation efforts. Second, the release of information on plutonium production and nuclear tests lets "people know that we are willing to come clean." Thus, she enacts a role performatively consistent with the dissociation strategy. Her persona and the DOE's organizational persona are consubstantial.

Through her performative commitment to the declassification process and to "coming clean," O'Leary offered the public "the new spirit of the Department of Energy." Rhetorically, the Secretary of Energy signaled a qualitatively different organizational commitment characterized by an ethos of "openness" and public accountability. When discussing the declassifying efforts, Hazel O'Leary referred to it as the first in a series of upcoming exchanges between the public and the DOE. The press conference is a performative commitment to the new organizational persona: "the reason I'm doing it today is because I want you to clearly understand the new spirit of the Department of Energy." The declassification is the first step in the opening of a "public dialogue." The DOE will be committed to engaging the public in "a dialogue" to create an "informed debate" and to satisfy the "public's desire to know." The public stakeholders, for O'Leary, are the most explicitly identified audiences. O'Leary invites these publics to engage in a dialogue with the DOE concerning future declassification efforts. Public citizens are an important implied audience of the initial event and an anticipated audience of future declassification efforts.

In concert with her explicit identification of stakeholders, the other important audience for O'Leary was the media. O'Leary developed the media as an audience in two simple ways. First, the scene of the announcement includes the media most directly. She chose to engage in a dialogue with the public indirectly via the press conference. The media as a mediator of change, in Bitzer's terms, was a means to disperse the message of openness widely. She asked the press to assist her and the DOE in promoting the new trend toward a publicly engaged DOE. "We could use a lot of help," she stated, "just in terms of how customers see that process and what they'd like improved as opposed to what we'd like improved." Near the end of her statement she spoke directly to the press at hand. She asserted that in order to build public trust, the DOE must "deliver what you need ... tell you what we can deliver [and] when we'll deliver it." This audience, arguably, was the most important for O'Leary. The media's ability to disseminate her message of openness broadly and positively nationwide would allow a wide public audience to hear her dissociative message.

Throughout the statement, O'Leary made commitments to act upon the input of her audiences. The DOE was interested in "what they'd like improved," and promised to "deliver what you need." By identifying stakeholders, opening a dialogue with those stakeholders, and making a commitment to act upon the outcome of that dialogue, O'Leary constructed the rhetorical persona of a servant-leader of the public. O'Leary framed her persona as a crusader for the "public's desire to know," thus associating herself with the generally preferred value of openness. In so doing, she dissociated herself from previous heads of the DOE.

O'Leary attempted to enhance the credibility of her organization. Her strategy was to rhetorically involve the public stakeholders in a dialogue. In order to turn the tide on the public's lack of trust in the DOE, O'Leary must rely on strategies that will demonstrate that the current DOE is committed, competent, caring, and predictable (Kasperson, Golding, and Tuler 170). O'Leary, a former energy industry public relations executive (Corn), no doubt understood the difficulties facing her organization. O'Leary is responsible for casting her organization in a more favorable light in order to maximize the probability of success of future DOE projects. This partially demanded that she include, or at least appear to include, the public more in the decision-making processes of the DOE. Cooperation and a bilateral exchange of information are at the core of establishing social trust (Kasperson, Golding, and Tuler 164). Significantly, rhetors may ease the fear of nuclear waste and power through organizational appeals to openness. The DOE desperately needed to reconcile the history of secrecy and repression associated with the organization. Enhancing the public's trust in an organization that has been plagued by a lack of public credibility is not an easy task. Fundamentally, the task requires a profound shift in the way the public looks at the DOE. As Rosa, Dunlap, and Kraft argue, "[a] regaining of trust will require a fundamental modification" of the DOE's

culture "inherited from a military past of secrecy and isolation from public accountability" (317).

The Human Radiation Experiments

The story that would capture the lion's share of the public's attention came at the end of O'Leary's statement. "There's one final piece that I want to discuss today, and that is the human radiation experiments that have been ongoing," she stated. Her subsequent message was of human interest and shocking and it would receive more attention and exposure than any of her other statements. O'Leary stated that in order for "the Department of Energy ... to really enter into informed dialogue with the public, there's got to be some trust around that informing, and that only happens when we release information that's necessary for the dialogue." The key information, for the media, was the disclosure of the government's Cold War human radiation experiments.

In November of 1993, Eileen Welsome published a series of articles in the *Albuquerque Tribune*. These articles concerned 18 individuals injected with plutonium without their adequately informed consent. The articles reported that the injections were part of human radiation experiments beginning in the 1940's and sponsored by the Atomic Energy Commission. Again, Welsome's series initially received scant media attention (Kurtz G1), but several of the accounts captured O'Leary's attention.

Responding, in a way, to Welsome's series, O'Leary portrayed herself as a humanistic servant-leader of the DOE. She stated that she was "appalled, shocked, and deeply saddened," by the accounts of the individuals reported about in the *Albuquerque Tribune*. Regarding a specific account of one of the individuals injected with plutonium, she indicated that she was "constantly reminded of a comment by a daughter of one of the patients." She stated that she "attempting not to be sensational." Although most of the 800 experiments were ethically appropriate, "the idea ... is to wrestle down what we know and give it to the public." In so doing, O'Leary broke from the traditional persona of the head of the DOE. She humanized her role by reflecting remorse and sympathy for the individuals involved in the AEC-sponsored experiments. The government was responsible for ethically questionable actions and O'Leary framed herself as a concerned person trying to get to the bottom of the issue. O'Leary symbolically departed from a traditional role of the spokesperson for the DOE of the past and adopted the persona of a citizen concerned with past injustices of the Cold War. She was also a leader of the public in a quest for understanding and information. She accomplished these role enactments by dissociating the past action of the DOE by demonstrating a commitment to getting to the bottom of the issue of human radiation experiments. In sum, her statements reflected a sense of commitment to the public, performatively consistent with the new persona she had crafted for her organization.

The significance of O'Leary's departure from the traditional role of the head of the DOE received considerable notice. O'Leary, in the words of

Senator Ted Stevens (R-AK), had taken "actions ... in direct contrast" to her "predecessors" (*Federal*). O'Leary's move "represents a" profound "change of attitude toward the government's Cold War legacy" (Allen 1+). Eileen Welsome stated that "Secretary O'Leary has done what none of her predecessors have done in nearly half a century" (Welsome, *Federal*). Makhijani wrote, "for the first time, the head of the nuclear weapons establishment" has admitted that human radiation experiments were conducted (18).

The release of information about Cold War human radiation experiments was a performative move in the temporal and ideological dissociation. This, as with the construction of the post-Cold War DOE as a rhetorical reality, was another constructed exigency; a rhetorical move used to demonstrate the openness characterizing the persona of the new DOE. Although the revelations of the government's role in the human radiation experiments could increase skepticism in government, O'Leary dissociative strategy shields the post-Cold War DOE and the post-Cold War administration from criticism. Indeed, the post-Cold War DOE and administration would be committed to grappling publicly with the nation's recent Cold War past.

Implications and Conclusions

The lack of trust in the DOE and nuclear waste policies threatened the DOE's ability to achieve its organizational goals. O'Leary responded by revealing potentially damaging information regarding the nation's Cold War nuclear policies. O'Leary's rhetorical situation involved multiple exigencies and discourses to respond to those exigencies. O'Leary crafted exigencies and defined her multiple audiences and her complimentary roles. O'Leary defined multiple audiences, working with different organizational constraints, and reassured these audiences of the DOE's commitment to all of their interests. She reassured the military and scientific community even as she advanced a message of openness in direct contrast to the secrecy that characterized nuclear policies in the Cold War.

O'Leary used the shared understanding that the post-Cold War reality is a qualitatively different historical period as a base for her overarching rhetorical strategy. This shared understanding premised her dissociative isolation of the present DOE from the organizational characteristics of the Cold War DOE. O'Leary's discourse is an example of the flexibility of the argumentative strategy of practical dissociation. Rather than a heavily analytic or philosophical example of dissociation, the ideological and temporal aspects of O'Leary's dissociation allowed her to differentiate the contemporary organization from its past actions and at the same time enhance its public image. O'Leary's rhetoric is thus a marked symbolic shift from political discourse of recent decades. Although political dissociation is not uncommon, the use of the post-Cold War as a shared understanding of a historical shift from the Cold War represents a turn in political communication.

We contend that O'Leary used Welsome's human radiation experiments

story, along with the ideological and temporal dissociation strategy, to increase the credibility of the post-Cold War DOE as an open, honest, caring, and trustworthy organization. By highlighting a temporal and ideological shift from the Cold War and by appealing to the public performatively, with a the commitment to openness and governmental accountability, O'Leary presented the new DOE as a separate and distinct entity from the secret DOE of the Cold War. Her rhetorical acts were performatively consistent with the new persona of the DOE. O'Leary broke from the traditional constraints of the head of the DOE. She presented herself as a compassionate public servant driven by a human need to get to the bottom of the secrets of the Cold War.

There are two broad implications that we should now consider. First, we should next ask how much the DOE, as an organization, has changed with O'Leary's announcements. O'Leary attempted to enhance public trust in the DOE in order for the DOE to achieve its organizational goals. But, she must also maintain a commitment to other interests. There is a tension in her commitment to openness and her commitments to the scientific and military interests. O'Leary clearly addressed the scientific and military community in her statement and she advanced strong commitments to their interests. Certainly O'Leary released controversial information and much more soon followed. But, was the strategy simply instrumental to achieving organizational goals, goals that will inevitably, at some level, be surrounded in controversy and secrecy? The DOE as an organization has a vital interest in dissociating its present persona with the legacy of Cold War nuclear policies even though many of its central interests remain the same. O'Leary's appeals and explicit reasons for her actions seemed earnest. However, we should also consider that two important controversial DOE programs were not explicitly discussed in her statement.

Recall that two pressing concerns for O'Leary were the Yucca Mountain waste repository and the National Ignition Facility. The Yucca Mountain program is one of the most controversial in the DOE's history. Is the danger of the waste dump lessened because we are in the post-Cold War world? The answer, we believe, is no. Furthermore, there are significant signs that the DOE is pushing only for the Yucca project and is ignoring public opposition and is not participating in bi-lateral communication practices (see, Flynn, Kasperson, Kunreuther, and Slovic).

The NIF program did not become highly controversial until a few months after O'Leary's statement, but O'Leary makes several independent indirect references to the fusion program for both military weapons research and civilian energy purposes. The NIF is a program designed to both continue nuclear weapons research and civilian hot fusion energy research (Collina). O'Leary referred to the NIF (not by name, but indirectly), as "a major component of the administration's [non-proliferation] program." Her advocacy for this program is clear in her use of strictly positive terms. Is the danger of pursuing nuclear weapon's research at the same time the U.S. is calling for non-proliferation efforts and testing bans less-

ened because O'Leary pointed out that we are now in the post-Cold War world? Is the public's concern with nuclear power being addressed if O'Leary is pushing for the next revolution in nuclear energy? The answer to both questions, we believe, is no (or at least, not completely).

In sum, we can read O'Leary's rhetoric as ideologically motivated by her identification with the central purposes of the DOE (whether it is the Cold War or the post-Cold War DOE), rather than simply a commitment to accountability and openness. After all, O'Leary's primary commitments are to releasing information about the past, not about the present DOE programs. Her rhetorical strategy offers information regarding Cold War nuclear policies, not post-Cold War nuclear policies. Further research should focus on the DOE's subsequent exchanges with public citizens about nuclear waste policies and repository siting issues.

The second implication, although it is not necessarily mutually exclusive with the first, more favorably considers O'Leary's discourse. Certainly, O'Leary's strategy intended to enhance the credibility of the DOE and the Clinton Administration. However, how the nation comes to terms with the policies of the Cold War deserves increasing consideration. We suggest that the rhetoric of a post-Cold War world presents an opportunity to understand more openly our nation's recent past. O'Leary's strategy suggests how rhetors may address actions of the recent past and deal with those actions publicly. This strategy does not necessarily jeopardize the credibility of the current administration. Such a rhetorical strategy allows public officials to publicly reveal controversial actions in the past in a way that invites public deliberation, discussion, and contemplation. At the same time, this strategy also isolates the rhetor, the organization, and the current administration from direct criticism. So, it is a strategy that allows the dissemination of important information about the recent past with less personal and organizational risk.

O'Leary's discourse is suggestive of the possibility of healthy political advocacy about the past. Indeed, according to Senator Markey, O'Leary may have started an openness precedent (as cited in Greenberger). Her actions "may have touched off a revolution in official openness" (Wasserman 113+). Both Jane Kirtley, executive director of the Reporter's Committee for Freedom of the Press and Sheryl Walter, general council of the National Security Archive, suggest that O'Leary has potentially laid the groundwork for other agencies and organizations to open up and come to terms with the recent past.

O'Leary's discourse may signal a genre of post-Cold War rhetoric of openness. This argument is certainly premature, but this essay begins to sketch out rhetorical aspects that may lead to a better understanding of the potential of political/historical rhetoric in the post-Cold War world. We should, at the least, be aware of this rhetorical strategy to see if others employ similar rhetorical moves. O'Leary's December 7 statement is useful to rhetorical critics as it may come to represent a form of strategic discourse evolving from the transition to the post-Cold War America. There is a ten-

sion in the two implications presented above. This tension deserves further consideration. O'Leary's rhetorical dissociation is a means to shield a contemporary or post-Cold War DOE and administration from criticism. At the same time, the grim and controversial work of the DOE to dispose of nuclear waste and to promote nuclear energy and nuclear power will continue, perhaps without the two-way communication between the DOE and the public. We should consider carefully if there has been a change in the DOE's relationship to publics concerned with the DOE's nuclear policies. But, on the other hand, it is also vital to explore and understand how more open and genuine understandings of the nation's recent Cold War past can be facilitated. By isolating herself and her administration from the policies of the past, O'Leary facilitates public deliberation and simultaneously bolsters her organization's credibility with the public. We ought consider the ideological reasons for such disclosures, but we must also recognize the strategy's potential to facilitate the dissemination of information about the recent past. Such efforts enhance timely public reflection and consideration about the United States' Cold War nuclear policies.

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JONES v. CLINTON AND THE APOLOGETIC IMPERATIVE

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Abstract

Since the beginning of his first presidential campaign in 1992, Bill Clinton has survived several news-making scandals. Clearly, the recent sexual allegations of the Monica Lewinsky case were precipitated by the Paula Jones case. This case has shown surprising longevity and involves the May 6, 1994 sexual harassment suit filed by Paula Corbin Jones. In light of Bill Clinton's experience with scandal, particularly the Paula Jones suit, this essay explores initial media assessments of Clinton's credibility. Additionally, the rhetorical ritual of self-defense is examined as a virtually unused persuasive device for Clinton. This analysis subsequently theorizes that public desensitization to such accusations has, for the time being, altered the electorate's response to Bill Clinton's ethical predicaments and the art of "political damage control" in general.

Introduction

Bill Clinton has been beleaguered by scandal since early in his first presidential campaign in 1992. Indeed, he has provided the popular press with numerous stories which titillate the tabloid mentality. During the 1992 presidential campaign, he was questioned about his romantic involvement with Gennifer Flowers, his avoidance of the draft, and his experience with marijuana use. After becoming president, additional scandals surfaced, such as the ongoing Whitewater controversy, the issue of questionable contributions to his 1996 presidential campaign, and, of course, Paula Corbin Jones' claim of sexual harassment. Even more recently are the ongoing sexual allegations regarding former White House intern Monica Lewinsky and President Clinton.

In many ways, the Paula Jones sexual harassment suit presents a situation representative of the "character" related accusations that have surfaced during both Clinton's candidacy and presidency. Moreover, the "secret" deposition of the Paula Jones case has opened a personal and political "can of worms" regarding new sexual allegations. As such, the circumstances and the apologetic exigencies surrounding the Paula Jones case will be the central focus of this essay. It is Clinton's role as the president of the United States and the potential for his personal conduct to set the moral precedent for that institution which make this case and his rhetorical re-

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sponses to it noteworthy.

Paula Jones alleges that on May 8, 1991, while Clinton was governor of Arkansas, he met her in a hotel room and made unwelcomed sexual advances toward her. On February 11, 1994, in response to a story she read about the incident, Jones held a press conference (during a conservative political convention) to disclose these allegations. On May 6, 1994, she filed a sexual harassment suit against Clinton. (For a more detailed account of her perceptions of the May 8, 1991 incident, see the Appendix.)

Clinton's responses to Paula Jones' accusations have been consistently limited, yet the ramifications of sexual harassment in this case do not seem to haunt him as might be expected. It appears that public desensitization to Clinton's ethical circumstances has become a buffer between negative public perception of Bill Clinton and of the office that he holds. Perhaps a desensitized public bombarded with such accusations has now resulted in an unprecedented perceptual separation of the president and the office of the presidency.

Given Bill Clinton's experience with scandal — particularly the Paula Jones sexual harassment suit — this essay will explore: (1) initial media assessments of Clinton's credibility, (2) the rhetorical ritual of self-defense and Clinton's avoidance of it, (3) the inoculatory effects or desensitization of the electorate to high level sexual scandals, and (4) the implications of Clinton's apparent rhetorical approach, i.e., his unique application of apologetics.

Media Perceptions of Clinton's Credibility

Not surprisingly, the popular press—particularly the conservative press—has not hesitated to question the "character" of Bill Clinton. Certainly his derogatory nickname, "Slick Willie," is a reflection of this tendency. Conservative publications such as the *American Spectator* have repeatedly chastised Clinton as an unabashed "womanizer" (see, for example, Eastland, 1992, April, p. 58). Richard Lacayo writing for *Time* commented on some of the negative perceptions of Clinton as he labeled him the "Libido-in-Chief" (1994, May 16, p. 44).

An important issue is whether it is fair to attack Clinton for accusations primarily related to his personal life. Certainly there are those who view such scandals as the Paula Jones story as unjustifiably distracting and essentially irrelevant to Clinton's presidency. James Wall writing for the *Christian Century* obviously echoed initial public skepticism as he referred to the Paula Jones case as mere "trash talk" that interfered with the important tasks of the presidency. He concluded: "Sexual harassment remains a national problem which deserves our attention — but not our exploitation" (1994, May 18, p. 515). Joe Klein of *Newsweek* found it difficult to be judgmental of Clinton's personal life especially in an era of "moral relativism" and divorce. Consequently, he believed that if he were to err he would rather it be "in the direction of not covering sex and other personal things" (Quoted in Shepard, 1994, July/August, p. 26). Some commentators find it

unfair to single out Clinton when there have been many philandering presidents. Moreover, some of these presidents have been quite effective. As the *Economist* stated: "Plenty of adulterers (and liars) have occupied the White House, some with distinction" ("Clinton Agonistes," 1992, February 1, p. 16).

Conversely, some analysts have found that Bill Clinton has demonstrated serious and seemingly habitual character flaws. The *New Republic* vehemently stated that Paula Jones' sexual harassment suit should not be taken lightly:

... the accusation of sexual harassment against the President of the United States is a big deal. It has nothing to do with the invasion of the president's private life, which we have consistently lamented. It has everything to do with the president's — or, rather the former governor's — public life, which is of great interest to anyone who cares about the integrity of the most powerful man in the country. ("Distinguishing Characteristics," 1994, May 30, p. 7)

Concerns also have been expressed regarding possible patterns of personal indiscretion by Clinton. Lance Morrow, in *Time* magazine, reflected that Clinton had duped him before but would not do it again:

Some observers—including me—took this grow-up-and-get-to-work-on-real-problems line during the Gennifer Flowers episode in early 1992. In retrospect, I think I was wrong. There is an American cultural problem here that sharpens down to a character problem: Bill Clinton's character problem. (1994, May 16, p. 94)

In summarizing the relevance of the Paula Jones story to our assessment of Bill Clinton as a public figure, Michael Kinsley of *The New Republic* concluded:

First, it would constitute classic, hard-core sexual harassment, which is illegal . . . Second, legality aside, it is gross and disgusting . . . behavior that suggests a real character problem . . . Third, if Paula Jones' story is true, Clinton has lied about it, which makes him less believable about other matters. (1994, May 30, p. 6)

In mid-January of 1997 as Clinton was about to begin his second term, *Newsweek* magazine featured Paula Jones as their cover story. Reviewing the history of this case, *Newsweek* argued that the reason many people had not taken Jones' story seriously was that the mainstream media (which was now beginning to give more credence to this story) had been "skillfully spun" by the White House and Clinton's lawyers (Thomas & Isikoff, 1997, January 13, p. 26). Regardless of one's assessment of the true nature and potential seriousness of the Paula Jones/Bill Clinton scandal, did it necessitate some form of a personalized defense (apologia) from Clinton? On "legal" grounds, certainly Clinton can remain virtually silent—as he waits to see if and when this case comes to court (i.e., tentatively in late-May of 1998). However, on "moral" grounds, one might expect more of an explanation or even indignation on his part. Perhaps this question would be more easily answered after a brief examination of the rhetorical ritual of

self-defense.

The Ritual of Self-Defense

In the many examples of apologia throughout history, there is one common element, that is, in each case the accused chose to face his/her accusers and to speak in defense of himself/herself. The witnesses to such self-defenses seem satisfied with a personal defense by the accused rather than a surrogate defense by a representative. The actual speech of self-defense is thus defined by Ware and Linkugel as a "personalized defense by an individual of his morality, motives, and reputation" (1973, p. 274).

Other scholars essentially concur with this definition. Butler (1972) refers to the apologia as speakers' attempts to "repair their ethos" (p. 287). Kruse (1981) concludes that apologetic discourses are "similarly structured in that logos and pathos function principally to support ethos" (p. 290). Downey (1993) goes even further in her concept of apologia as having evolved to an important "symbolic strategy" (p. 60).

The traditional form of the apology as it was used by the ancients has not significantly deviated in the contemporary practice of apologia. Specifically, the four following rhetorical tasks are often undertaken by the ancient as well as the contemporary apologist: (1) A statement of the case at hand is given; (2) Then, a refutation of the charges and often a counterattack are advanced; (3) The self-defense explanation unfolds, particularly stressing the rhetor's fine character; and (4) Finally, a summation/conclusion is given reasserting the apologist's own moral integrity (Kennedy, 1963, p. 151).

Although the rhetorical critic's interest in apologia has been considerable, Ware and Linkugel's (1973) article was the first contemporary scholarly endeavor to both grant apologia a generic status and detail its common elements. They posit that four primary "factors" or strategies consistently appear in self-defense rhetoric: denial, bolstering, differentiation, and transcendence (p. 275).

The denial strategy amounts to a disavowal by the speaker of any participation in, relationship to, or positive sentiment toward that which has repelled the audience. Bolstering efforts are the speaker's attempts to identify himself/herself with something viewed favorably by the audience. The differentiation strategy is the speaker's particularization of the charges at hand—moving the audience toward a new and less abstract perspective. Finally, transcendence is the speaker's means of moving the audience away from the particulars of the charges at hand, while toward a more abstract and general view of his/her character.

Gold (1978) believed that post-Watergate presidential campaigns would be particularly reliant on the type of character defense inherent in apologia. Gold's view of the exigencies that require apologia are worth noting. She stated, "Any attack casting suspicion upon one's moral character may hinder one's ability to achieve goals and, unless deflected, may destroy the ability to function as a public leader" (p. 307). As a result of the Watergate

scandal, Ford and Carter in their 1976 presidential campaigns clearly stressed the integrity of their character, as the presidency had lost its inherent sense of honor. In light of the Chappaquiddick incident, Edward Kennedy was faced with a similar character defense in his 1980 campaign for the presidency. In the 1988 presidential campaign, Gary Hart's candidacy was short-lived as a result of his inability to explain away charges of sexual indiscretion.

In examining the specific case of Bill Clinton in light of what is known about the ritual of self-defense, the following conclusions are apparent: (1) The exigencies, tasks, and specific strategies of traditional apologia appear to display a recurring form; (2) Given the aftermath of the Watergate scandal, the necessity of character defenses would seem even more significant in presidential communication; and (3) Certainly Bill Clinton's "morality" and "reputation" have been called into question.

Implications of Clinton's Approach to Apologia

After analyzing the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* from February, 1994 through December, 1997 (i.e., a four-year period following Paula Jones' first public accusations), it is readily apparent and not at all surprising that Clinton has avoided any direct comment on the Paula Jones lawsuit. When asked at a May 6, 1994 exchange with reporters if he had any comment on the lawsuit filed against him, he stated: "Well, I thought Mr. Bennett [his attorney] did a fine job. I don't have anything to add to what he said." When asked if he was going to argue that all the charges were false, he insisted: "I don't have anything to add to what Mr. Bennett said. I'm going back to work." Finally, when asked if he categorically denied the charges, he merely repeated: "Bob Bennett spoke for me, and I'm going back to work. I'm not going to dignify this by commenting on it" (Office of Federal Register, 1994, May 9, p. 1000).

A similar Clinton response was apparent at a town meeting in Cranston, Rhode Island on May 9, 1994. When asked if he and his family were being held to a higher standard than their predecessors, he remarked:

Well, I think that I've been subject to more assault than any previous president, based on the evidence . . . But I think that the constant politics of diversion and destruction is not good for America, but I'm prepared to live with it and keep working. (Office of Federal Register, 1994, May 16, p. 1039)

Clinton's limited comments here focus on (1) his attorney, Robert Bennett, being his official spokesperson, (2) not wanting to dignify the charges with a response, (3) the divisiveness of the assaults against him, and (4) his need to continue his work. It is interesting to note that he personally does not deny the charges at hand. Moreover, he uses a surrogate apologist of sorts in his attorney, Robert Bennett. In addition, he tries to transcend the circumstances by labeling his detractors as divisive and implying that they interfere with his work.

One obvious question is if Clinton is not willing to address the Paula

Jones suit what does his delegated spokesperson, attorney Robert Bennett, have to say? Bennett's public comments were similarly limited but somewhat more direct:

The President adamantly denies the vicious and meanspirited allegations in the complaint. Quite simply, the incident did not occur . . . This is about money and book contracts, and radio and television appearances. (Lacayo, 1994, May 16, p. 44)

Although this is a brief statement, it provides a surrogate apologist's groundwork for three apologetic strategies: denial, differentiation, and transcendence. Speaking on behalf of Clinton, Bennett provides a clear denial of the charges at hand — and that the incident did not even occur. In addition, Bennett uses differentiation as he particularizes these accusations as "vicious" and "meanspirited." Finally, Bennett transcends the charges here by showing a hidden agenda of "money," "book contracts," and "radio and television appearances." Interestingly, Bennett's denial was later modified to suggest that Clinton and Jones may have met but that Clinton had no recollection of it ("Lawyer: Clinton Offered Settlement," 1994, October 2, p. 2A).

In sum, Clinton's self-defense approach is dominated by his attempts to personally avoid the issue at hand and his use of a surrogate apologist. His surrogate, attorney Robert Bennett, at least provides a denial of the charges as well as other traditional apologetic strategies. A conspicuous question is: Why couldn't Clinton provide his own denial? Would this not be more credible and consistent with the tradition of apologia? As discussed, there may be ongoing and compelling "legal" reasons for his relative silence, but a strong "moral" obligation to do otherwise. Perhaps this query can be further illuminated after a brief examination of the issue of the desensitization of the American public. This issue will be examined in special regard to the recurring accusations confronting Clinton.

Inoculating the Nation to Scandal

In their seminal essay on prior-belief defense to persuasion, or inoculation, McGuire and Papageorgis (1961) posited that the biological analogy of inoculation could be used to bolster a defense against persuasive attacks against the United States. They proposed that by introducing young Americans to less substantial counterarguments against their governmental systems, they would be more prepared to battle against arguments contrary to American values that came at a later time (McGuire & Papageorgis, 1961). Just as a weakened virus arouses the body to fight off disease, weakened arguments will stimulate a mind to build strong defenses against persuasive discourse.

McGuire and Papageorgis discussed patriotic issues in their original study. Coincidentally, this study examines a very sacred institution for most Americans: their president, and particularly, the office of the presidency. Indeed, there exists in most U.S. citizens the predisposed quality to support the sanctity of the president, or at least the

office that he holds. The person, the persona, and the office are all part of a mythic perception that we as a nation have created. The president is our leader, and should have superior intelligence, character, and privilege in the collective mind of the constituency. The latter two qualities, however, have set up a possible paradox in the case of Bill Clinton, which the public must confront.

The office of the presidency inherently accommodates privileges which can nullify character flaws. These can be legal privileges as well as symbolic privileges. The public is eager to support the highest office of the land, and even those who do not support Clinton are hesitant to contribute to the degradation of the office of the presidency. When this element is considered along with the effects of an inundation of allegations, we can see how an inoculation to the president's circumstances could shape his self-defense posture.

Tolerance among the electorate is volatile, and cannot be explained easily, as time, setting, and individuals involved are evaluated by standards that invariably change. For example, while Bill Clinton's experimentation with marijuana was not debilitating enough to hinder his first campaign for the presidency, many of us remember this as the instrumental factor that prevented Douglas Ginsberg from ascending to the Supreme Court bench in the late 1980s. In Clinton's case, his actions were cause for some bad press and pot-smoking jokes, but not much more. In essence, the public had received a potentially negative image, or a negative persuasive argument about Bill Clinton, but it was not strong enough to encumber his campaign. Shortly thereafter, voters were introduced to other "mini-scandals" which surrounded Bill Clinton, none of which paralyzed his political career, but all of which have left marks upon it.

While McGuire explained inoculation in terms of reinforcing morale in our nation, he also explained it as an effective theory of counteraction to persuasion. He later expounded on his previous work by stating, "We can develop belief resistance in people as we develop disease resistance . . . by exposing the person to a weak dose of the attacking material, strong enough to stimulate his [or her] defenses, but not strong enough to overwhelm him [or her]" (McGuire, 1970, February, p. 37). In effect, the American public was seemingly never overwhelmed by each segment of the evolution of the collective character of Bill Clinton.

Evidence to support that desensitization to accusations about Clinton has taken place exists in the statements by many that we need to focus more on the political abilities of our leader than his personal life. Also, in a 1994 study conducted by the Center for Media and Public Affairs examining over 300 news stories and 1,200 news articles, it was noted that "every major newspaper published more than five times the number of stories on Whitewater as on Troopergate/Paula Jones" (Hernandez, 1994, November 19, p. 16). One reason for this could be that after hearing the accounts of Gennifer Flowers and later Paula Jones, the electorate is no longer shocked

by such accusations. It is also very possible that these narratives are falling into the "what's new?" department of Clinton affairs. Whether we believe that Clinton is guilty or not has become less of an issue because of the many inoculations we have received regarding accusations of unpresidential behavior. It is likely that doses of this inoculation started long before Clinton even took office, as the public has become privy to accounts of unpresidential behavior by leaders such as John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, as well as hopefuls such as Gary Hart.

One advantage for Clinton may be a lack of credibility for his accuser. Reports have varied on Paula Jones, initially claiming a wide scope of attacks ranging from "she is doing it for the money and the book rights" to the opinion by one unidentified bureau chief that she is just a woman "from a trailer park with big hair" (Hernandez, 1994, November 19, p. 38). However, more recent revelations of systematic White House "smear" tactics against Jones tend to enhance her credibility (see Thomas & Isikoff, 1997, January

13, p. 26). As can be expected, there is still disparate and often politically-motivated speculation about the seriousness of this case. The theory presented here provides one reason as to why this scandal was not taken seriously enough to derail Clinton's re-election in 1996.

While the public may very well be numbed to Clinton's alleged behavior for myriad reasons as suggested, the lack of impact that such information about our president would normally carry is not extremely surprising. This seeming acceptance of behavior has no doubt influenced Clinton's response: While his predecessors would rhetorically seek exoneration, he has discovered that "inoculation" provides the same eventual outcome—a public that is surprisingly willing to forgive and forget. In effect, this helps to shape his attempts at self-defense and alters the basic premise that apologia consists exclusively of denial, bolstering, differentiation, and transcendence. Although desensitization is not a rhetorical strategy, *per se*, an awareness of desensitization results in a less aggressive apologetic discourse. In considering the legal as well as the theoretical implications here, Clinton's legal team may see it in his best present interest to say as little as necessary. This representation of a change from previous expectations for apologia very possibly develops from inoculation, and in these circumstances a surrogate response appears to be adequate.

Apologetic Epilogue

In addition to the ongoing legal issues in this case and his possible reliance on public desensitization (or inoculation), there appear to be several other potential reasons for Clinton's "rhetoric of avoidance." First, an explanation can be found in the familiar expression: "I will not dignify that with a response." Such a comment, which was actually used by Clinton, implies that the accusations are so far-fetched and preposterous that an explanation is not necessary. But as previously discussed, are Paula Jones' accusations beyond the realm of possibility given Clinton's history and his

own admission of "having caused pain in his marriage" (Lacayo, 1994, May 16, p. 44)? In sexual harassment cases there are seldom other eyewitnesses, and "courts are inclined to credit contemporaneous accounts." Immediately after the alleged incident, Jones told six people about it and several have provided affidavits supporting her story. Moreover, in an account prior to any of Jones' public statements, Arkansas State Trooper, Danny Ferguson, confirmed some of her story as he stated that he had taken "a woman named Paula" to Clinton's room (Weisberg, 1994, May 23, p. 12).

A second possible reason for avoiding traditional apologia in this circumstance may certainly be based upon his presidential status. Regardless of innocence, would it not appear unpresidential to be making such a response. Throughout his presidency, however, Bill Clinton has demonstrated a "casual" presidential style in which "frankness" appeared to be an important quality. For example, he is the president who appeared on MTV and actually responded to a question as to whether he wore boxer shorts or briefs (Morrow, 1994, May 16, p. 94). As such, rhetorical "avoidance" would appear to be inconsistent with Bill Clinton's redefined presidential style.

Perhaps the most feasible explanation is that he may not be innocent, or, at least, completely innocent. Specifically, the self-defense rhetor attempts to extricate himself from wrongdoing by elucidating the situation. If such an illumination is unavoidably self-incriminating, the rhetor will find himself "hoisted on his own petard" (see Vartabedian, 1981, p. 107). An awareness of a desensitized public, however, may alter the traditional need to provide a personalized defense. In light of the dichotomy of president/presidency discussed in this case, it appears as though Clinton is forming a self-defense posture unique to his surroundings.

Unless Paula Jones recants her accusations or Bill Clinton confesses to them, we will never really know what transpired on May 8, 1991. Since neither of these divulgences is likely, it is her word against his, which is not uncommon in sexual harassment cases. What is uncommon about this case is that the accused is the President of the United States. In addition, the accused has been repeatedly involved in controversies which would have most likely prevented previous politicians from serving in office. Clinton's approach to these controversies, however, may have helped him to overcome the stigma of sexual harassment for the time being. Unless the public and the media demand thorough investigation of any turpitude on the president's part, his self-defense strategy of avoidance may prove to be the most effective approach. Lack of public outcry combined with the ongoing legal ramifications of this case have, for the time being, effectively helped Bill Clinton in shaping any defense for the future. Additionally, a thriving U.S. economy serves to further motivate Americans in their willingness to be "desensitized."

While denial, bolstering, differentiation, and transcendence are obviously still employed, there are noteworthy departures from the traditional ritual of self-defense in Clinton's approach. It is possible that modern times

create different public expectations with regard to a “personalized defense”. Clinton and his advisors may have chosen the most workable strategy available even if it is not seen as the most honorable. Perhaps the paradigm for apologia has shifted with a public that is inured to personal scandal, is increasingly comfortable with spokespersons, and distinguishes the president from the presidency.

Certainly the Monica Lewinsky case, which “broke” in late-January of 1998, will serve to further test our notion of public desensitization. Despite these allegations, at present, President Clinton enjoys his highest ever job approval rating. Perhaps Americans are still waiting for better corroboration of these allegations? Yet again, perhaps Americans simply do not care. It may be that a desensitized modern society and moral relativism have rendered previous apologetic imperatives obsolete.

Notes

Paula Jones’ account of the May 8, 1991 incident was as follows:

A state trooper, Danny Ferguson, came by her convention registration table (for the Arkansas Development Commission) at the Excelsior Hotel to relay a message from Clinton: “The Governor said you make his knees knock.” Ferguson came back with Clinton’s hotel room number and the message that the Governor wanted her to stop up in a few minutes. She told the *Washington Post* that she wasn’t wary of the invitation because “I was brought up to trust people, and especially of that stature—you know, a Governor.”

Ferguson led her to Clinton’s room, she says, which was furnished with a sofa and chairs but no bed. With the trooper waiting in the hallway, Clinton closed the door and made small talk about her job. Then he took her hand and pulled her toward him. When she pulled away, he told her, “I love the way your hair flows down your back,” and “I love your curves.” Then he put a hand on her leg and tried to kiss her neck.

Despite the advances, Jones says she didn’t leave the room but sat down at the end of the sofa. Clinton’s next move, she claims, was to drop his trousers and his underwear, sit down beside her on the sofa and ask her to perform oral sex. At that, she says, she headed for the door. As she departed, she says, Clinton told her, “You are smart. Let’s keep this between ourselves.”

Jones maintains that Clinton’s alleged come-on was harassment because she was an Arkansas state employee in 1991. After refusing Clinton’s advances, she says, she was treated badly at work, transferred, and denied promotions. Because the federal statute of limitations bars harassment suits after six months, Jones is suing instead for infliction of “emotional distress,” as well as deprivation of civil rights and defamation. (See Richard Lacayo (1994, May 16). Jones v. the president. *Time*, 143, p. 44.)

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THE DARK SIDE OF DEBATE: THE DOWNFALL OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

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Over the past several decades, scholars, former debate coaches, and debaters have lauded the advantages of participating in competitive debate (McBath, 1975; Parson, 1984). Debaters learn how to reason critically, do in-depth research, speak "on their feet," learn about contemporary world problems, and, upon graduation, achieve great successes in graduate school or in organizations. As former debaters, we are grateful for having been trained in these skills; however, we also have observed that there is a "dark side" to competing extensively in debate activities. The very type of thinking in which one is trained to engage while debating can be detrimental to interpersonal relationships. Therefore, the purpose of this essay is to outline some common interpersonal communication theories and perspectives, and to examine how "thinking like a debater" can lead to unsatisfying interpersonal communication.

Ideological Perspective

Between the two of us, we have had nearly fifty years of experience in debate, either as debaters or as coaches. Our aim in this essay is to use our personal experience, observations, as well as knowledge of the experience of other debaters and coaches to help explain a phenomenon which we have experienced or witnessed for many years. Thus, while this theoretical application is not based on experimental data, it is ethnographic in nature. Creswell (1994) defines "ethnography" as the naturalistic study of a cultural group over a period of time, using primarily observational data (p. 11). Adler and Adler (1994) note the ethnographic researcher could play the role of complete participant, participant-as-observer, observer-as-participant, or complete observer. For this study, we were complete participants, observing others in a familiar location and drawing on our familiarity with the culture, including the setting and typical behaviors (Adler & Adler, 1994). In addition to observation, we drew upon personal experience, a method outlined by Clandinin & Connelly (1994), as well as upon our knowledge of the experiences of others.

We acknowledge that individuals have difficulties in relationships for many reasons; for example, the mere fact that debaters and coaches are gone from their homes for extensive periods of time can be harmful to relational maintenance. However, recognizing that relationships can be

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ineffective for a myriad of reasons, we still contend that one's way of thinking will profoundly affect how one interacts with other people.

Prior research suggests that debaters approach reasoning differently in comparison to non-debaters; debaters use more bribes, social pressure and assertive burden switches than non-debaters (Rieke, 1981). Thus, our main argument is that, because debaters think and reason differently than non-debaters, they approach relationships, particularly conflict, differently than others. Debaters are trained in argumentation skills of logic and analysis; therefore, relationships and events which occur therein must be explained utilizing principles of logic. This situation is similar to that faced by lawyers who are trained to believe that all value systems and principles can be challenged; this belief can cause the individual to be skeptical when a loved one expresses a desire or aspiration (Fischer, 1990). Unfortunately, some interpersonal scholars have noted that relational satisfaction is not predicated on logic (Davis & Latty-Mann, 1987; Hecht, 1978). For example, some successful relationships defy explanation — outsiders might wonder how the two individuals ever formed a relationship. In other cases, it would make sense for a relationship to be perfectly healthy; e.g., a relationship between two interpersonal scholars, yet the relationship might be fraught with conflict and tension.

The notion that relationships must make logical sense affects the manner in which debaters deal with conflict as well. Thus, while debaters might think they are providing logical responses to a partner's position, the feelings of the partner might be paramount. Feelings can take precedence over logic, and feelings are not always logical. In a recent conflict, for example, one of the authors was told, "You can provide 100 reasons for this, but I *feel* x, and I don't care if it's logical or not." Debate can also make one hostile and combative; we have both been told to "quit arguing like a debater," and/or "this isn't a debate round." In fact, similarly, a lawyer is trained to value "winning" an argument — "it is how well one argues that really counts" — not preserving the relationship (Fischer, 1990).

In general, then, our position is that, as debaters, we are trained to think differently than others. While that type of thinking might be useful in academics and on the job, it can be detrimental to one's interpersonal satisfaction. The remainder of this paper will outline some predominant interpersonal perspectives and will discuss how "thinking like a debater" allows one to operate in each perspective.

Standpoint Theory

According to Wood (1994, p. 154), standpoint theory holds that "humans are shaped by diverse material, social, and historical circumstances within which their lives are embedded." A standpoint, then, is not just a position; it is a "sense of being engaged" (Hartstock, 1983, p. 285). The most commonly accepted type of standpoint is gender (Wood, 1993). That is, instead of viewing behaviors as being attached to biological sex, behavior is learned as a concept of gender. However, standpoints are created

socially, so that “roles, experiences, and understandings entailed in them shape individuals’ thoughts, feelings, and actions” (Wood, 1995, p.38). Thus, standpoints do not necessarily have to be gender-related.

One’s standpoint, then, is dependent on several components. First, the context and environment in which people are involved over a lifetime are important (Wood, 1993). In addition, and perhaps most importantly, standpoints are dependent on the groups to which one belongs (Wood, 1995). Social groups determine how people think and behave; therefore, social groups can help form our views about relationships. In fact, as group membership solidifies, a culture is created in which group members understand the goals, behaviors, and ways of communicating with one another — something those outside the group do not understand. As a result of the environment, coupled with the nature of group membership, individuals tend to depend on self-talk to shape and re-shape their identities to cohere with the expectations and perspectives of others with whom they interact (Wood, 1994).

Although the influence of debaters as a social group cannot in any way be as pervasive of the influence of gender, those who have competed in debate become a part of a unique social group which creates a standpoint for interacting and having relationships with others. Participants in debate travel from early October through late April, almost every weekend. During the week, squad members meet for practice rounds and work sessions. Frequently, squad members socialize with one another outside of the academic and competitive environment. Therefore, students who compete at even a moderate level can expect to spend a great deal of their time in college with the debate team.

While group dynamics vary from team to team, the forensics environment typically features some common characteristics. Students are competitive; the purpose of the activity is to win. Those who do well are accorded more credibility by the others in the group; those who do not perform well are usually unknown. In fact, winning the National Debate Tournament, or even qualifying for a final round can become all-consuming events, molding the standpoint of debaters and coaches. On some squads, students compete against each other for the opportunity to travel. In addition, debaters are trained to express themselves clearly and without hesitation.

Recall the thesis of standpoint theory is that one engages in self-talk and shapes or re-shapes his/her behaviors to correspond with the perspectives or views of others in the group. The group, then, has a tremendous influence on how individuals within it view relationships and how they deal with relational issues. As one becomes enmeshed in the debate culture, it is difficult to not consider and make changes in one’s communication behaviors. The typical student (and coach) in this group is outgoing, argumentative and assertive. Thus, because the norm in the culture fosters such behavior, debaters (and coaches) tend to model it. In fact, in order to fit in and to be considered successful in the activity, it is important to be

able to be similar to and gain acceptance with other group members. Such a life change is similar to that which lawyers experience: "a fundamental change in world-view, a change in how they experience meanings and significances of human situations, as well as a change in the ways in which they relate to them" (Fischer, 1990). It is no wonder, then, that debaters who "live and breathe" forensics for four years (as well as group members who are not as immersed) become and assist in creating a culture in which the members are introduced to a unique way of approaching problem solving, competition and relational issues. Our position is that debaters approach relationships from a particular standpoint which might create the relational problems described throughout the remainder of this paper.

Uncertainty Reduction Theory

In everyday interactions with others, individuals cope with uncertainty as to the communication patterns and actions of the other individual. As a result, one of our main goals is to reduce the uncertainty of the interaction, a concept called uncertainty reduction theory (URT) (see, for example, Berger & Calabrese, 1975). As uncertainty decreases, individuals might experience greater intimacy, increased verbal communication and nonverbal affiliation, and increased similarity and liking (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). On the other hand, when uncertainty remains high, individuals feel uncomfortable and conversation is effortful and awkward (Berger, 1986). In those cases, high uncertainty leads to the opposite effect: intimacy, verbal and nonverbal communication, similarity and liking remain low (Berger & Calabrese, 1975).

The primary method for reducing uncertainty is question-asking through conversation (Douglas, 1994). Berger and others have found that, when uncertainty is high in initial interactions, individuals ask many questions (Berger & Calabrese, 1975; Berger, 1979; Berger & Kellerman, 1983). As uncertainty decreases, the number of questions asked decreases as well. While any number of questions can produce helpful answers, most of the questions tend to be requests for information about the other's self (Douglas, 1987).

While question-asking is an efficient way to gain information about the other person, the strategy also presents difficulties. Berger (1979, p. 140) notes that too many questions change a conversation into an interview; as a result, the person being questioned might begin to dislike the feeling of being interrogated. In addition, extensive question-asking (without question-asking from the partner) violates the norm of reciprocity. Finally, there is no guarantee that the answers one receives are truthful. As a result, individuals must find a balance between seeking information and behaving in a socially appropriate manner (Berger & Kellerman, 1983; Kellerman & Berger, 1984). Ultimately, then, for most individuals, social constraints restrict the rate and intimacy of information requests, making question-asking, in some ways, an inefficient way to find out about others (Douglas, 1990; Douglas, 1994).

When individuals are not able to reduce uncertainty, the result typically is a failed relationship. Douglas (1990) concluded that even if individuals use a wide array of information-seeking devices, if the partner is unwilling to sufficiently disclose, uncertainty will continue to exist. Thus, to some extent, uncertainty reduction depends on the partner. On the other hand, if the individual behaves in a socially inappropriate manner by grilling the partner, the relationship probably will not develop at all. Berger (1986), in fact, discovered, and Parks and Adelman (1983) agreed, that if interaction cannot be coordinated due to high levels of uncertainty, the relationship will terminate.

URT helps explain failed relationships in terms of those who have been involved in debate. One of the skills taught in forensics is information seeking. Debaters must continue to question as they research positions on the topic. They learn how to engage in cross-examination — grilling someone and being grilled for six total minutes in each debate round. In addition, debaters are trained to ask questions in order to score points or to win, not to understand the relational other's aims. Coupled with our innate need as humans to decrease uncertainty, information seeking is something that debaters know how to and are encouraged to do. In fact, much of the activity revolves around principles of information seeking, and the notion that nothing is absolutely "certain." Such "global uncertainty" tends to promote in high levels of information seeking (Douglas, 1994). In the forensics context, such a practice is not unusual and is socially acceptable.

However, when one is trained to ask as many questions as possible in an attempt to decrease uncertainty, it is likely that the balance between question-asking and socially appropriate norms will be lost. To a debater, asking a series of questions is not unusual; yet, to someone who is not involved in that context, the questions appear like an interrogation, and/or the interaction does not appear to be reciprocal. Such social unease (and, thus, uncertainty) is unsettling and is damaging to a developing relationship. Opponents in a debate round handle cross-examination in a professional, effective manner; relational partners typically are not equipped to handle being cross-examined (nor should we expect them to be).

In addition, if the practice of question-asking is to reduce uncertainty, debaters, in their unending quest for knowledge, might not ever feel they have enough information to decrease uncertainty. If the individual feels that his/her partner is not providing sufficient or truthful information, the questioning will continue. If uncertainty still exists, the likelihood of relational termination increases. Therefore, URT operates on two levels: first, the debater might cross the line of social appropriateness, badgering his/her partner until the relationship terminates, or, second, the student might never feel he/she has enough information to reduce the uncertainty, thereby not pursuing the relationship. Our position is that debaters take URT to the extreme, which results in relationships that do not begin or relationships that terminate as soon as the partner decides to not tolerate further inquisition.

Second Guessing

URT provides the impetus for second-guessing theory. If humans are information seekers, and tend to gather information in an attempt to reduce the uncertainty of the interaction, they also will attempt to reduce uncertainty of particular messages. They do so by utilizing the process of "second-guessing."

Second-guessing is a cognitive process in which the receiver, upon hearing a message which he/she feels is biased, will attempt to "de-bias" the message to gain a "truer" account. The receiver believes that he/she can "correct for" the bias contained within the message (Hewes & Graham, 1988; Hewes, Graham, Doelger, & Pavitt, 1985). Typically, second-guessing occurs due to the need for uncertainty reduction when 1) people obtain indirect information, 2) the information is useful and 3) they realize the information might be distorted (Doelger, Hewes & Graham, 1986).

The process of second-guessing involves four steps. First, in the vigilance phase, individuals become aware of the need to second-guess. The primary drive is for accurate information (Hewes & Graham, 1988). Next, in the reinterpretation phase, the individual must choose whether or not to doubt the message. If there is a need to second-guess, he/she will attempt to reinterpret the message. Of course, this requires one to be "mindful;" messages are closely and critically examined (Hewes & Graham, 1988). In contrast, mindlessness consists of accepting and acting upon messages without reflecting upon their meaning. The third phase is the reinterpretation assessment. In this phase, individuals determine if their reinterpretations are adequate; if there is a need for more information, individuals will engage in more question-asking and information gathering (Hewes & Graham, 1988). The social tactic phase involves acting upon the reinterpretation — how the individual chooses to respond (Hewes & Graham, 1988).

Thus, the premise behind second-guessing theory is that, when a message is presented that might be biased, the receiver can choose to reinterpret that message. In debate, students are taught to second-guess. There is no "true" argument; it is always possible to counter a claim. If one does not have evidence, at the very least, coaches teach their students to listen to the claim and "press" the other team to provide more information. In addition, when the individual is attempting to determine whether the other's disclosure is truthful (recall, this is a drawback to question-asking discussed in terms of URT), a forensics student's training suggests that no statement is completely truthful — second-guessing should be commonplace. Therefore, debaters may have what Doelger, Hewes and Graham label "dispositional traits" in which they are "globally distrusting," second-guessing everyone (1988). While this skill works very well in debate rounds, in interpersonal relationships, it can create havoc. Imagine interacting with someone who second-guesses each message you produce. Even more troubling is the enactment of the fourth phase, involving social tactics. In debate, when one second-guesses an argument, thinking that there is bias

underlying it, he/she openly challenges the opponent. It is a common (and supportable, we believe) myth that debaters can argue about anything and will not hesitate to openly challenge and confront the opposition regarding the perceived bias and their reinterpretation. (Just ride in a van with debaters for awhile, and this behavior will be quite evident.) In interpersonal relationships, this strategy is not always wise, as, if for no other reason, it is annoying. In addition, it is impossible to establish trust when one's messages are constantly being second-guessed. Thus, second-guessing theory effectively explains the argumentative nature of the forensics student and why that nature might not foster solid relationships with others.

Interpersonal Influence

Research in the area of compliance gaining suggests that individuals use an array of strategies to influence others (see, for example, Marwell & Schmitt, 1967; Wiseman & Schenk-Hamlin, 1981). Although there is some question as to the validity of methods used to determine such strategies (Burleson, Wilson, Waltman, Goering, Ely & Whaley, 1988), researchers have concluded that the strategies which are selected are based on the intention of the actor (Schenck-Hamlin, Georgacarakos, & Wiseman, 1982), on the situation (Levine & Wheeless, 1990), and/or on secondary goals such as identity, interaction, resources, and arousal management (Dillard, Segrin, & Harden, 1989). Cody and McGlaughlin (1980) systematized compliance gaining into a six-factor typology: (1) the degree of intimacy between the target and the actor; (2) the extent to which compliance will personally benefit the actor; (3) the consequences of the compliance-gaining attempt to the relationship between the target and actor; (4) the rights of the actor in the situation; (5) the extent to which the target typically dominates the actor; and (6) the degree of resistance the actor expects the target to offer. Finally, researchers have discovered that individuals usually use compliance-gaining strategies which will help the other "save face" (Craig, Tracy & Spisak, 1986), although individuals with power will tend to use politeness less often (Baxter, 1984).

While most individuals, for whatever reason, use a common set of compliance-gaining strategies in order to gain others' compliance, debaters tend to use argument and reason-giving to gain compliance. Debaters are trained in winning and losing with immediate consequences, especially in the age of immediate revelation of decisions. Hence, debaters might attempt to win an "interpersonal" position just to win, merely for the ego satisfaction of winning without concern for the larger bearing on the relationship. Therefore, if three reasons are not sufficient, the debater might provide another ten, thinking that a "judge" will look at the flow and clearly see that the opponent is "spread out of the room." However, in some cases, it does not matter how many reasons are provided, if none of them are compelling. Moreover, if a partner feels "spread out of the room," he/she might be much *less* willing to comply. The compliance-gaining strategies of argu-

ment and reason-giving are impolite, meaning that debaters tend not to think about face-saving when attempting to influence others. In fact, such impoliteness might make a partner feel that he/she is constantly in a one-down position, leading to feelings of victimization or refusals for continued communication. The choice of strategies also reflects the possibility that debaters are less concerned with interaction and arousal management goals and more concerned with establishing the goal of identity. If interpersonal interactions become nothing more than extended debates to gain compliance; if one partner continues to treat his/her relational partner as both opponent and judge, the relationship can be doomed to failure.

In addition, typically there is not a great deal of intimacy between the debater and judge, so students do not get to practice their compliance-gaining requests in intimate relationships. Miller et al. (1977) have discovered that intimate relationships are more successful when a variety of strategies are used. Lacking experience and training in both intimate and nonintimate realms, debaters learn only a single competitive type of compliance-gaining. Winning a debate not only furthers the aims of the debater, but also generally increases their personal satisfaction. When debaters have fulfilled their ego needs by being successful in the debate arena, they may not feel the need, or have the skills to practice their compliance-gaining in more intimate interpersonal relationships. The consequences of debating are quite clear: immediate victory or defeat. Admittedly, these are rather short-term consequences. Strategies in interpersonal relationships may well have more long-term consequences, such as the continuation of the relationship, and if debaters believe that every decision has roughly a two-hour time frame, it may hinder their ability for longitudinal insight.

Therefore, the perennial need for compliance and the staunch training in but a single type of compliance-gaining can do a great disservice interpersonally to those involved in debate.

Dialectic Theory

Baxter (1988, 1993) contends that a series of dialectical tensions pervade relationships such that relational participants must negotiate and resolve tensions in order for an effective relationship to occur. She articulates three overarching dialectical tensions in her typology: integration/separation, stability/change, and expression/privacy. Baxter and Montgomery (1996) describe these dialectical poles, not as opposites, but as "both/and," noting that relationships require simultaneous consideration of both spectrums of these poles. Opposing forces in relationships create dialogic complexity (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). As relationships inherently must move toward closeness, there also is a force continually pulling toward separation and the quest for autonomy. Similarly, one purpose interpersonal relationships serve is to create stability, yet given the ever uncertain circumstances surrounding interpersonal relationships, there is the constant desire and need to cope with change. Finally, as relationships de-

mand some level of expressing feelings and being open, this characteristic also is not constant. Baxter and Montgomery illustrate from a two-year romantic relationship: "You just have to realize sometimes the importance of not talking about certain things. Sometimes, it's better to just let it pass on some topics. But we both realize that what keeps our relationships growing is our willingness to talk about personal things" (1996, p.6). Hence, this need to talk and not talk provides the final thread of the dichotomy.

On the surface, dialectic theory would appear to perfectly describe the bifurcation of thinking which occurs in a debate round. Debaters are trained to view the world in affirmative and negative terms, and the more successful ones perceive it in both simultaneously. However, upon closer examination, the debate mind set creates even greater difficulties for relationships when viewed through dialectical theory.

According to Baxter (1990), individuals cope with dialectical tensions by using a variety of strategies. She found that the most common strategy was separation, either by alternating between the poles or through segmenting particular topics. Regardless of the type of strategy selected, Montgomery (1993) notes that partners must constantly work to adjust to dialectical tensions and must use tension and strategies for dealing with it as the basis of their relationship. When relationships are unhealthy, partners do not balance the dialectical tensions well, leading to potentially abusive environments (Sabourin & Stamp, 1995).

Unfortunately, debaters do not engage in the same types of strategy selections as those who have not been trained in the activity. First, debaters must grant adherence to one pole over the other. While debating the affirmative, a debater must be fully invested and able to convince others of the worthiness of his/her position. The bifurcated nature of debate inherently stresses two separate world views, only one of which can be granted adherence at the end of the debate. Continually pursuing such an end cannot help but spill over into relational thinking, as critics must make and debaters must live with "forced choice" situations continually. While such choices might appear to resemble the separation strategy, it is not cyclic nor is it segmented; it is a rigid, polarized form of separation. Next, the policy nature of debate has debaters constantly trying to change policy instead of learning how to live with it or seeking stability; Montgomery (1993, p. 221) suggests that, rather than trying to change the situation, typical relational partners accommodate and adjust. Finally, students in forensics are trained to debate an issue. "Not talk" would appear as an unwillingness to debate and hence be considered an unacceptable option since by the rules of debate, all things are debatable. Should a relational partner not wish to discuss some interpersonal issue, he/she could be provoked to do so by the student with debate training, so that this facet of the typology is not within the realm of consideration by those with debate experience. So, it would seem that debaters have been trained not to appreciate the dichotomies of Baxter's dialectical theory, but to embrace only one extreme. Hence, by investing in a position, argument, or side, the thinking of those in debate

becomes polarized, exactly the opposite of the pluralism Baxter and Montgomery (1996) contend is necessary for interactional competence.

Social Penetration Theory

Altman and Taylor's (1973) social penetration theory suggests that as relationships grow, both the depth and breadth of interaction increases. Such relational development includes exchange of information, exchange of positive and negative affect, and mutual activities (Daher & Banikiotes, 1976). Altman and Taylor liken their model to peeling away the layers of an onion; as topics become broader, the degree of self disclosure becomes deeper, and nonverbal behaviors become more relaxed (Keiser & Altman, 1976). Others have found that reciprocity is cyclical – that self-disclosure does not necessarily follow a developmental pattern (Vanlear, 1987).

The first dimension of Altman and Taylor's model is richness, which describes the breadth characteristic of self disclosure. Often, debaters' all-consuming thinking is only as broad as the current resolution's affirmative land. Debaters are trained to view the resolution with very clear parameters, and the realms which exceed this view are nontopical. Likewise, debaters may have a very narrow view of the world relationally. It is often easier to spend vast quantities of time conversing about global warming or nuclear war than it is to discuss issues one believes are personally important. Such neglect of one's partner's understanding of the topic is the key to a unhealthy marriage, according to Honeycutt (1986). He concludes that communication effectiveness is directly related to perceived partner understanding.

Similarly, the issues that matter most to debaters are the ones which provide the "depth" of the relationship. Such focus can lead to non-debaters feeling as if they do not have much in common with their mates; this lack of similarity in terms of amount and level of disclosure can lead to decreased attraction (Daher & Banikiotes, 1976). Debaters select their favorite positions and "become deep" on their research, so much so that on the circuit they may fancy themselves as the foremost experts on a specific issue. This view also short-circuits successful relationships. When individuals become so circumscribed on a single issue, they often have difficulty breaking free of that all-consuming issue and certainly have difficulty relating to issues which may be of deep interpersonal concern, but which do not have the overwhelming global impact of their favorite debate position. According to our observations, debaters have a great deal of difficulty dealing with self disclosure, particularly among non-debaters. While debating, and even when coaching, such individuals tend to think solely about debate – positions they can run, old rounds revisited, or policy implications. We have observed debaters "cutting" evidence in class, on the bus, and in a variety of interpersonal situations. Thus, the degree of both depth and breadth in debaters' and coaches' relationships is limited, and, in many cases, it is much easier for debaters to cultivate platonic relationships with other debaters (to be renewed on a bi-weekly basis throughout the season)

than to risk forging deeper relationships with non-debaters.

Social penetration theory helps explain why debaters' relationships tend to decline. Yoder and Nichols (1980) explain that parties in a relationship must weigh three factors when deciding whether or not to self disclose: costs and rewards of the relationship, situational determinants such as societal pressure on the couple, and attitudes. They discovered that attitudes towards self disclosure were associated with dissolution; divorced and married people had distinctly different attitudes. Discrepant attitudes towards the topic and form of disclosure, as noted above, would certainly play a role in debaters' relational terminations. Similarly, Tolstedt and Stokes (1984) suggest that as intimacy decreases, self disclosure breadth decreases, and the valence of the self disclosure becomes more negative. They also indicate that decreased intimacy is associated with increased depth, presumably due to the discussions individuals have when a relationship is terminating. Perhaps this is one time when a debater's relational partner can focus discussion on the relationship itself.

Conclusions

In this survey of contemporary interpersonal theory, we have attempted to show the inconsistency between the skills that are taught in contemporary debate training and the skills which contemporary interpersonal communication theory dictates are necessary for satisfying relationships.

Without a doubt, debate is an intense activity, one with many benefits for students' research skills, presentational skills, and critical thinking. However, the mind set created is one, we argue, that may not foster healthy interpersonal relationships. Sadly, forensics is not alone. As noted previously, researchers in similar fields, such as the law (Fischer, 1990), have concluded that the result of such intense issue-oriented thinking is responsible for the lack of interpersonal success for participants in those fields. Ironically, many debaters become lawyers, furthering honing the ineffective skills they learned as undergraduates.

Through this current analysis, we argue that participation in debate creates a unique standpoint, which, in turn, plays havoc with a debater's ability to cope with uncertainty, encourages second-guessing, impedes rather than fosters dialectical thinking, rewards uni-dimensional compliance-gaining strategies, and focuses on depth over breadth in self disclosure, when both dimensions are needed for success.

We are not yet ready to call into question the overall value of debate training, but we are cognizant of the difficulties it may present in the creation and maintenance of strong interpersonal relationships. Continued research on the longitudinal effects of debate training must be undertaken to assess the health and success of interpersonal relationships for those who continue to participate in the debate activity.

Endnotes

¹Although our study focuses on debaters, as we have continued

our research, we are beginning to discover that the same difficulties in interpersonal relationships could pertain to individual events competitors as well. We will explore that angle in future research.

²Currently, we are collecting data which will add to the discussion presented in this paper.

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EVIDENCE IN THE GLOBAL VILLAGE: THE PROMISE AND CHALLENGE OF COMPUTER-ASSISTED RESEARCH IN INTERCOLLEGIATE DEBATE

Pat J. Gehrke

Abstract

The growing importance of research databases and the proliferation of evidence sources on the Internet have provoked responses from the debate community ranging from ecstatic hope to pronounced fear. The debate community should critically incorporate databases and the Internet into its research. The benefits of computer-assisted research are plentiful, if we can appropriately adjust as a community to the age of digitized research.

Introduction

Debate heavily relies upon research. Hence, the advent of mega-databases and Internet research systems must receive our full attention. Unlike other areas of forensic scholarship, advancing technologies will over-run the activity at a pace which our writings can barely hope to match. As the debate community deals with these innovations we should take a broad perspective on our goals and try to predict where the information race will take its next turn. In an attempt to bring one small piece of our path into focus, this essay emphasizes how information technology affects our use and conception of evidence.

In the pre-digital world of moveable type, the definition of evidence seemed simple. Debaters could use anything that was printed and distributed. If it was ink on paper circulated to interested parties, then debaters could use it as evidence. Today, ink on paper is usually a printout of an originally digital text. The debate community should critically incorporate information technology into the use of evidence. To facilitate this move we need to first examine our definitions of evidence in relation to computer-assisted research. It may also be of assistance to investigate the promise of embracing electronic research and to discuss some of the challenges to be met as we incorporate technology into debate. Finally, we should consider how we could actively meet those challenges.

Defining Evidence

Defining "evidence" is a necessary first step to this discussion. There is a substantial difference between a discussion of what makes for the highest quality evidence and what makes something acceptable to be presented as evidence. The former contains questions such as the relevancy of quali-

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fications, the rigor of the author's methodology, the ability of the author to qualify her or his conclusions, the author's personal connections to the subject, and opinions of other perceived experts of the author's work. Debaters should address these questions in their debates. Establishing any formal community standards for what makes good evidence would remove such discussion from the debate round and rob debaters of the opportunity to test the saliency of sources and literature. However, the latter question is an issue that requires community standards.

In discussing whether certain sources of evidence should be admissible in forensic, we may seek a more fundamental standard. The Cross-Examination Debate Association Bylaws and the American Forensic Association Code of Ethics provide some guidelines for defining "evidence." The bylaws of the Cross-Examination Debate Association (CEDA) state that "Debaters should use only evidence which is in the public domain and, hence, open to critical evaluation by others" (XIV.1.C). CEDA Bylaw XVII defines "evidence" as "material which is represented as published fact or opinion testimony and offered in support of a debater's claim" (XVII.B.1). The Code of Ethics of the American Forensic Association (AFA) defines "evidence" as "factual materials (statistics and examples) and/or opinion testimony offered as proof of a debater's or a speaker's contention, claim, position, argument, point, or case" (II.1.A). From the documents of these two debate organizations, we may take it that the definition of evidence is composed of four elements:

(1) In the public domain, (2) Represented as published, (3) Testimony of either fact or opinion, and (4) Offered in support of a debater's claim.

We can divide computer-assisted research into two general areas: fee-based services and free Internet sources. Fee-based services include databases such as Lexis-Nexis, ProQuest Direct, Westlaw, Dow Jones, and Electric Library. These databases provide access to varying quantities and types of publications, such as newspapers, magazines, law reviews, and scholarly journals. The power of these databases is their ability to perform very precise searches of their holdings and to return the full text of some articles instead of only a citation. Fee-based services also include news clipping services, such as Dow Jones's /CLIP, which will monitor news-wires and save stories that match criteria set by the subscriber. Free Internet sites are also an abundant source of research. National, state, and local governments operate thousands of Internet sites providing publications, press releases, reports, and official statements. Dozens of newspapers offer their text over the Internet at no cost. Corporations, foundations, universities, research facilities, and think tanks are also publishing journals, reports, press releases, studies, and other documents directly to the web. Together these free sources span the full spectrum of current issues and perspectives. Both fee-based services and free Internet sources usually meet the standards for evidence outlined by CEDA and the AFA.

In the Public Domain

The first standard for evidence is that it must be in the public domain. Both a reasonable comparison to print sources and a glance at recent court rulings indicate that electronic evidence sources comply with this standard.

Though fee-based services (such as Lexis and Westlaw) charge subscribers to access information, these are indexing and distribution services not publishers. Lexis-Nexis does not write the documents that debaters use for evidence, but provides a means of accessing documents produced by others. The documents housed in databases are distributed in paper version by separate newspaper or journal publishers. The database service simply holds an electronic version of these documents. Given that this material differs only in medium from the printed version, there seems little reason to exclude database evidence from debate sources. If a Los Angeles Times article is currently considered in the public domain, then the digital version of that same article is likewise in the public domain. The fact that databases charge for access to information does not place it outside of the public domain. Very few paper publications are free.

While one may also need to pay to access the Internet, much of the material there is not being distributed privately but is open to anyone who can log on. If anything, Internet material is more public than most traditional evidence sources. The largest barrier to accessing most Internet information is a physical connection to the Internet itself. Since schools are rocketing onto the Internet, most debaters should have free access.

Additionally, the National Commission on Library and Information Science reported that over 60 percent of public libraries now have some form of Internet connection for patron use and more than 50 percent of public libraries provide graphical World-Wide Web interfaces for patron use. Even if one must purchase a private connection to the Internet this is hardly cost prohibitive. Unlimited usage of a dial-up connection averages between fifteen and twenty-five dollars a month. While a student budget and even a coach's budget may seem tightly squeezed, an Internet service subscription can replace subscriptions to national newspapers that freely distribute their daily editions on-line.

Courts have discussed the status of Internet information quite directly and hold that material on the Internet is in the public domain. Similar to previous rulings on print publication, the U. S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia ruled in the highly publicized 1995 *Religious Technology Center v. Lerma* case that once material is posted to the Internet "it is effectively part of the public domain."

Naturally, not everything can meet the standard of public domain. Private mail is not public domain nor is electronic mail (*American Civil Liberties Union et. al. v. Janet Reno*). This may seem troublesome for listserves (also known as mail exploders). Listserves are services that distribute electronic mail to large groups of people who have identified themselves to the listserve as interested in certain subjects. An individual subscribes to a listserve the same way one might subscribe to a newsletter. From that point on, any messages sent to the listserve's electronic mail address are copied and distributed to everyone who has subscribed to that listserve. If the messages on the listserve blink into existence and then are gone, then we can fairly say that this violates the spirit, if not the letter, of the public

domain standard.

The CEDA bylaws include the public domain requirement so that evidence may be available for evaluation by others. The AFA Committee on Educational Development and Practices similarly stated in their proposal to amend the AFA Code of Ethics, "that evidence used in forensic activities should generally be accessible by all members of the community, be verifiable, and should be from authentic sources." This seems a necessary element for an activity seeking to promote open discussion and exploration of diverse topics. Internet materials meet this requirement if they are archived somewhere. Archiving is a relatively common practice of saving every message or document from a certain Internet site or listserve in a retrievable format. Material that is not archived somewhere is not available for critical analysis by others, and thus fails to meet the public domain standard.

The impermanence of evidence sources is an important concern. Mainstream books and periodicals can promise a relative durability to their existence. Copies will likely exist in at least a few university libraries for dozens of years past their original publication. Electronic resources may be less stable than paper evidence sources. A web site may change regularly or go out of existence completely. Even electronic databases will occasionally "die" and no longer be available to researchers (Quint). Debaters and coaches who use computer-assisted research must take this relative impermanence into account and should both seek to preserve originals and maximize the bibliographic information they record on their evidence. It should not take a repeat of the fire at Alexandria to remind us that paper documents are less than permanent. Newsletters, pamphlets, local papers, and alternative press publications are often not found in any university library or are only archived for one year. Thus, these questions of permanence should also be addressed to those paper publications and similar precautionary practices adopted.

Represented as Published

The courts make it clear that posting to the Internet or a commercial database is seen as publication. In the 1997 *Daniel v. Dow Jones & Co.* a New York court stated that the electronic nature of a news service is irrelevant to the transaction. The court further concluded that the relationship between a news content service provider and client is functionally identical to the relationship between a newspaper and subscriber (Counts and Martin). Additionally, in the court battle surrounding the Communications Decency Act of 1996 a Federal District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania held that material placed on the Internet is published (*American Civil Liberties Union et. al. v. Janet Reno*).

Simply put, publication is copying and distributing to an audience. To do so on paper only requires that one photocopy or otherwise reproduce a document and then distribute it. Alternatively, one might put a document on a computer diskette, make multiple copies, and distribute the disks.

Some computer and technical magazines have already switched to publishing on computer diskette or CD-ROM every month, instead of paper. Posting material to the Internet is not substantially different than this latter method. Instead of a disk, think of it as placing an infinite number of copies in a centralized location. Whenever someone desires, they can visit that location and take a copy of the document. On the Internet, when we access a web site or an archive, that information is copied from the computer where it is housed and saved onto the terminal we are viewing. This copy is temporary, since within a few days after we view the document it is automatically deleted from our computer. We can save or print the document, if we wish to retain a copy. However, the original will remain on the computer from which we retrieved it until its owner (the publisher) deletes it, independent of our access to that document.

Posting to the web lacks the peer review and editorial process of academic journals, but the review process determines the quality of a publication, not its status as published. Independent press publications, self-published books, certain private book publishers, and even a few periodicals have little or no editorial review. Publication is merely a matter of the will and the resources to publish. Quality academic publication is an entirely different issue. This difference is the gap between the baseline standard for what qualifies as evidence and the quality or credibility of the evidence in a given debate.

Testimony in Support of a Claim

The final two criteria for evidence are that it is offered as testimony and used to support a debater's claim. These have no relationship to the medium or status of the material. Rather, they are dependent on what the debaters do with that material. Electronic resources provide a great deal of testimony of fact and opinion. Debaters are already distilling this information into evidence and presenting it in debate rounds as support for their positions. The four criteria currently outlined by the Cross Examination Debate Association and the American Forensic Association clearly encompass evidence from the fee-based services and free Internet sources.

The Promise of Computer-Assisted Research

A few scholars have advocated the rejection or severe limitation of computer-assisted research (Elliot). Many of these arguments are based upon an opinion that electronic evidence is of poor quality. As with print evidence the quality of electronic evidence varies widely. If one is a discriminating researcher, fee-based services and free Internet resources can provide a cornucopia of strongly qualified sources and fantastically reasoned arguments. Integrating electronic research systems into debate holds a great deal of promise for expanding every debater's base of research.

The Move to Digital Publication

Robert Tucker noted the force that electronic research databases can have on debaters trying to finish research assignments. Easy access and

complex search capabilities cause debaters to flock to these systems. What he neglects to mention is the degree to which the Internet is becoming a haven for scholars, theorists, researchers, and publishers. Many publications are available only in full text for download from web sites. Journals such as *Critical Theory* and the *Journal of Postmodern Culture* are but two examples of material that existed on the Internet before it was published on paper. The *National Journal of Sexual Orientation Law and Queer* are two journals that received national attention when they recently published their inaugural issues on the Internet. There are also electronically published medical, science, and technology journals on the Internet that are much more current than their printed counterparts, due to reduced production time (Bates, "Database" 64-65).

Additionally, some scholars have decided to circumvent what they perceive as a biased and lengthy review process by publishing their materials directly to the web (Hibbits). The web is already providing many writers with an instantaneous and global reach difficult to acquire any other way (Valdes).

As more publishers and authors choose the relatively inexpensive option of Internet publication, and the ability to access the information on the Internet improves, the debate community will find that it can not ignore the whole schools of thought which are predominantly published electronically. Nor can it realistically prevent debaters from utilizing electronic resources.

The Internet as Alternative Press

Robert Tucker expressed concern that corporate databases (such as Lexis-Nexis and Westlaw) only provide homogenous uniform views of the world from a single ideological framework. While some services have improved the diversity of sources available and newspapers from dozens of countries are represented, there is still some merit to this argument. I would be greatly surprised to have *Anarchy: The Journal of Desire Armed* or similar publications pop up in a Lexis-Nexis search. Most databases are designed to serve law firms, investors, and advertising agencies.

However, one can improve the diversity, breadth, and depth of analysis of any research project by combining traditional research and paid services with Internet research. Radical argumentation is not only sparse in the databases, but the vast majority of the popular news media exclude material which could be considered offensive to their corporate owners or advertisers (Bagdikian; Lee and Solomon). We should also not delude ourselves into thinking that this only happens in the popular press. Similar exclusion of fringe theories and ideas can occur in the dominant scholarly journals of any discipline. Infighting between faculty and funding wars between departments, and the general factionalism of the Ramistic university model, can undermine the ideal of open academic discourse (Booth, chap. 19).

Faced with the likelihood that few departments and libraries might

subscribe to their publication or that publishers are uncomfortable with their subject, some journals and authors turn to the Internet (Valdes). Debate involves the power of ideas and their expression, but such is contingent on access to diverse viewpoints. As these marginalized voices raise their volume of distribution through the Internet our community should be paying special attention. The U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California recognized this unique virtue of the Internet, arguing that it provides the capacity for even relatively poor organizations and individuals to publish to millions of readers (*Religious Technology Ctr. v. Netcom On-Line Services*).

Additionally, many viewpoints are so far from the center of scholarship and media that it is extraordinarily difficult for debate teams to acquire copies of pertinent publications. Perhaps schools in New York City and San Francisco can find a great diversity of underground and truly radical press, but in more rural or suburban areas such publications are rare indeed. By providing a method to explore the most radical literature available we promote a truly open exploration of ideas and the development of independent critical thinking.

Better Debate Through Technology

Internet material may also provide other advantages for debate. Eugene Volokh identified six primary advantages to using material from the Internet:

They're (1) more accessible, (2) timelier, (3) cheaper, (4) easier to search, and (5) easier to copy into your own electronic documents; and because of the cost savings, (6) the web makes it possible to publish items which otherwise never would have been distributed publicly at all. (206)

Each of these can be of great benefit to debate. Improving our resource efficiency by finding faster, easier to access, and cheaper research can free up resources (both time and money) for things other than research. The increasing ease of searching will also make teaching Internet research easier. The fifth advantage Volokh lists has unique implications for intercollegiate debate. Unlike paper documents, your electronic evidence can be copied and pasted into a word processor, then processed and briefed right on the screen, allowing debaters to print out finished evidence briefs. This method dramatically reduces the amount of paper a debate program consumes in producing evidence. As a community, we should not ignore the implications that electronic resources might have on our consumption of natural resources.

The Internet and Debate Pedagogy

A number of pedagogical advantages should compel forensic educators to provide electronic facilities to their students. The planet is moving at a rapid pace toward a predominantly information-based economy (Drucker). Universities may have equipped their students and faculty with the physical technology they need, and perhaps even database accounts, but most universities are poor when it comes to effectively training the

students on how to make full use of the resources available to them.

Debate is a place where students can learn skills and knowledge that set them apart from the rest of the graduating class. In addition to their argumentation skills, the research and organization skills are extraordinarily valuable. Familiarity with computers and the Internet are critical contemporary survival skills. If a committee is looking for a person to hire, admit, or promote and they have two equally qualified candidates, except that only one is familiar with information technology, the computer literate applicant is the likely choice. In addition, in academia the use of databases is increasingly important. Law students, other graduate students, and active faculty are increasingly dependent on database systems, computerized indexes, and the Internet (Liestman).

Many students entering college (and sadly, some leaving it) are information poor. Not only are these students lacking in exposure to a deep and broad base of general education, but they lack the skills needed to effectively find, process, and apply information. Whether it be because of poor K-12 resources or a general lack of access to technology, university librarians are swamped with students who have no idea how to effectively phrase a search term, compile a search, or skim screens for useful information (Liestman). Debate has an opportunity to not only expose students to the basics of computerized research and Boolean logic, but through constant practice debaters can develop computer research and Internet skills far beyond the average graduate student.

Embracing Internet and electronic database research in academic debate is beneficial to all parties involved. The shift from print to web publication, especially by the alternative press, necessitates that we incorporate Internet research into debate. Further, the benefits of increased resource efficiency and increased exposure to radical information sources can make electronic resources superior to print publications. Finally, the forensic community cannot ignore the benefits of information technology education.

Suggestions for Charting a Course in the Electronic Age

There are challenges we need to consider as we move toward digitizing research. Three of the most critical issues are the quality of the evidence retrieved from electronic sources, the fairness of access to technologies, and the availability of paid databases or a reasonable alternative. While some have advocated that these issues create sufficient warrant to reject or severely limit the use of electronic sources of evidence this over-generalizes. Rather, what forensic educators might consider is adjusting the way debate is taught and coached.

Reviving the Source Debate

One of the largest criticisms levied against Internet and database research is that the sources are unqualified staff writers, or lay persons writing without qualification or reflection. Though some debaters have virtu-

ally made careers out of using two sentence conclusions from newspapers on Nexis, this is not the fault of the medium. The same debater would likely be producing two sentence conclusions from current periodicals in the library if they were not able to access a database. If a debater is predominantly cutting low-quality evidence, we can safely bet that there is more going on than just a dependence on electronic resources.

Avoiding poor sources and groundless evidence should be important to all of us. Coaches should promote deeper and more critical research and writing by their students. Encouraging debaters to wade through a scholarly book, or read law review articles, or scrounge through government documents, or incorporate scholarly journals, or decipher court decisions goes further toward the goal of promoting deep research than attempting to restrict the use of electronic resources.

In fact, electronic resources may facilitate this. Some journals and many legal resources are available through databases or the web. Additionally, a plethora of government documents and court decisions can be found on the web. Sources such as the Electronic NewsStand provide access to selected publications and articles for free. Expanded Academic Index provides full text of a few scholarly journals. Lexis-Nexis provides immense legal holdings and a select few journals on economics, foreign policy, and marketing. ProQuest Direct provides full text access to a variety scholarly publications, including *Argumentation and Advocacy*, *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, *Foreign Affairs*, and *Urban Affairs Review*. If poor quality evidence is being cut from these electronic systems, it is the fault of debaters and coaches, not the systems that index the information.

Issues of Basic Access

Access is probably the most troublesome of all the issues related to the use of computer-assisted research in debate. We should be sympathetic to the plight of forensic programs with few computer facilities at their disposal. Up to this point this inequity has been regarded as an inevitable result of education within capitalism. However, the addition of computer research to a debate team's resources in many cases multiplies the available literature for that team a hundred-fold. Any school that suddenly gains access to the Internet will find (with appropriate effort) that the resources at their disposal substantially supplement their library.

Additionally, the ease and speed of accessing information through a moderate Internet connection (a 28.8 kbps or faster modem) makes conventional paper index and card catalog research look like some arcane academic torture device. Students who build their skills at searching the Internet and databases may find they can pinpoint their searches well enough to find evidence on any topic quickly. The biggest problem is that some schools still do not provide their students with web-browsing terminals. Not all colleges give their students electronic mail accounts. This means that while the rest of academia is zipping along the electronic Autobahn, many have been left to be pedestrians roaming in the under-

passes.

The gap between basic access to the net and no access is not just a small step, but rather is an enormous leap. Even a simple web connection opens vast worlds of information. Professional researchers are increasingly finding the web as an indispensable and irreplaceable source of diverse and abundant information (Bates, "Internet"). Students with more complex Internet access may find faster connections or fancier visual displays, but not necessarily any more useful information. A simple connection and a computer that can support Microsoft's or Netscape's free web-browser software is sufficient for most research. One of the critical challenges facing the forensic community is ensuring that every debater at least has access to this baseline standard of Internet use.

Actual physical technology can be a barrier for both students and forensic programs. The growing complexity of the Internet does increase the minimum acceptable configurations for a research computer. However, careful shopping and educating oneself about what is important can save a substantial amount of money. Computers that function well as research stations can be bought for well under a thousand dollars, including a monitor and a laser printer.

Corporate Databases

At this point it would be foolish for anyone to ignore the disparity in access to corporate databases. Though Westlaw and Lexis-Nexis are the most famous, they are not the only databases. Even so, many schools have no electronic database access and lack the financial resources needed to purchase an account. Lexis passwords were reasonably priced for mid- and high-budget forensic programs when they were sold at the original educational discount rates. However, Lexis has refused to open new educational accounts to most schools in the past few years, while phasing out existing educational accounts. This has left a growing portion of the forensic community without access to the best-known database for debate research. Complaints that a lack of access to Lexis has made competition in debate impossible for some schools have also received attention.

The advent of the new Lexis Universe system may mitigate some of these problems and disparities, but preliminary informal reports have been inconsistent and less than promising. Universe is a version of Lexis/Nexis that is accessible, for a fee, via the Internet. The Universe system is estimated to cost 70 to 80 per cent less than the comparable commercial service (Young A39). Because of how Universe security authenticates its users, Lexis subscribes whole universities at a time, rather than providing passwords. The minimum price quoted for a very small university to subscribe to the Lexis Universe system was \$9,000 per year (Miller 12). The Universe security system also generally precludes accessing the database while away from the subscriber's university. At least one coach has managed to negotiate a more reasonable arrangement with Lexis, but the company's history precludes taking that experience as an opening for other

coaches.

This researcher has yet to find a system as well organized or efficient as Lexis. However, there are web sources that might provide some similar information. The Library of Congress runs THOMAS, an on-line system to access documents from the Congressional Information Service. Here debaters may access, for no additional cost, the congressional record, pending and recent legislation, and indices to congressional material. Recent and landmark Supreme Court decisions are also available on the Internet from Case Western Reserve. Even given these and other resources on the net I must agree with database expert Don MacLeod that the web can not match systems like Westlaw and Lexis.

However, the Internet is much stronger in academic literature than Lexis. A number of journals have already been mentioned as web accessible, but academic papers published directly to the Internet are also widely available. For most research areas there are articles and books providing guidance for where to start looking for information on the Internet. On the 1996-97 CEDA/NDT topic, high quality evidence could be found from dozens of government and hundreds on non-governmental web pages (Alston). Internet sites can also provide access to daily newspapers around the world and direct news feeds. Direct access to Reuter's reports and dozens of newspapers means free access to news through the web. CNN's web page even accommodates complex searches of its news files (Notess). None of these services fully closes the gap between Internet access and a commercial database, but together they do a great deal to cut against the claims that without access to Lexis-Nexis there is no hope of competing in debate.

Additionally, a wide number of databases have begun to offer less expensive services since Westlaw and Lexis began. A regular perusal of *Database* magazine will reveal many companies advertising services similar to those most coveted by debaters. For example, CompuServe's Current News service provides access to magazines, wire services, and newspapers quickly and at a substantially lower price than Lexis-Nexis (Kassel). Some of this information receives hourly updates and the database can be searched with controlled vocabulary terms or keywords. This service was advertised at approximately \$25 per month for twenty hours and then \$2 per each additional hour. Electric Library provides access to their substantial database for as little as \$60 a year. America Online and NewsNet also have offerings similar to CompuServe's. These lower cost alternatives to Lexis-Nexis may be sufficient for the needs of many debate teams.

Navigating an Electronic Future

We should not approach computerized research as a digital version of traditional library research. In large part, students, librarians, and a small group of technologically savvy coaches have facilitated the integration of technology. The day is not far away when a coach's official responsibilities will also include computer-assistance and training. Many in our commu-

nity currently facilitate free research resources on the Internet for debaters. The challenge now is two-fold: first, we must adjust our coaching strategies to a world where information quantity is infinite; and, second, our national organizations need to proactively promote a baseline level of technological equity.

Proposals for Coaching Adjustments

Making changes in our behavior as coaches is the area where we can have the most immediate impact. As coaches and as critics we need to become more demanding on comparisons of evidence quality. Too often debaters and coaches are impressed by evidence quantity with little concern for the strategic and argumentative quality of the evidence. Debate machismo manifests itself as a comparison of the number of briefs or quotes on a given topic that debaters, teams, or even institutes can produce. Valuing evidence quantitatively and placing numerical minimums on research assignments reflect a school of thought that believes all evidence is qualitatively roughly equal.

Part of this problem may be a reactive method of doing research. Much of the research done in debate is a hasty skirmish to extract some evidence against an affirmative case. In general, teams work on well developed affirmative case strategies, but approach negative research as a disjointed set of brief forays into databases and the library. Rather than debaters focusing on answers to a single affirmative case for a few days or even two weeks, we may find that seeking out strategies with better warrant and deeper meaning is more pedagogically and competitively rewarding. Hence, a debater may seek out evidence which applies to a variety of cases and cuts more fundamentally, or holistically, against common affirmative arguments.

Debaters and coaches are also often dissatisfied with the current bibliographic information for electronic evidence. Rather than try to hide our evidence and sources from one another, we can demystify electronic evidence by providing more thorough citation of sources. The American Forensic Association Committee on Educational Development and Practices proposed a standard of five elements that each electronically retrieved piece of evidence should include:

- (i) Name of author(s), source of information, full date, and author(s) credentials where available; (ii) The nature of the electronic site identified in the evidence citation [e.g., 'listserve,' 'Lexis/Nexis,' 'Homepage,' 'CD-ROM']; (iii) A full current Universal Resource Locator (URL) when applicable [e.g., <http://www.epa.gov>]; (iv) The date the information was retrieved [date of access]; (v) Unique and original page numbers where available, or an indication if not available [e.g., 'n.pag.,' 'p.Lexis']. (AFA Code of Ethics II.1.C.6)

Additionally, since some web pages have a tendency to relocate or restructure quite frequently, the electronic mail address of the person who maintains the web page might also help, such as pjg154@psu.edu. Since

the Internet and commercial databases are not as well organized as university libraries, we should not expect citations equivalent to a book title to be sufficient to meet our standards. A 1998 study reported that even the most thorough Internet search engines only manage to search about a third of the material on the Internet, and many popular search sites index substantially less (Weber). Full citation is essential to the spirit, if not the letter, of the public domain requirement. If evidence is not properly cited it may technically be in the public domain but elude critical examination by others in the community.

In addition to being aware of our own teams' evidence practices, we can also train our debaters to critically examine the sources and quality of evidence. Debaters should revive the practice of evidence and source comparison. The relevancy of authors' qualifications, the completeness of their arguments, the quality of their warrants, and similar arguments have been unfortunately characterized as mere evidence presses. As educators and as critics if we take these arguments seriously we can utilize the integration of electronic research as a springboard into expanding the quality of critical thinking in debate.

Learning how to use these resources is often a barrier for coaches and students. Many universities have seminars to train faculty on research systems and computers. The faculty training sessions are in general better than those that are available to students. Coaches who attend these training sessions can share that information with their students and others in the community who have questions about electronic resources. Coaches can also help develop research skills by setting up special training sessions with librarians who specialize in electronic resources. Many librarians are happy to train interested students in how to use the Internet or databases for specific types of research. Coaches and students can also take the time to read up on the various resources at their disposal and do some research on effective means of integrating computer-assisted research.

Internet research has also been facilitated by the development of web sites that compile connections to resources on the Internet that are pertinent to the current debate topic. Debaters and debate coaches around the country with a concern for the community have autonomously constructed these central clearinghouses. The preservation and proliferation of these resources should be supported and applauded.

Proposals for Organizational Adjustments

A national organization may need to facilitate access for technologically disadvantaged programs. Donations of computers and Internet connection services should be acquired by a national organization and disseminated to the most needy. While programs could conceivably seek sponsorship and donations independently, the likely result would be further concentration of resources in the hands of those who are already well enabled. Successful programs will have the resources and background to attract more donations of resources, thus undermining the capacity for do-

nations to offset resource inequity. By positioning a national organization as the solicitor and receiver of donations we might better ensure that the technology find its way into the hands of the most needy.

A registered non-profit organization with sufficient support and history to begin the project of soliciting donations, such as the Cross-Examination Debate Association or the American Forensic Association, would be ideal for such a project. Individuals and private cooperatives of debate coaches cannot accomplish this task without the support of an established non-profit organization. Without the recognized non-profit status and the organization's reputation to back up the request, the likelihood of receiving any assistance is slim indeed. Most corporations and foundations will not even accept requests for support from individuals that cannot present themselves as a part of a larger institution.

To facilitate these projects national organizations need to establish an elected committee to oversee the acquisition and distribution of technology donations. A Technology Coordinator would coordinate these donation requests and chair the Technology Resource Committee, which might eventually find a broader purpose. A blind review process for applications combined with electing community members with a record of outstanding professional integrity could help to ensure against favoritism or discriminatory practices by the Technology Resource Committee. The qualifications required for this post are obvious, and the duties quite substantial. However, the alternative is for debate to be tossed about by the fourth wave, rudderless.

Previous experiences of organizations attempting to negotiate with database providers, such as the AFA Policy Debate Caucus' interaction with Lexis-Nexis, have been less than promising. We should not expect rapid or complete solutions from such a committee or from our national organizations. Yet, to hope for steady movement forward in providing a baseline standard of technological equity for all debate programs seems a reasonable vision. Resource disparity is a simple fact of the way schools and debate programs are funded. Different travel budgets, coaching resources, libraries, and technology will inevitably maintain resource inequity between programs. What we might be able to do is mitigate the impact of those disparities on basic access to information.

For programs looking to purchase computer technology the same individuals responsible for the donations program could assist in selecting computers that meet the needs and budget constraints of specific programs. National organizations would do well to help these programs set up their connections and provide information on what types of service might be available to them.

Concluding Remarks

Advances in technology often bring turmoil and fear. Integrating new technologies into debate is no different. It is plain that electronic research meets the formal criteria for evidence established by the community. Com-

puter-assisted research also holds great promise for the future of research in debate. We must thoughtfully and critically integrate the new information technologies, fully aware of the challenges they pose and the issues that arise from their use. With conscience and self-awareness we can each help our own programs and the community as a whole adjust to new technologies. With institutional support we may even be able to help programs with fewer resources access the evidence shared in the global village.

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THE IDEAL CITIZEN AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE: PEDAGOGY AND PUBLIC ARGUMENT FROM VICO TO HABERMAS

Brian R. McGee

Abstract

Long before Jürgen Habermas bemoaned the deterioration of communicative action and the public sphere at the expense of purposive-rational action and the technical sphere, Giambattista Vico worried about the quality of public argument and deliberation in eighteenth-century Western Europe. I argue in this essay that Vico provides an account of the *ideal citizen* lacking in Habermas's discussion of the public sphere. My reading of Vico and Habermas suggests an argumentation theory and pedagogy relevant to improving the quality of argument in an imperfect public sphere.

The dawn of the European Enlightenment was not a good time for rhetoric or rhetoricians. A century after Peter Ramus sought to deprive rhetoric of invention, Descartes, Hobbes, and Locke, three major influences on the Enlightenment, would either dismiss rhetoric as unimportant or attack rhetoric for its deceptive potential. However, rhetoric was not without its defenders. Foremost among those who defended the rhetorical tradition was Giambattista Vico. Vico, professor of Latin eloquence at the University of Naples from 1699 to 1741, attempted to combine respect for the accomplishments of the new, Cartesian science with a defense of traditional rhetorical pedagogy. Although his work did not receive much attention until the end of the eighteenth century, Vico is now revered as a talented and original thinker whose work still has important implications for the study of philosophy, education, history, and rhetoric.

This veneration is not without some drawbacks. Vico has been made to represent structuralism, existentialism, constructivism, and numerous other intellectual movements in the twentieth century.¹ As Peter Burke (1985, p. 8) complains about Vico's admirers, some scholars "tend to re-create their predecessors in their own image." While I have no desire to intimate that Vico was a forerunner of contemporary critical theorists, I suggest in this essay that the work of Vico foreshadowed a twentieth-century concern with the paucity of substantive deliberation on matters of public concern. Long before Jürgen Habermas (1962/1989, 1970, 1989) bemoaned the deterioration of the public sphere and communicative action at the expense of the technical sphere and purposive-rational action, Vico worried about the quality of public argumentation and deliberation in eighteenth-century Western Europe. Against the suspicion of rhetoric one finds in Locke and others of that era, Vico championed a vision of public

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argument and rhetorical pedagogy consistent with the modernist science of his time.

My thesis is that Vico's solution to problems with the public argument of his era has the potential to improve Habermas's theory of communicative action. Specifically, I argue that Vico provides an account of the *ideal citizen* lacking in Habermas's discussion of the public sphere. There are at least three reasons for comparing the work of these two theorists. First, Vico and Habermas both were concerned with improving the quality of civic discourse, and the differences in their suggestions for doing so help us to recognize the strengths and limitations of those suggestions. Second, while Habermas aims to defend the project of modernity and its emphasis on specific modes of rationality, Vico wishes to acknowledge the advances of modernity while preserving the best of pre-modern thought. Reading Vico against Habermas makes no less sense than reading Lyotard (1979/1984; Lyotard & Thébaud, 1979/1985) against Habermas, since both Vico and Lyotard turn to classical sources in their critique of Enlightenment reason. Third, as I suggest below, Habermas (1973) recognizes Vico as a germinal early thinker on the tensions between modern science and public participation in policy debates. Habermas understands that Vico and he address similar concerns, though I maintain that Habermas does not give the entire Vichian corpus sufficient attention.

Below, I begin by reviewing ideas about rhetoric, pedagogy, and citizenship expressed at the close of the Renaissance by Vico. Next, I summarize Habermas's distinction between the public and technical spheres and suggest implications for Habermas's communication theory that follow from my reading of Vico. This juxtaposition of Vico and Habermas suggests an argumentation theory and pedagogy relevant to the public sphere, where the ideal citizen and rhetoric play an important role.

Vico, Rhetoric, and Civic Relevance

In Giambattista Vico's thought, especially in his primary work, the *New Science*, a diverse group of students has found inspiration for their own scholarship. Theories of history and law are announced in the *New Science*, as is a theory of the origins of language. Those interested in political philosophy also find in Vico an early attempt at comparative political analysis and a historical account of the rise of the nation-state. With all of this interest in Vico, one easily forgets that Vico was a professor of rhetoric, who propounded throughout his lifetime a theory wedding eloquence to wisdom and philosophy to rhetoric. For example, Burke's (1985) monograph includes a chapter entitled "Vico and Posterity," but Burke says nothing about Vico's contributions to rhetorical theory. This omission on the part of Burke (and others) is curious, given that Vico "drew upon the verbal and conceptual idiom of traditional rhetoric in shaping nearly the entire body of his philosophical thought" (Bevilacqua, 1972, p. 71).

Vico's writing on rhetoric spanned nearly fifty years, and one could expect to find some evolution in his theories of rhetoric over the course of

his career. However, just as Edwin Black (1958) chose to read Plato as a consistent thinker, I perceive Vico's work as advancing a unified theory of rhetoric and public deliberation. This theory was announced in part during the course of six early inaugural orations delivered from 1699-1707 at the University of Naples (Vico, 1993) and developed more explicitly in *On the Study Methods of Our Time*, which was first published in 1709 (Vico, 1990). His *New Science* also addressed eloquence (Vico, 1968), as did his speeches of 1732 and 1737.²

As I read Vico, his work includes a critique of Cartesianism, a discussion of practical wisdom, an emphasis on audience, and the fusion of eloquence with philosophy. This theory of rhetoric is unified by Vico's emphasis on the civic relevance of rhetoric. These different aspects of his work are discussed below. My aim in this gloss of Vico's work is to emphasize his pedagogy, as well as his concern for the future of public deliberation in what we now call modernity.

The Critique of Descartes

In eighteenth-century Naples, as well as in most of Western Europe, the "new" science and philosophy adumbrated by Bacon and propounded by Descartes enjoyed an enthusiastic reception. This "new philosophical critique," as Vico called it, valorized certainty over probability and the solitary search for truth over any communal sense of veracity. While Bacon saw rhetoric as commensurable with a new science grounded in induction, Descartes rejected rhetorical pedagogy as incapable of producing eloquence, since eloquence and poetry were "gifts of the mind rather than the fruit of study" (Descartes, 1637/1968, p. 31). John Locke, another thinker in the new scientific tradition of Bacon, considered rhetoric to be deceitful, labeling rhetorical practices as "perfect cheats" in Book Three, Chapter Ten, of his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690/1959).

When Vico sought to craft his own "new science," he hoped to rescue rhetoric from the advocates of the Baconian-Cartesian modern philosophical critique. Although Vico conceded in *Study Methods* that Descartes's philosophical critique had marked advantages over the science of the ancients, he defended the rhetorical tradition and the cultivation of eloquence as valuable aids to pedagogy.³ Vico noted that Descartes's method "is the common instrument of all our sciences and arts" (1990, p. 6) and praised the superiority of seventeenth-century geometry, mechanics, chemistry, and astronomy in comparison with ancient efforts in those areas.

For Vico, however, the training of beginning students in the Cartesian method "is distinctly harmful, since training in common sense is essential to the education of adolescents, so that the faculty should be developed as early as possible; else they break into odd or arrogant behavior when adulthood is reached" (Vico, 1990, p. 13). Vico argued that the speculative philosophical ruminations of Descartes, the Port Royalists and their ilk could stifle the development of the common sense (*sensus communis*) thought by Vico to be essential in a world where "nature and life are full of incerti-

tude" (Vico, 1990, p. 15).⁴ Specifically, the decline of eloquence in the eighteenth century is attributed by Vico to the Cartesian disdain for rhetoric. As Vico summarized his concern in 1737, "I hold the opinion that if eloquence does not regain the luster of the Latins and Greeks in our time, . . . it will be because the sciences are taught completely stripped of every badge of eloquence" (1990, p. 87).

Academics who master Cartesian philosophy but do not have common sense wait until certain truth has been ascertained before making decisions, rather than taking timely action on the basis of merely probable knowledge. Unfortunately, a consistent emphasis on leisurely philosophical deliberation as a prerequisite to action risks disaster. If the Huns are besieging the city, citizens cannot withdraw from society and contemplate their response in solitude. They must act immediately, on the basis of common sense. This common or "communal" sense in Vico is not identical to the Scottish notion of an innate capacity to recognize obvious first truths, as in the work of Thomas Reid or George Campbell. Instead, as Bevilacqua (1985) comments, "in Vico the *sensus communis* is a native power both to recognize and to *create* first truths by dint of that capacity of human nature which arises from various inventional *topoi*" (p. 27). The rhetor draws her or his topics from the commonplaces accepted by members of a given community. Against Descartes, who desired certain truth, Vico suggested the need for a theory of rhetorical probability grounded in the sense of a particular community. This native power to recognize common sense must be cultivated by an education that includes the study of topics, on which eloquence is based. Descartes's conclusions on rhetoric and native ability are incompatible with Vichian pedagogy.

As a result of this theory of common sense and the topics, Vico's choice to ground his own "new science" in "a combination of principles adapted from classical rhetoric with philological discoveries and conjectures . . . in ancient poetry, myth, language, and law" is scarcely surprising (Mooney, 1976, p. 192). Unlike Descartes, Vico will not abandon a rhetorical tradition designed for practical politics and day-to-day human activity, whatever the advantages of new methods of scientific investigation. In *Study Methods*, Vico's critique of Cartesianism as incommensurable with the development of common sense and making timely political decisions is interwoven throughout his rhetorical theory. Further discussion of common sense, civic activity, and rhetorical instruction occurs in subsequent sections of this essay.

Practical Wisdom

For Vico, wisdom refers to individual self-knowledge and the achievement of that knowledge. Wisdom ought to be acquired by devotion to the "entire universe of studies" (Vico, 1993, p. 33). In his 1732 oration on the "heroic mind," Vico compared hospitals, places for the healing of the body, to universities, places for the healing of the mind and soul. Once this healing took place, wisdom would be attained: "You have come together here

[at the university], ailing as you are in mind and soul, for the treatment, the healing, the perfecting of your better nature" (Vico, 1976, p. II:233). Concerning the university curriculum, Vico's *Study Methods* should be read as an attempt to make the perfecting of wisdom possible by balancing Cartesian method with instruction in common sense. Furthermore, wisdom requires both "knowledge of things divine and prudent judgment in human affairs and speech that is true and proper" (Vico, 1993, p. 132) Prudence, Aristotle's *phronesis*, also is required of those aspiring to wisdom.

As suggested above, Vico claimed that immediate action is often required of the learned adult, rather than the leisurely contemplation preferred by dedicated Cartesians. Often action must be taken on the basis of "reasons that wear a semblance of probability and verisimilitude" (Vico, 1990, p. 41). But what is the relationship of *verisimilitude* to *truth*? Vico agreed with Descartes that "the aim of all kinds of intellectual pursuits" is "Truth" (Vico, 1990, p. 9). Further, Vico asserted--also in *Study Methods*--that "whereas truth is *one*, probabilities are many, and falsehoods numberless" (Vico, 1990, p. 19). Finally, Vico concluded that "the specialists in topics [rhetoricians] fall in with falsehood" because they deal in probabilities, while "the philosophical critics [Cartesians] disdain any [of the] traffic in probabilities" needed to function in society (Vico, 1990, p. 19). Humans must act on a day-to-day basis without the knowledge of certain truth but risk falsehood and error as a result of their restriction to the probable in making decisions.

In response to this problem, Vico counsels in *Study Methods* that students receive the widest possible education, so that they might best avoid the pitfalls associated with classical rhetoric and Cartesian philosophy. Moreover, the value of this education was explained a few years before the publication of *Study Methods*, when Vico suggested that all assessments of probability were not equivalent. Vico implied that one should act *as if* the best available opinion is *true*:

Hold to an opinion only until another *more true* is demonstrated. There is no shame in changing your beliefs when erring has been involuntary. . . . Be of an open mind throughout your life, and instead choose these words: "I affirm, but it is up to you to make me deny by demonstrating for me a *better way*." (Vico, 1993, pp. 84-85; emphasis added)

We see in this passage the outlines of a theory of truth germane to practical wisdom and compatible with probability, a theory that distinguishes between *certain truths* and *truth claims* deserving our assent. Of course, there is such a thing as certain truth in Vico's system. A Roman Catholic in Vico's Naples could scarcely assert otherwise in a public document. But Vico introduces the possibility that some claims based on probability seem more "true" than others. When final truth is not revealed by Providence or made ascertainable by Cartesian reflection, the citizen should respond by acting as if the most probable opinion (i.e., a truth claim) is true, at least until a superior alternative is revealed via argumentation. For Vico, philosophical critique and private introspection in the fashion of

Descartes could yield certain truth, at least in some cases, but decisions about important policy matters could be made on the basis of mere truth claims, even though better truth claims (or even certain truth) might be available at a later date.

Prudence requires action taken on the basis of the best truth claims known to the citizenry. Vico asserts that, when rhetors fail to admit that some truth claims are superior to others, "false eloquence, [which is] ready to uphold either of the opposed sides of a case indifferently," is the result (Vico, 1968, p. 423). In contrast, "a robust and most prudent eloquence" is brought into being when "civil wisdom" flourishes (Vico, 1968, p. 422). As a result, prudence and true eloquence are entailed in one another.

Arguments about probability, then, provide the basis for choosing between competing truth claims in argument. But the generation of such truth claims would be meaningless without the larger consent of an audience to these claims.

Audience

In addition to his defense of probability and truth claims from the Cartesian demand for certain truth, Vico returned to the classical emphasis on the audience as a justification for rhetorical instruction, since the force of the better argument does not always guarantee audience agreement or consent. The history of rhetoric has been marked by a preoccupation with "audience" as the privileged term around which most definitions and theories of rhetoric revolve. For example, despite his alleged antipathy to rhetoric, Plato's announced definition of rhetoric in the *Phaedrus* centers on the rhetor's knowledge of the audience (see 271c-d). While my aim is not to develop this argument, if rhetoric is at all distinguishable from dialectic in the *corpus Platonicum*, then "audience" is the place where one could make that distinction, since concern with souls is a task given to the rhetor, but not to the dialectician. From Aristotle to the Middle Ages to Kenneth Burke, rhetoric has focused on the links that rhetors might form with auditors. Rhetoric has repeatedly been positioned as a practical art that must do some sort of work in the world vis-à-vis particular audiences.

Vico's rhetorical theory also emphasized the audience. Because the "multitudes" do not have the intellectual capacity of the Cartesian philosopher, the skill of the rhetor is required to make the better argument (i.e., truth claims) compelling to that audience. As Vico suggests, "in the art of oratory the relationship between speaker and listeners is of the essence. It is in tune with the opinions of the audience that we have to arrange our speech" (1990, p. 15). The "bare truth" (whether certain or only most probable) is insufficient; the "ideal orator," to borrow Cicero's phrase, will also have to understand credibility (*ethos*) if she or he intends to adapt to particular audiences. Thus, in response to the new science and philosophy, Vico concludes that

whosoever intends to devote his [sic] efforts, not to physics or mechanics, but to a political career, whether as a civil servant or as a mem-

ber of the legal profession or of the judiciary, a political speaker or a pulpit orator, should not waste too much time, in his adolescence, on those subjects taught by abstract geometry. Let him, instead, cultivate his mind with an ingenious method; let him study topics, and defend both sides of a controversy . . . (1990, p. 41)

Such study of topics, debate, and the other concerns of rhetorical theory are required because even certain truth is not sufficient to persuade audiences without the assistance of rhetoric. Especially among the unlearned, the better argument does not always sway auditors. Even certain truth, the domain of logic and philosophical reflection, needs assistance from rhetoric, which "teaches an appealing way of speaking" when speaking to the "common man [sic]" (Vico, 1993, p. 133). The common person is not able to follow a complex sequence of philosophical arguments meant to demonstrate some point. As a result, "when an orator addresses such a gathering [those without academic training], he [sic] should adopt a free, ample manner of utterance. . . . At times he should pause on a single point and stress it . . . so that the listener may take it home, deeply stamped upon his soul" (Vico, 1990, p. 25).

In summary, Vico's rhetorical theory shares with many other theories of rhetoric an emphasis on the audience. But, as an inhabitant of a city ruled by a monarch, why would an audience focus be important for Vico? Minimally, during Vico's lifetime, eloquence was still seen as pertinent to the legal practice taught at the University of Naples. But Vico had a far larger vision of rhetoric as it pertained to the civic obligations of educated citizens, as I suggest in the next section.

Rhetoric and Philosophy

In Vico we have an attempt to "fuse philosophy with eloquence," as did Isocrates and Cicero (Vico, 1990, p. 37). However, unlike the ancients, Vico is arguing for the fusion of modern scientific methods, such as those advocated by Descartes, with classical rhetorical theories and precepts. Vico did not reject the scientific advances of his era, but placed them within a university curriculum that served the needs of both scientific method and civic relevance. Vico wished to educate citizens who could take their place in the public sphere to discuss important issues of public policy. Rhetoric's central place in his educational program was a direct response to the derision of the Port Royalists and others for rhetorical concerns. Vico's position on the unity of rhetoric and philosophy is described below.

A basic principle for Vico is his commitment to broad liberal education in the humanistic tradition. Self-knowledge, the central facet of wisdom, requires acquisition of "all the sciences and arts that make up humanity" (Vico, 1968, p. 110). Notes Vico: "Crippled and tottering--such is the education of those who throw all their weight into the study of just one particular and specialized discipline" (1976, p. II:233). Further, Vico informs students that, if they are successful in pursuing a liberal education, they "will fully realize what each discipline imparts to the others (for each has some

good in it) and what all contribute to that sum total itself, wisdom in its entirety" (1976, p. II:235). Cultivation of wisdom, the highest aim of a university education, requires the study of all disciplines, including rhetoric.

In addition to the pursuit of wisdom, a liberal education has a social or civic function. Humans live together in communities and as citizens of nation-states. They do not exist only in the solitary reflection of Cartesian philosophy. Citizens have an obligation to the state that preserves and protects them; this obligation entails some service to the state in accordance with individual talents: "For all associations of men [sic] this is the intended law: that each member bring with him to share in common either his goods or his talents" (Vico, 1993, p. 77).

Central to the pursuit of a liberal education that would both cultivate wisdom and enable the performance of civic obligations was the study of rhetoric. Listed by Vico among the humane letters required for the sciences of government is the study of eloquence. Indeed, eloquence held a privileged position in the liberal arts. In contrast with those Cartesians who would eradicate the study of rhetoric, eloquence was one of the three requirements for wisdom in Vico's pedagogy: "All wisdom is contained in these three most excellent things--to know with certainty, to act rightly, and to speak with dignity" (Vico, 1993, p. 129). With knowledge and virtue, Vico included eloquence as part and parcel of a definition of wisdom. Also, eloquence empowered the public enactment of wisdom, since "eloquence is none other than wisdom speaking" (Vico, 1990, p. 89).

In this close relationship between wisdom and eloquence is found Vico's fusion of rhetoric and philosophy. Rhetoric and philosophy cannot be separated, since they are entailed in one another. In the union of rhetoric and philosophy we have Cicero's ideal orator, who knows the good and is able to defend the good via argument in a public forum (see Watson, 1858/1970). Given this belief in the merits of linking rhetoric to philosophy, Vico's discussion of rhetorical and philosophical practice in subsequent sentences of his third oration is scarcely surprising (see Vico, 1993, p. 79). Also, to give wisdom public relevance, as suggested above, Vico tells his students that "you have been instructed in these studies of wisdom so that each of you may earn merit far and wide from human society and be of help, not only to yourselves or to a few, but to as many as possible, and to this end you should join with these studies those of eloquence" (Vico, 1993, p. 138). In summary, Vico demanded that the educated citizen serve others, and the best way to serve others, Vico claimed, was in the union of philosophy and rhetoric. The next section of this essay outlines Habermas's theory of communicative action and describes how Vico's work might supplement that theory.

Habermas, Vico, and the Public Sphere

With whom should Vico's well-educated citizen converse on matters of civic importance? For an investigation of the role of argument and Vico's ideal citizen in public discourse, I rely on the work of Jürgen Habermas. By

reading Vico against Habermas, I do not intend to suggest that Vico somehow was a harbinger of neo-Marxism, characterizing Vico in a way that has “nothing to do with the culture of the philosopher’s time” (Costa, 1976, p. 1:222). Nevertheless, Vico and Habermas do share some parallel concerns. Both share the conviction that philosophy ought to enable conversations between scholars working in disparate disciplines (see Habermas, 1970, p. 8; Vico, 1990, p. 47). Further, Habermas and Vico hold to the belief that scientific progress is no guarantee of improvement in the human condition. More importantly for our purposes, Vico and Habermas seek to construct a normative theory for communicative interaction between informed citizens. After a brief summary of Habermas’s discussion of the public sphere as it relates to his critical communication theory, I argue that Vico’s vision of an optimal rhetorical practice provides an account of how to improve deliberations in an always imperfect public sphere. In short, a pedagogy that produces citizens possessing both eloquence and wisdom will lead to better decisions in the public sphere.

Initially, a necessarily incomplete sketch of relevant portions of Habermas’s project is required in order to compare that project to Vico’s work, a sketch complicated by Habermas’s ongoing and often subtle revisions in his own theories. In providing this sketch, I wish to bracket several well-known objections to Habermas’s notion of the public sphere, including its alleged marginalization of women, working class, and various minority interests in the bourgeois public sphere (e.g., Benhabib, 1992; Felski, 1989; Fraser, 1992; Griffin, 1996; Negt & Kluge, 1972/1993); its purported romanticization of the bourgeois public sphere in previous centuries (e.g., Schudson, 1992); and its apparent assumption of a coherent analytic split between *public* and *private* (e.g., Gring-Pemble, 1998). Further, I necessarily slight the ever-growing literature in communication studies on the public sphere and procedural democracy (e.g., Goodnight, 1982, 1987, 1989, 1997; Goodnight & Hingstman, 1997; Hauser, 1987, 1997; Hauser & Blair, 1982; Herbst, 1992; Hicks, 1995; Jarman & McDonald, 1995; McGee, 1997; Phillips, 1996; Willard, 1989).

Habermas’s understanding of the public sphere concerns “a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all citizen” (Habermas, 1989, p. 136). The bourgeois public sphere had emerged by the end of the eighteenth century, when the possibility of policy change promoted by private individuals holding no public office came into being in parts of the Western world. The “liberal model” of this public sphere was organized around newspapers that were organs of information dissemination and opinion expression, rather than the means for making a profit and promoting consumer culture (see Habermas, 1962/1989). With the permanent legitimization of the public sphere in the North Atlantic democracies and elsewhere, the realm of the public sphere was extended beyond small groups of politically active *literati* to large numbers of citizens with political interests.

For several decades, Habermas has worried that the public sphere, a

conceptual space where informed citizens should be able to follow and contribute to the arguments advanced about issues of contemporary concern, is contracting in response to a number of twentieth-century social and economic transformations. Among the causes for the contraction and decline of the public sphere is the practice by large organizations (e.g., corporations) of engaging in political compromise with the state when there is no public sphere knowledge or discussion of that compromise. For this problem Habermas prescribes that the records and proceedings of large organizations be open to public scrutiny, just as government records are available to all interested citizens in many nations (see Habermas, 1989).

Another cause for public sphere decline is the growth of the technical sphere, where the intelligent layperson cannot be expected to function as an effective advocate. For example, discussions of nuclear power regulation that presuppose advanced training in nuclear engineering effectively exclude all but a very few laypersons from contributing to those discussions. As public policy has increasingly become the domain of experts in late modernity, the public sphere has contracted while the technical sphere has expanded. Habermas's answer to the expansion of the technical sphere is complicated, but he demands that the public sphere be the presumed space for any conversation about making public policy, even if technocrats and "policy wonks" are inconvenienced by such efforts to include larger publics in the decision-making process.

In response to the decline of the public sphere, Habermas proposes a normative communication theory predicated on the notion that all citizens could take part in public sphere political discussions, if only a state of affairs more closely akin to his "ideal speech situation" were created. In the ideal speech situation, where a consensus ideally could be formed free from the distorting effects of unequal power, lack of time, and other limitations on discourse, Habermas sees the union of social theory with an optimal political practice. Thus Habermas's theory of communicative action represents a normative ideal for the restoration of critical thought and judgment to the public sphere in the social-welfare states of Europe and North America, where the public sphere has assumed advertising functions and become "unpolitical" (see Habermas, 1962/1989, p. 15). A re-politicized public sphere would become a better, more effective version of the "cooperative endeavor to moderate, abolish, or prevent the suffering of vulnerable creatures" (Habermas, 1988/1992, p. 146).

As this review of his theories suggests, Habermas's attempt to find a rational grounding for political consensus in the practice of discourse itself makes possible an interesting comparison with Vico's work. Since he lived in a society without a bourgeois public sphere in Habermas's sense of the term, Vico cannot be expected to speak to the formation of nineteenth- and twentieth-century public opinion. But Vico's rhetorical theory *does* speak to the communicative preconditions for the ideal discussion of politics and the education of citizens for such discussions.

Given Habermas's occasional references to Vico, my comparison of Habermas to Vico requires a review of those passages in Habermas's work. In *Knowledge and Human Interests* (1968/1971) and in the last chapter of *Theory and Practice* (1973), Habermas considers Vico only as Vico has influenced the philosophy of history. However, Habermas's (1973) treatment of Vico in the first chapter of *Theory and Practice* is directly relevant to Vico's rhetorical theory. For Habermas, Vico's critique of Descartes and his followers is justified, since Cartesian philosophy uncoupled science from political action. The promise of social philosophy to connect political theory to a predictable political practice remains unfulfilled: "To be sure, 'scientific' objectivation [sic] . . . detaches the social to such an extent from the praxis of life that the applications derived from social philosophy cannot itself by scientifically controlled" (Habermas, 1973, p. 46). But Vico, claimed Habermas, failed to appreciate the insights into social life made possible by rigorous social science. Ideally, such a science would provide the means for finding truths grounded in the "intersubjectively formed common will" of the community (Habermas, 1988/1992, p. 141).

Habermas's reading of Vico makes Vico a defender of the classical tradition, who insists on the need for a pedagogy geared to political practice and the cultivation of prudence but makes no attempt to elevate prudence to the status of a modern science: "Vico hits on the difficulty with which Hobbes wrestled in vain. The scientifically established theory of social action fails to include the dimension of praxis to which classical doctrine offered direct access" (Habermas, 1973, p. 74). The task of linking theory to practice, of constructing a normative social philosophy that addresses Vico's concerns about practical politics while grounding truth claims in something more rigorous than a carefully cultivated wisdom, is Habermas's goal.

In the two volumes of his *Theory of Communicative Action* (e.g., Habermas, 1981/1987), Habermas describes a theory of truth grounded on consensus and a vision of the ideal speech situation that would enable the achievement of consensus if the ideal speech situation were attainable. While the project of modernity had "achieved the rigor of . . . theory at the cost of access to praxis" (Habermas, 1973, p. 79), the revision of social philosophy offered by Habermas was intended to solve this problem. Habermas's idea of communicative action would meet the requirements of connecting theory to an optimal practice by providing a rigorous approach to decision making about public policy. This approach would combat the "colonization of lifeworld" by technical sphere concerns that disable effective discussion of political interests, where "*everyday consciousness* is robbed of its power to synthesize; it becomes fragmented" and, therefore, unable to achieve consensus (Habermas, 1981/1987, p. 355).

We should note here Habermas's virtual silence on the subject of rhetoric. While Habermas does not condemn Vico's classical recovery of rhetoric in response to Cartesian science, neither does Habermas make a place for rhetoric in his own communication theory. Although Habermas admits that the rhetoric of Vico (and Aristotle) "indeed served the end of effective recommenda-

tion and warning; it aimed at decision, at the action of the citizens . . . within the specific sphere of Politics" (Habermas, 1973, p. 80), Habermas chooses to pursue a dialectical model amenable to the project of modern science. Rhetoric played an important role in classical thought and continues to have a place in literary and philosophical discourse, but Habermas conceives of rhetoric as subordinate to his normative argumentative procedures for achieving political consensus in the public sphere, since Habermas apparently perceives rhetoric merely as figural, as the art concerned with enriching language by use of rhetorical devices such as metaphor. As Habermas maintains, "literary criticism and philosophy have a family resemblance to literature . . . in their rhetorical achievements. But their family relationship stops right there, for in each of these enterprises the tools of rhetoric are subordinated to the discipline of a *distinct* form of argumentation" (Habermas, 1987, pp. 209-210). As I read this passage, argumentation is not a component of rhetoric for Habermas, though argumentation necessarily employs rhetorical devices. Rhetoric is subservient to the rules for good argument found operating in each genre of argument (e.g., philosophy). In short, Habermas does not need to speak to rhetoric, since rhetoric is subservient to the constraints imposed by the rules for political argument and, ideally, the rules of the ideal speech situation. In contrast, argument clearly has a place in Vico's conception of rhetoric.

Given Habermas's interest in reviving the critical potential of the public sphere, his decision to exclude rhetoric from his project is curious. Even his more recent work, which gives more respectful attention to the idea of compromise than did his earlier monographs (see, e.g., Habermas, 1993, p. 60), still fails to take rhetoric seriously. While this choice essentially to ignore rhetoric may come from some fear of the inherent corruptness of language itself (see Conley, 1990), such a fear seems odd for a scholar who has spent several decades arguing that an optimal rationality is linked intrinsically to a certain mode of public discourse. As a result of the omission of rhetoric, Habermas is susceptible to the critique of Cartesian science made by Vico and, indeed, to Habermas's own summary of Hobbes's limitations. While Habermas's construction of an "ideal speech situation" makes an important contribution to normative social and communication theory, his project still begs important questions relevant to social action where systematically distorted communication is unavoidable. In other words, Vico would maintain that Habermas, like Descartes, uncouples science from political action, since Habermas gives us little guidance on how to proceed in public deliberation without the ideal speech situation.

Without devaluing or slighting the value of dissent, Habermas champions the achievement of consensus in public discourse, where such consensus, when arrived at after public sphere deliberation, would become the social-political equivalent of Descartes's desire for certain truth. True, Habermas concedes that, at least where moral argumentation is concerned, "we can never be certain that the statements we take to be true or correct . . . belong among the statements that will withstand all future criticism"

(Habermas, 1993, p. 59). However, Habermas still insists that his theory of communicative action is about finding more than mere truth claims, since "all languages offer the possibility of distinguishing between what is true and what we hold to be true" (Habermas, 1988/1992, p. 138). Because Habermas's approach is grounded in the structure of language itself, he maintains that his approach ideally should allow a community to come as close as possible to certain truth in a given discussion.

Unfortunately, as was the case in Vico's day, social philosophy in modernity--now with a Habermasian stamp--fails to address the problem of contingency (i.e., the need to make timely decisions without certain knowledge of the optimal course of action). Habermas fails to prescribe a course of action for those who *cannot* avoid systemic distortions in the public sphere. Consistent realization of anything approximating the ideal speech situation seems unlikely in a world where technical jargon is becoming ever more complex and where time seems an increasingly scarce commodity.⁵ Despite the existence of romantic notions concerning U.S. history on this subject, Schudson (1992; but see Goodnight & Hingstman, 1997) suggests that the public sphere of deliberation in the United States historically has been imperfectly attained at best.

Habermas, the consummate rationalist, hopes that the search for consensus will make unnecessary Vico's truth claims grounded on probability. Vico insists that the probable is an inevitable component of human decision-making in the imperfect world of practical politics. Since little movement towards the ideal speech situation is discernible at present, Vico's idea of rhetorical competence promotes the education of citizens who can participate effectively in policy debates while remaining comprehensible to the relevant audience(s) in the imperfect public sphere of the current era.

Vico's refurbishment of rhetoric as an audience-centered, practical art serves as a needed corrective to Habermas's ideal for public discourse. In a world where the "most probable" often provides the best guidance we have, the study of rhetoric and the cultivation of prudence is preferable to begrudging acceptance of an undemocratic world of noisy elites and silent/silenced multitudes until such time as the ideal speech situation can be called into being. Vico's pedagogy is geared to the preparation of citizens who can argue and act when time is short, where power is unequal, and where consensus is not imminent. Vico speaks to the world we inhabit presently, while Habermas speaks of a world we would rather inhabit. Both projects have their place. But a social theory of argumentation in the public sphere should account for improving deliberations in the present as well as pointing to a preferred future. Perhaps in Habermas's world, where interlocutors would have the luxury of unlimited time, rhetorical training would be superfluous. However, in an imperfect public sphere, rhetoric is needed when interlocutors suffer from the shortcomings mentioned above, such as deliberative time constraints and inequalities in political, economic, and cultural authority among discussants.⁶ Deliberation in an imperfect

public sphere is improved when interlocutors not only think well but also present their arguments as attractively as possible. Such rhetorical skill provides auditors with a sharper contrast between competing arguments and clarifies alternatives. While Habermas (1993, p. 60) admits at one point that public decisions sometimes must look for "fair compromises," Vico's pedagogy suggests how we might prepare citizens to search for such compromises.

Further, rhetorical theory does a better job of meeting Habermas's demands for a satisfactory social philosophy than Habermas admits. Habermas is correct when he claims that Vico never aspires to the standards of a modern scientific method. But, like Habermas, Vico does construct a normative theory of political discourse, where probability, eloquence, and wisdom combine in the ideal citizen to enable discussion and action that benefit the *civitas*. As Vico (1993) suggests

regarding his own era, "rulers honor those arts and sciences which bring advantages to the state and impede the worst evils of the state such as 'avarice and excess'" (pp. 104-105).

When the implications of Vico's theory for the public sphere that emerged following his death are considered, Vico provides a theoretical account of the preparation of *individual citizens* for participation in an imperfect public sphere. While Habermas speaks to the procedural norms for optimal public discussion, Vico would prepare citizens able to function as well as possible in the flawed public sphere of the status quo, where Habermas's procedural norms for public argument do not consistently apply. First, Vico's critique of Cartesianism as unsuited to public deliberation in many cases also applies to Habermas's account of argumentation in the public sphere. Second, Vico's insistence on a pedagogy that cultivates practical wisdom is important for an imperfect public sphere where probability, rather than certainty, is the norm. Third, Vico's audience focus reminds students that they must make their arguments attractive and understandable for specific audiences, rather than naively assuming that the better argument is always the more compelling. Fourth, the union of rhetoric and philosophy preached by Vico would prepare students for the discovery and enactment of good public policy. In short, Vico's students of rhetoric would bring eloquence and wisdom to the imperfect public sphere. If Habermas gives us an ideal vision of the public sphere, Vico provides an ideal vision of the citizen who could make the best of the opportunity for deliberative argument under less than optimal conditions.

Conclusion

Vico's rhetorical theory accounts for the preparation of citizens able to operate effectively in whatever public and political space is available to them. To the extent that Habermas's social philosophy fails to account for the production of ideal citizens in his description of optimal public discourse, Vico provides a needed addition to the normative communication theory of Jürgen Habermas. Further, Vico provides practical advice for

educators who must prepare students for public life in the actually existing democracies in which they reside, as opposed to the life they might prefer to have in Habermas's world (see Fraser, 1992). My reading of Vico and Habermas adumbrates a theory of the public sphere in which rhetoric—Vico's eloquence—has a place.

Vico should not be categorized as a leftover from the Renaissance; he recognized the contributions of Cartesian science to the study of some disciplines. But he was one of the few cautious voices at the beginning of the Enlightenment. For Vico, the emphasis on new science did not require abandonment of classical learning. Instead, the new science was a supplement, a valuable addition to research and pedagogy, but no replacement for the teaching of the ancients. The rhetorical pedagogy of Rome and Greece prepared students for activity in political affairs. Advances in physics and other sciences did not displace classical learning, at least with regards to the *polis*. Vico sought the union of the best Classical and Renaissance thought with the scientific advances of his age. Vico's concern for civic relevance should be examined thoroughly for its potential contributions to contemporary rhetorical and argumentation theory.

Endnotes

¹ In communication studies, scholars like Bevilacqua (1972, 1974, 1985) have read Vico for such purposes as generating insights on communication as "process" or reinterpreting George Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776/1988). The implications of Vico's rhetorical theories for the practice of rhetorical criticism have also received some attention (e.g., Bryan, 1986).

² The six inaugural orations became available in English translation only a few years ago; see Vico (1993). The speech of 1732, named "On the Heroic Mind," is available in English in Vico (1976). The 1737 address, now given the title "The Academies and the Relation between Philosophy and Eloquence," is included as an appendix to the 1990 reprinting of Gianturco's 1965 translation of *Study Methods* (Vico, 1990).

³ Some scholars maintain that the young Vico was a "Platonic Cartesian" (see Vico, 1993, p. 46), and Vico never argued that Descartes failed to make a substantial contribution to philosophical inquiry. Vico's early orations include the suggestion that Descartes was an original thinker: "Listen to Descartes . . . You will discover that he is a philosopher like no other" (Vico, 1993, p. 81).

⁴ See Gadamer (1960/1989, pp. 19-30) for a discussion of Vico, rhetoric, and *sensus communis*.

⁵ My own assessment of the possibilities for public sphere creation and maintenance is more pessimistic than the position taken by Habermas. At a 1989 conference inspired by the publication in English of his *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Habermas's (1992) "Concluding Remarks" included his own thoughts on the potential for realizing his vision of the public sphere. However, even Habermas admits that, at present,

"[e]very public sphere I know still depends on violence" (1992, p. 475).

⁶ As I do in this essay, Doxtader (1991) notes the limits imposed on Habermas's theory of communicative action because Habermas fails to incorporate rhetoric into his system. For Doxtader, Habermas undertheorizes strategic action in his account of consensus formation, since Habermas assumes commonalities among interlocutors that may not exist. My own reading of Vico provides further justification of and context for reconceptualizing Habermas's theory of communicative action in the fashion of Doxtader.

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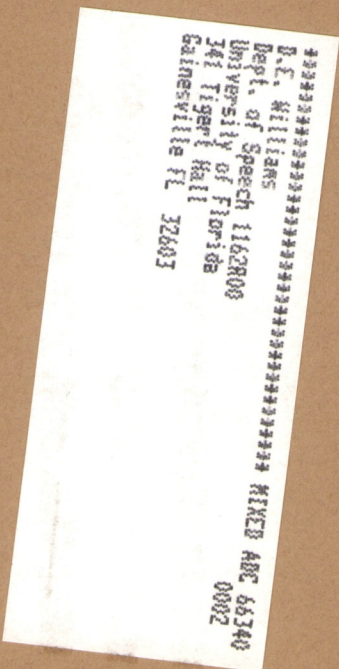
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