

Lincoln-Douglas Debate: An Educational Exercise

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A growing commitment to Lincoln-Douglas debate and countless examples of diversified practice provide a clear exigence for extended philosophical discussion regarding the scope and function of the activity, particularly as it acquires those characteristics that will inevitably define it into maturity. The National Forensic Association's (NFA) decision to accommodate an influx of interested and talented students and this very issue of the *National Forensic Journal* bear witness to its unqualified commitment and the increasing legitimacy of this activity. At the same time, an unprecedented number of "border-crossers" have arrived at tournaments across the country, equipped with philosophy and technique learned and practiced in the crucible of policy and value debate. Their arrival has brought an inevitable challenge to those principles upon which this alternative form of debate was conceived and implemented five years ago.

In framing the rules that govern Lincoln-Douglas debate, forensic educators made a conscious effort to distinguish Lincoln-Douglas from other forms of competition. The original NFA Rules (1995) state that "Lincoln-Douglas Debate is a one-person, persuasive, policy debate on traditional stock issues." Although we agree with these efforts to define uniquely the character of Lincoln-Douglas debate, this essay argues that these efforts alone may be insufficient to guarantee its future viability and vitality.

We contend primarily that many debaters, judges, and coaches have lost sight of the educational purpose of forensics; far too many now view the activity simply as a contest where trophies are won and lost. In the first section of this essay, we will examine how the *tabula rasa* philosophy has contributed to the decline of

argumentation and debate. In the second section, we will argue that forensic educators should adopt a more interventionist philosophy of forensics when coaching and judging Lincoln-Douglas debate. In the final section, we briefly respond to some of the likely objections to the activist position we express in this essay.

TABULA RASA AND INTERCOLLEGIATE DEBATE

The earliest forensic educators believed that debate was an extension of the classroom learning experience. Although the theory of argumentation and debate could be taught in lectures, gaining proficiency in the application of these techniques required a forum for students to practice their argumentation skills. Debate tournaments, competitions featuring teams composed of students from different schools, were intended to provide a co-curricular setting for teaching students how to argue effectively.

Not surprisingly, the academics who judged these early debates imposed a preconceived set of standards for adjudication. Since the primary goal of debate was to educate students, there was no reason to reward weak delivery or shoddy argumentation. In fact, a review of argumentation and debate literature of this era finds that judges were encouraged to actively intervene in debates to enforce educational objectives. In his classic work, *Argumentation, Discussion and Debate*, for example, Baird (1950) advocated penalizing debaters who insisted "that 'should' implies merely theoretical desirability but carries no requirement of practicability" and/or those who used "peculiar" analysis "seemingly devised to throw the other team off guard" (p. 363). Judges and coaches of this era believed it was more important to discourage uneducational practices than to reward the performance of technically proficient debaters. Like Ehninger (1958), many feared that if judges started voting for technique over substance, debate arguments would "tend to become ever more esoteric, elaborate, and far-fetched" (p. 133).

As competitive debate has matured, there has been a profound change in the role played by the judge (Ziegelmueller, 1996). While forensic educators first conceived of the judge as an educator, many contemporary judges appear more concerned with

enforcing competitive fairness than with promoting educational standards. The new generation of judges view debate as a competitive game instead of educational exercise. Accordingly, they see the proper role of the judge as that of neutral referee charged with objectively processing the subject matter of the debate, a philosophy known as the *tabula rasa* approach. "*Tabula rasa*," Ulrich writes (1992), "is an approach to judging that emphasizes the desirability of having debate rules evolved from each individual debate instead of being imposed upon a round externally by the judge" (p. 312).

At first glance, the idea behind *tabula rasa* is convincing. Ulrich (1992) claims that the *tabula rasa* approach encourages debaters to develop perspectives on the evaluation of argument, that it encourages educationally sound goals, and that it is consistent with the adversary system. According to advocates of the *tabula rasa* approach, the judge should allow the "individual debaters to develop standards for the evaluation of argument" (Ulrich, 1992, p. 312). Good arguments, if they truly are good arguments, will necessarily drive out bad arguments without the intervention of the judge. So while a judge may have standards for assessing evidence and evaluating argumentation, these preconceptions should be subservient to the evaluative criteria advanced in the debate. "If one wants to reward good argument, one should equally penalize a team that does not know what is wrong with a bad argument" (Ulrich, 1992, p. 312).

Although these are commendable goals, in practice the *tabula rasa* perspective has had disastrous consequences for the quality of argumentation in competitive debate (Cutbirth, 1983; Dempsey, 1983; Dempsey & Hartmann, 1986; Ganer, 1987; Herbeck, 1990; Herbeck & Katsulas, 1988). As more and more judges have ceased to impose educational standards in debate rounds, gamesmanship elements (i.e., excessive speed, counter-intuitive arguments, destructive theoretical constructs) have begun to be utilized with greater frequency by debaters. Knowing that judges will passively assign credibility to all arguments and allow a wide range of competitive practices, debaters have advocated increasingly abusive theoretical constructs and preposterous arguments. Experienced competitors often overwhelm

weaker opponents, not with greater depth of analysis, but by employing speed, unusual theory, or esoteric arguments. By rewarding debaters who employ such tactics, judges have encouraged others to teach and learn them until these gaming techniques overshadow substantive argument as preferred strategy in the forensic community. Such judge passivity is responsible for the often dramatic decline in the quality of debate arguments and the promotion of shallow practice nearly devoid of educational utility. Ganer (1987) has observed:

Many of the problems in contemporary debate can be traced to those who persist in divorcing debate from general academic concerns of argumentation and viewing debate as nothing more than a "game," in the antitheoretical rather than theoretical sense, to be played under the sponsorship of an academic institution. (p. 387)

In the blunt assessment of Rowland (1984), "the *tabula rasa* perspective, when applied without limits, leads to bad debate arguments" (p. 83).

Despite these concerns, most judges in policy and value debate operate within the *tabula rasa* philosophy, believing that it is warranted as it promotes diversity of thought and ensures competitive fairness through critical objectivity (Freeley, 1981; Matlon & Cross, 1978; Rowland, 1984). Regrettably, the widespread assumption of a *tabula rasa* perspective has had profound and deleterious consequences on the quality of debate sponsored by the National Debate Tournament (NDT) and the Cross Examination Debate Association (CEDA). If the *tabula rasa* philosophy comes to be widely accepted in Lincoln-Douglas debate, the educational experience, like that of NDT and CEDA will be dramatically diminished. If Lincoln-Douglas is to be more than a competitive information processing game, forensic educators must be willing to enforce the educational objectives of debate and insist on practices that teach students to argue effectively and communicate persuasively.

LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATE AS AN EDUCATIONAL EXERCISE

Partially in response to abuses witnessed in policy and value debate, forensic educators devised Lincoln-Douglas debate. The motivations behind Lincoln-Douglas debate are laudable, yet in order to maintain its distinctiveness, we need to adopt and enforce a perspective on judging and coaching that is designed to further specific academic objectives. Competitive practices, arguments, and tournament procedures that run counter to this conception of debate need to be changed. Consistent with this thinking, we argue for a philosophy of forensics based on debate as an educational exercise. Such a view, we hasten to add, is consistent with the positions endorsed by both the first and second National Developmental Conferences on Forensics (McBath, 1974; Parson, 1984).

As coaches, we bear a responsibility to foster practices that will improve the quality of argument in competitive debate. This means that we must make a meaningful effort to instruct our students in the principles of argumentation. We must insist upon the construction and delivery of theoretically sound positions in debates. We must encourage students to make effective use of evidence in support of their positions. Similarly, we should teach students to critically assess positions as part of the preparation process and to test reasoning offered in debates.

At the same time, judges must demand that debaters conform to prescribed standards in debates, by becoming more than information processors who mindlessly assess and weigh tactical maneuvers in rounds. Minimal standards for arguments must be maintained. Debaters must be encouraged to fulfill completely their role as advocates, and be rewarded for adhering to principles of cogent argumentation delivered in a comprehensive fashion. Further, debaters must be given incentives to cultivate a persuasive style of speaking.

We insist that coaches, competitors, and judges stop treating debate as a game. If debate is merely a game, it may be appropriate for judges to act as referees assigning points to the participants. By contrast, debate should be an educational exercise designed to serve as a "laboratory for teaching argumentation skills"

(McBath, 1974; Thomas, 1980). Forensic educators must intervene as necessary to redress some of the "irrational practices currently emphasized in academic debate" (Rowland & Deatherage, 1986, p. 246). While it is impossible to address all of these problems in a single essay, several significant issues confronting Lincoln-Douglas debate are addressed in the paragraphs that follow.

Rate of Delivery

Intercollegiate debate is experiencing fragmentation because of dissatisfaction with traditional forms of competition. At one time, a heterogeneous mix of persons were involved in policy debate. Participants included students with and without high school debate experience; coaches included those who were formerly college debaters, high school debate coaches, and speech and argumentation teachers. Today, some forms of debate have become so specialized that only a very small group of students and coaches are able to participate. Over the past two decades, critics (McGough, 1988; McGlashen, 1990) have noted that specialization of several kinds—the development of a sophisticated debate theory literature, the emergence of arguments (both affirmative and negative) virtually devoid of real world relevance, and the increase in the rate of delivery to the point where few are even able to comprehend a debate—has functioned to limit severely the audience attractiveness of the activity. Hollihan, Baaske, and Riley (1987) rightly note that "Academic debate has become an activity that those of us actively involved in it value, but which cannot be celebrated in the presence of our faculty colleagues, university administrators, community leaders, or even alumni if they graduated more than ten years ago" (p. 186). Rowland and Deatherage (1988) concur noting that "to many observers the practices . . . seem absurd" (p. 247). Even former debaters (Pinkus, 1983; Snow 1987) have expressed serious reservations about contemporary trends in academic debate practice.

One of the leading causes of disaffection is the rate of presentation. The arguments advanced by advocates defending rapid delivery are clear, and some of these arguments are persuasive in certain contexts. However, such presentation style is not

appropriate for Lincoln-Douglas debate. As the "Rules for Competition" (1995) state, Lincoln-Douglas "is a communication event, by which we mean the philosophy of the activity is consistent with that which governs other individual events." "Spread delivery" is "antithetical to the purpose and intent of this event," and accordingly, it should constitute grounds for voting against a debater who speaks too quickly. Encouraging judges to admonish debaters, as the Rules do, is not a sufficient sanction. Judges should, without hesitation or anxiety, vote against debaters who speak at an inappropriate rate of speed.

Of course, the appropriate rate will vary from debater to debater, from round to round, and from judge to judge. Notwithstanding this fact, we are adamant in our commitment to the principle that Lincoln-Douglas debate is a communication event intended for a general audience. It may be appropriate to speak at an accelerated rate in the more specialized forums provided by policy and value debate. The fact that an accelerated rate is acceptable in some forums, however, does not mean that such presentations are appropriate in all forums. Far from seeing this as a limitation, the diversity between the forms of debate should be preserved and protected.

Quality of Argumentation

If we are to improve the quality of argumentation, forensic educators must be willing to enforce educational standards on the activity. This would require a change both in the way in which we prepare debaters and evaluate debates. With respect to coaching, it would require that we impose the same educational standards on our debaters that we eloquently espouse in our professional writings and associations. Such constructive role-modeling is absent, as was documented in Matlon and Keele's (1984) survey of former NDT participants. It found that "there is a recurring caution expressed in several places that directors set a standard for the ethical integrity of arguments and to teach students the objectives of honest, rational, real-world arguments and to stop game-playing" (p. 202). The implication of such a change in thinking about the nature of debate is clear. If we believe that debaters make implausible arguments,

then we need to encourage our own debaters to develop reasonable positions that are supported by compelling evidence. Rather than bitterly complaining about certain types of arguments, we need to convince our debaters that better arguments exist. To put it simply, meaningful change in debate practice will not occur until we clean our own houses. A necessary first step in a program to protect Lincoln-Douglas debate is for coaches to ensure that their own students debate in an exemplary fashion.

This same commitment to promoting sound argumentative practices should be rigorously adhered to and enforced by judges. Rather than serving as neutral referees, judges should take on the role of active critics. From this perspective, critics should use their debate expertise to encourage quality argumentation. Judges should not be required to accept any argument that violates traditional standards of adequacy or validity. At a minimum, judges should require clear presentation, development and explanation of all arguments, and, if evidence is used, the author and specific qualifications should be presented. When bad arguments are advanced, judges should not be afraid to call them bad arguments. For too long, debaters have been allowed to set the agenda for what is permissible. The time has come to abandon this philosophy as it no longer serves pedagogical interests. Instead of abrogating control for assessing a debate, critics should enforce educational standards on the activity. This sort of activist stance was described by Dempsey and Hartmann (1986) when they wrote: "Where judges of academic debate view the educational values of debate being threatened by the perpetuation of certain practices, even when these practices have been adequately defended in a given round, they too have an obligation to intervene" (p. 172). Such selective intervention, which rewards high quality argumentation, will rapidly eliminate detrimental gamesmanship, and will make the practice of Lincoln-Douglas debate consonant with its theoretical moorings.

This does not mean that the NFA community should endorse wanton or indiscriminate judge intervention on every issue in every debate. It does mean, however, that judges should be more willing to impose their own minimum standards on arguments and practices within a debate. Muir and Panetta (1987), among others, have tried to set appropriate guidelines for judge intervention. The alternative,

forcing judges to assume that all positions are debatable and all arguments are plausible, misconstrues the nature of the critical act. "To acknowledge critical subjectivity," Balthrop (1983) notes, "does not weaken the intellectual value of the perspective. What is important is that some checks exist which keep subjective interpretations bound to the event and to the community's, or field's, standards of appropriateness" (p. 9).

Evidence

Two related problems concerning the use of evidence in Lincoln-Douglas debate must be considered. First, if Lincoln-Douglas debate is an educational exercise designed to teach argumentation skills, it must necessarily involve the use of evidence. While Lincoln-Douglas should emphasize effective communication skills, debate is more than an exercise in persuasive speaking. Accordingly, the "Rules of Competition" (1995) appropriately state that Lincoln-Douglas debate requires "evidentiary support of arguments." Irrational fears that any similarity to policy and value debate denotes the transformation of Lincoln-Douglas into NDT or CEDA constitute a paranoia that only weakens the substance of the activity. Forensic educators should insist on evidence when preparing students to debate and when assessing arguments made in debates.

A second problem, not yet readily apparent in Lincoln-Douglas debate, also needs to be addressed. All too often, contemporary debate privileges the quantity of evidence over the quality of evidence. As evidence increases in Lincoln-Douglas, debaters may begin to support argumentative claims with copious amounts of data at the expense of supporting warrants. Rather than explaining the reasons used to justify a particular conclusion, many policy or value debates have become little more than exercises in reading evidence offering summary judgments. The content of these debates can be reduced to the presentation of a list of claims complete with an expert opinion providing authoritative endorsement of the conclusion. All too often, there is very little explanation for the connection between the evidence and the claims that the evidence is advanced to support (Leeper & Herbeck, 1991/1992).

The evidence substantiates the claim, but it provides no warrant or explanation for why the claim is correct. As a result, the reasons justifying the conclusion are unknown.

Regrettably, the "Rules of Competition" have little to say about the quality of evidence in a debate. Instead, the Rules discuss the minimal elements of a source that must be introduced, the process of challenging evidence, and the type of information that may be offered as evidence. While this discussion is both necessary and important, the Rules ignore more significant questions concerning the assessment of evidence.

As educators, we must encourage the debater to do more than "provide many claims, little data, and no warrants" (Leeper & Herbeck, 1991/1992, p. 24). Along the same lines, we should also encourage students to evaluate critically the evidence that they are utilizing. This is no idle charge as advocates beyond the debate context have regard for qualifications and reservations on arguments.

Further, rigorous and systematic evidentiary clash in debates should be rewarded. "There is nothing wrong," Ganer (1987) writes, "with a judge rejecting evidence or arguments that are counter to his or her basic values and beliefs without having to insist on matching evidence or arguments from the opposite side" (p. 392). Some sources should be accorded more weight than others. Many of the sources used in contemporary debates would not be considered credible by any rational decision maker. Debaters should discriminate between and among evidence based on the credibility of the author and the reasons provided. Even in the case of a credible source, tests of external and internal consistency should be used before decisions are made on the basis of that evidence.

IN DEFENSE OF OUR POSITION

Some in the Lincoln-Douglas debate community will likely find this line of reasoning either objectionable or even outright offensive. Although it would be impossible to anticipate and answer all the criticisms against the positions developed in this essay, we do feel a need to respond to some of the likely criticisms that will be

advanced against our proposal. In particular, attention is given to claims that this activist stance is inconsistent with the principles of Lincoln-Douglas debate, that this activist stance is unnecessary, and that this activist stance is unfair to debaters. These objections are conceptually distinct, and so each is treated in turn.

Inconsistent

At face value, some might argue that this interventionist stance is inconsistent with the rules governing Lincoln-Douglas debate. For example, the National Forensic Association's "Rules of Competition" (1995) are considerably less strident on the question of speed:

Since L-D debate adheres to the communication principles of individual events, judges are encouraged to give a verbal warning to debaters speaking too rapidly in a round. If the speaker does not heed the warning in that particular round, the judge is strongly encouraged to give that speaker a loss for the round even if the student has otherwise "won" the debate on the basis of the stock issues.

On other matters, the "Rules of Competition" speak descriptively and do not empower judges to enforce the rules with specific sanctions.

For the most part, we concur with this stance. Debates should be decided primarily on the argumentation in the round. We are unwilling, however, to allow the *tabula rasa* perspective to completely disempower forensic educators. If debaters violate precepts of effective communication and sound argumentation, judges should not be bound to evaluate the debate solely on "analysis, use of evidence, and ability to effectively and persuasively organize, deliver, and refute arguments." Judge intervention in the evaluation of Lincoln-Douglas debate helps to guarantee that this type of debate remains a communicative event designed to teach effective argumentation skills.

Although others may disagree, such a stance is consistent with the goals and objectives of Lincoln-Douglas debate.

Moreover, such an activist philosophy is crucial if Lincoln-Douglas debate is to remain different, both conceptually and pragmatically, from policy and value debate. If judges allow the rules themselves to be debated, Lincoln-Douglas debate will quickly come to resemble one-person policy or value debate. Although CEDA was originally intended to be an alternative to NDT, commentators like Ziegelmueller (1990) have observed that both organizations now face similar "issues and concerns" (p. 27). Lincoln-Douglas was not intended to be a one-person version of NDT or CEDA debate, but instead was created to afford a wide variety of students the opportunity to participate in a different type of debate. To preserve this unique form of debate, it is incumbent upon those in the community to actively enforce the "Rules of Competition" and to view Lincoln-Douglas debate as an educational exercise.

Unnecessary

Some will likely argue that our proposal is unnecessary. Based on a review of Lincoln-Douglas debate rounds, it might be claimed that this essay badly overstates the case. After all, the rate of speed in an overwhelming majority of debate rounds is comprehensible, most arguments are intellectually sound and substantiated with reasonable evidence, and there are comparatively few meta-theoretical arguments. Given our experience to date, this objection seems reasonable.

However, this happy state of affairs is unlikely to continue into the indefinite future. At the present time, the Lincoln-Douglas community largely benefits from both its manageable size and homogeneity. Many debaters are drawn from the individual events community and most coaches share a common conception of the activity. We suspect, however, that this homogeneity will be severely tested in the months and years to come. As Lincoln-Douglas debate has grown in popularity, a more heterogeneous mix of debaters and judges has already entered the competitive fray. Some debaters will be adept at the rapid rate of delivery sometimes practiced in policy or value debate, while other debaters will be familiar with sophisticated theoretical positions and more counterintuitive arguments. Simultaneously, judges with

experience beyond Lincoln-Douglas debate may be more tolerant of this diversity. As a result of this combination of forces, Lincoln-Douglas debate may soon confront some of the same difficulties as do NDT and CEDA.

This past year, for example, while judging at a regional tournament, one of us encountered a rather unusual round. One of the two participants in this debate was a skilled policy debater and spoke with great speed and clarity. The opposing debater, knowledgeable in the rules governing Lincoln-Douglas debate, objected to the rate of presentation. In response, the rapid debater answered with a lengthy series of cogent arguments defending speed. The slower debater reread the Lincoln-Douglas rules, thus weakly and ineffectively dismissing the arguments defending speed without attempting to respond to any of the specifics. In the final analysis, the individual arguments in defense of speed went largely unanswered despite the presumption lodged in the rules of the activity against speed. Although this may be a relatively simple example, situations exactly like this will occur more frequently in the future as the homogeneity of Lincoln-Douglas debate breaks down due to the increasing size of the community. As our community evolves, the argument that an activist philosophy is unnecessary will quickly lose its intellectual appeal.

Fairness

In addition to claiming that such thinking is unnecessary, others might object on the grounds that "radical" reform of this sort is unfair. This claim to fairness is grounded in the mistaken belief that debate is nothing more than a game. Those who hold this position claim that judges should not intervene in the debate process because intervention is necessarily unfair to one side in the debate. While it is true that a particular judge's conception of debate may work to the benefit of one debater, judges have an obligation, even a duty, to enforce educational standards on the activity. It is difficult to understand why many professionals in debate are reluctant to accept this premise, given that many of these same educators routinely impose stringent guidelines in their classrooms. In public speaking classes, for example, teachers frequently require

students to give particular types of speeches (e.g., persuasive, informative, ceremonial, etc.). Would such a teacher be guilty of violating academic freedom if she failed a student for giving a eulogy for an assignment that required a persuasive speech? Would this same teacher be guilty for failing a student for not adhering to the rules of grammar or for delivering a speech in Spanish? Definitely not. Why then is it troubling to require students to advocate sound arguments in a comprehensible fashion? As Hollihan, Baaske, and Riley (1987) argue:

No one expects a professor to be totally neutral in evaluating a student's classwork, some positions have more currency than others for a variety of academic reasons. Professors are asked to apply their expertise in evaluating their student's performance, and thus provide their students with the benefits of this expertise; we should ask for no less from debate judges. (p. 190)

Given that debate judges are experts in debate, one should not fear to use that expertise to improve the quality of the activity.

Second, arguments or theoretical constructs that are inherently uneducational should not be tolerated. Claims that are constructed from evidence fragments, unqualified sources, counterintuitive reasoning, causal oversimplification, and hyperbole are simply bad arguments. The debate judge, as a professional critic of argument, should label them as such. As for theoretical issues, judges should be willing to dismiss theoretical claims that would undermine the educational foundation of Lincoln-Douglas debate.

It will, no doubt, be difficult to defend these educational interests against appeals to fairness. Zarefsky (1992) has observed that "an educational approach leads inherently to the tension between providing structured environment-formats, rules, standards, guidelines, and the like to maximize the chance of positive results, and providing freedom and guidance to students as they learn to make difficult choices for themselves" (p. 32). These difficulties notwithstanding, such an effort is essential if we are to achieve the educational objectives underlying Lincoln-Douglas debate.

CONCLUSION

One of the great strengths of competitive forensics lies in the diversity of our community. By providing students with a variety of forums, we enable them to practice a wide range of skills. If this diversity is to endure, we must be willing to actively enforce the rules that differentiate between and among policy, value and Lincoln-Douglas debate. This was not difficult in the early days of the activity, but there will be an ever increasing pressure to blur the boundaries between the different forms of debate. While we applaud debaters, judges and coaches who are able to transcend the boundaries, we are firm in our belief that forensic educators should work to maintain the integrity of Lincoln-Douglas debate.

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A Philosophy for Judging NFA Lincoln-Douglas Debate

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Lincoln-Douglas debate offered by the National Forensic Association is uniquely situated within the collegiate forensic context. The event uses a traditional debate format and emphasizes traditional aspects of academic debate: evidence, reasoning, cross-examination, and refutation. However, as currently practiced, Lincoln-Douglas debate is sponsored by an organization dedicated to communicative performance in which high standards for presentation are encouraged. In addition, NFA Lincoln-Douglas is usually held in conjunction with individual events tournaments and, as a result, many Lincoln-Douglas judges who have individual events backgrounds tend to view the event differently than a judge who has National Debate Tournament (NDT) or Cross-Examination Debate Association (CEDA) experience. Finally, the NFA rules explicitly call for the de-emphasis of traditional debate style, stressing instead the importance of rhetorical sensitivity and persuasion. As a consequence of the unique situation of NFA Lincoln-Douglas, the event has been plagued by misunderstanding, controversy, and discrepant judging philosophies.

This article contends that the "schizophrenic" nature of NFA Lincoln-Douglas has created multiple judging criteria and that, so far, dialogue on the subject has failed to identify a predominant judging philosophy. We argue that NFA Lincoln-Douglas judges should use a "critical listener" perspective to evaluate rounds. A critical listener perspective recognizes the importance of traditional debate concepts, while at the same time acknowledging that subjective factors may intervene in the judge's decision in a round. To support this argument, we first survey the various paradigms employed by judges in traditional debate contexts and assess their appropriateness for NFA Lincoln-Douglas. Second, we explain an approach for judging individual events. Finally, we elaborate on the

"critical listener" perspective and the implications it would have for the activity.

THE WORLD VIEWS OF POLICY DEBATE JUDGES

Prominent figures in the field of argumentation have suggested that the role of paradigms—or world views—is one of the critical issues confronting contemporary forensic practice. Robert H. Gass, Jr., wrote in 1988 "That disputes involving debate paradigms have occupied the center stage of the debate literature for the last half dozen years" (p. 78). These competing perspectives have presented important problems for debaters, coaches, and judges, while also raising questions about the educational nature of competitive debate.

Debate paradigms were not intended to apply only to four-person NDT/policy or CEDA/fact-value debate formats. In fact, many Lincoln-Douglas judges, since the inception of NFA Lincoln-Douglas competition, have used these common debate paradigms, which we contend, do not effectively guide NFA Lincoln-Douglas judges and competitors. Common debate paradigms emphasize the technical nature of debate and do not adequately consider the audience-centered approach of NFA Lincoln-Douglas. This section of the paper reviews traditional debate paradigms and discusses aspects of them which may have application to Lincoln-Douglas debate.

Standard Policy Debate Paradigms

Competitive debaters make generalizations about the nature of the judging pool in competition. These generalizations inevitably lead to certain assumptions, on the part of these competitors, about the kinds of decisions that certain judges will make. Further, with the proliferation within the debate community of judging philosophy sheets, students and coaches are attempting to draw conclusions about how best to adapt to certain judging philosophies.

Common among the so-called paradigms employed in contemporary secondary school and collegiate academic debate are *tabula rasa*, policy making, hypothesis testing, stock issues, and

skills. From informal observation, policy making and tabula rasa would appear to be the most regularly used, followed by the stock issues approach. One can envision, for the purposes of this discussion, a continuum that stretches from consistently non-interventionist to regularly interventionist—with intervention being the act of the judge taking an active role in the debate and its decision. These perspectives are then stretched out along this continuum according to their degree of judge involvement.

The judge who adheres to the "tabula rasa" or "games" world view considers himself or herself a blank slate. Any argument made by a competitor is acceptable (Ziegelmueller, Harris, and Bloomingdale, 1995, p. 22). Taken to its greatest extreme, a debater could state "All pigs are blue and failure to deny that pigs are blue should justify a ballot for the negative." In the very strictest sense, a tabula rasa judge would be compelled to vote negative if this argument went undenied. The approach assumes that the debaters take charge and guide the round. Ulrich argued, "it is an approach to judging that emphasizes the desirability of having debate rules evolved from each individual debate instead of being imposed upon a round externally by the judge" (1987, p. 185), which is by far the most non-interventionist of the perspectives.

Policy making operates on the assumption that the judge in a debate is a maker of policy and the debate is focused on the evaluation of competing policy options (Ziegelmueller, Harris, and Bloomingdale, 1995, p. 18-19). Debaters who place a judge in a policy making framework may adopt a case structure that advocates replacing or modifying core values in a policy system (Lichtman, et. al., 1987, p. 229) or simply replacing one policy with another. In practice this philosophy has evolved around a metaphor that suggests, when the judge signs the ballot, he or she is acting as the government—actually implementing the policy. Such judges tend to be more concerned with the "weight" of the advantages of the affirmative plan versus the disadvantages offered by the negative against the plan. Issues of inherency and solvency, while they may play a factor in the decision, tend to be subordinate in importance to issues of harm and cost. Again, this perspective tends to be fairly non-interventionist.

The hypothesis tester treats every argument as an independent test of the truth (Ziegelmueller, Harris, and Bloomingdale, 1995, pp. 20-21). The model the hypothesis tester employs is social scientific in nature. Zarefsky noted, "the judge of argument is the counterpart of the scientist; his goal is to test the hypothesis to determine whether it is probably true" (1987, p. 208). Under this perspective, a debater might advance competing and contradictory arguments in the same speech, suggesting that while they cannot both be right, at least one will be selected by the end of the debate. The appropriate analogy to describe this perspective is that of a scientist who uses fifteen different reactants on an unknown substance in an attempt to discover its true identity by the process of elimination. Ultimately, this perspective requires the debater to guide the judge to make the appropriate choices. Yet, it leaves open the possibility of intervention in an unorganized debate.

The most traditional of the approaches to evaluating policy debate is the stock issues approach. In policy debates, a stock issues judge evaluates the existence of an inherent barrier to change (blame), a harm that is a product of the present system (ill), a degree of solvency stemming from the proposed plan (cure), the existence of negative results or disadvantages (cost), and his or her own jurisdiction to hear the debate (topicality) (Ziegelmueller, Harris, and Bloomingdale, 1995, pp. 16-18). In fact-value debates, such as occasionally offered by the Cross Examination Debate Association (CEDA), a framework similar to the classical rhetorical system of *stasis* is employed. Here, it is assumed that the affirmative must win all of the stock issues to justify an affirmative decision. Consequently, the decisions are governed largely by the debaters' effectiveness in telling a good story on each of the required issues and their success at fulfilling the proof burdens imposed by the stock issues template. Provided debaters and judges adhere to the stock issues, intervention should not occur with any great frequency.

Finally, the skills oriented judge approaches the debate from a pedagogical perspective. Such judges set their own standards for what is an acceptable argument based mostly on what they see as being educationally beneficial. A judge operating under the skills paradigm would focus on things such as delivery, quality of

argument, realism of the arguments, and coherence of the story. To a certain extent, these judges are unpredictable because they do intervene in the round based on their own pre-conceived standards of effective debating (Ziegelmueller, Harris, and Bloomingdale, 1995, p. 23).

Despite the ostensible claim that the judge has the freedom to develop his or her own philosophy, and despite the claim—on paper—that some of these perspectives allow for intervention, the reality is that the debate community expects the judge to remain uninvolved. Hollihan, Baaske, and Riley wrote in 1987:

the present norm of professional conduct encourages judges to evaluate every debate as a unique and individual contest, and discourages them from imposing their personal opinions about debate theory or the issues being deliberated upon by the debaters. Those judges who violate this norm and impose their opinions on the debates they judge are viewed by debaters and most coaches as highly subjective and potentially unfair. Perhaps even worse, they are "unmodern."

Professional standards in contemporary debate dictate a non-interventionist judging stance, and few judges wish to violate such pervasive norms. (p. 185)

This condition has set up the elements for a still unresolved controversy in the debate community, that being the role of the expert critic.

CHALLENGES: THE LAY JUDGE VS. THE EXPERT

No consensus exists within the debate community as to what is an ideal paradigm. In fact, some argumentation scholars theorize that some of these perspectives cannot be fairly called paradigms "in the conventional sense of the term" (Hollihan, Baaske and Riley, 1987, p. 185). Some more recent authors have begun to debate the question of the role of the judge in the round and, more specifically, the possible value of intervention in the conduct of academic debate. This question is central to the development of a perspective for judging NFA Lincoln-Douglas since Lincoln-Douglas is an

audience-centered format.

In 1987, Hollihan, Baaske, and Riley argued for the introduction of a version of Walter Fisher's narrative perspective into academic debate. Fisher's perspective, described in a March, 1984, issue of *Communication Monographs*, assumes that humans are basically story tellers and that arguments are, in effect, a series of stories which are judged by their audience through standards of narrative probability (coherence) and narrative fidelity (whether the argument rings true with the experiences of the person sitting in judgment). Hollihan, Baaske, and Riley liken these standards to tests of internal and external consistency and suggest that such a perspective, if employed, would help reinvigorate academic debate. The authors contend that academic debate suffers from several maladies, among which is the choice of most judges to check their own perspectives at the door:

Our position, however, is that most judges have surrendered even this relatively small amount of control over the character and communication rules of academic debate. Judges have become partners with the students they judge, creating and recreating a model of debate which encourages policy debaters to emulate the behaviors of highly trained technically skilled public policy advocates. These debaters present their arguments to "expert" judges who possess the ability to evaluate these complex claims (Hollihan & Riley, 1987). For judges, being experts means more than having the background in argumentation theory to sort through many technical, complex arguments supported by tremendous volumes of evidence. It also means suspending one's own beliefs and values, and giving all arguments a fair hearing (Balthrop, 1979). (p. 184)

Further, these critics suggest that the nature of the process has created a community closed to outsiders and has advanced an "elitist ideology which presumes that the man or woman off the street is too uninformed, uninterested, unintelligent, or biased to play an important policy making role" (1987, p. 185).

Hollihan, Baaske, and Reilly recognize that to advocate the narrative perspective requires the endorsement of judge intervention in the debate round. They embrace this notion, saying that the judge would now have the duty of comparing rival stories and being an active participant in the round. This, in turn, would improve communication style, diminish the significance of expert opinion evidence in the debate and make debate more accessible to the common person again (pp. 190-192).

Fearing the problem of excessive judge intervention, Robert H. Gass countered the narrative perspective in 1988, offering instead the model of the judge as "expert auditor" (p. 85). Gass accepts the position that the lack of an avenue for intervention is the source of many of academic debate's problems (p. 85), but contends that intervention should be based on the judge's experience as an expert on the art of argument and as an expert on the subject matter of the resolution (p. 85). This perspective offers a compromise between debate as it is practiced presently and the clearly radical alteration that Hollihan, Baaske, and Riley propose.

Contemporary academic debate presents judges with a variety of options to use as analytic frames. Yet these frames, while very different from each other, all share the influence of the common view that judges cannot intervene in the debate itself and must leave their own thoughts and experiences at home. This view contrasts with that which prevails in the individual events community.

A PHILOSOPHY OF INDIVIDUAL EVENTS JUDGING

Individual events judging philosophies have not been the subject of the same amount of discussion as debate paradigms. While debate judging paradigms are grounded in a philosophical/theoretical position, individual events are viewed as "real world" activities subject to the evaluation of judges and coaches who act as audience members. The judge in an individual events round often uses an implicit judging paradigm which is grounded in the principles of real-world communication. Unlike the debate judge, who is a trained policymaker or hypothesis tester, the individual events judge is part of the audience and supposedly reacts to the speech in a

manner that is similar to that of other audience members. Whereas debaters privilege logos, often at the expense of pathos and ethos, individual events competitors ideally use all the tools of persuasion available to them and the judge evaluates the performance as a whole, as opposed to individual lines of reasoning. Kay asserted that "individual events provide a realistic laboratory for the testing of argument and ideas" (1983, p. 927). The realistic context of individual events differs greatly from the context of academic debate and should influence the development of a NFA Lincoln-Douglas judging perspective. What follows is a description—not a prescription—of the state of individual events judging attitudes in collegiate forensics.

At the outset, the judge must determine whether the speech conformed to the established rules of the activity. The national associations have established sets of rules for each individual event. For example, speeches must be within specified time limits, they must be performed primarily in English, etc. Having determined that the speech was within the parameters of the rules, the individual events judge then typically fuses subjective and objective factors in making a judgment in the round. In other words, the objective, technical merits of the speech are weighed against the subjective factors of persuasiveness and credibility by the individual events judge, and a score is assigned based on the total effectiveness of the speech.

First, the judge measures the degree to which the speaker achieves a level of skills achievement. There are certain theoretical principles which guide the individual events performance. For example, organization is typically seen as an important component of a prepared event. Speeches which lack organization are usually downgraded. Those speeches which are well-organized are typically given higher marks. A student competing in persuasion should use evidence to support his or her claims. Likewise, a student who competes in prose should use the literature to develop a theme/thesis/argument. Thus, the theoretical aspects of the speech are evaluated by the judge.

However, individual events coaches, judges, and competitors fully recognize that these theoretical principles are not absolutes and that judges who have different levels of expertise will

evaluate the speeches differently. For example, while organization is important, judges have different notions on how best to structure a persuasive speech. In fact, the problem-solution format has become the standard on the collegiate circuit. Other formats, however, are used and are effective. Likewise, a veteran judge who has published numerous articles in the *Quarterly Journal of Speech* would, no doubt, scrutinize a competitor's rhetorical criticism more closely than the first year master's student who is only one year out of competition.

Numerous forensic convention papers, journal articles, and development conferences have addressed the notion of establishing criteria for judging individual events. Some participants wish to systematize the criteria for each event so that there are more or less "objective" standards by which to judge each event. Mills (1983) argued, "If any degree of uniformity is to be realized, the area of judging criteria must become a major concern in forensics" (p. 20). Mills is not alone in his call for judging criteria. The forensic community, however, is divided about the desirability of criteria and which criteria should be used. However, the technical merits of the speaking performance is one aspect of the judge's evaluation.

A second type of standard used by judges is the evaluation of the subjective factors of the student's speech. Rhodes, Faules, and Rieke (1976) wrote, "A valid, though quite subjective guideline, therefore, is for the judge to ask whether the presentation moved him [or her]" (p. 250). They continued, "Emotional involvement, subordinated almost completely to information-processing in academic debate, must be registered and accounted for in evaluating the [individual events] contestants' performances" (p. 247). In other words, the judge evaluates the degree to which the student identifies with, convinces, or moves the judge and audience to action. Kosloski has identified these subjective factors as, "impressions that reflect, among other things, empathy for the speaker, perceived level of ethos, personal preference for style, and interest in the topic" (p. 2). The students should creatively use evidence and pathos to create a speech that is communicatively effective, as well as technically sound. That is, the judge may rate a technically perfect speech lower than a speech that, while not perfect, is more convincing. Dean summarized, "The forensics community must

embrace the notion that oral discourse is more than a mouth in front of a face turned towards another body; rather oral communication is an address *to* an audience, a communication act accomplished *with others*" (196). The individual events judge fuses the objective and subjective merits of the speech in passing judgment on the performance.

POINTS OF CLASH

The preceding discussion has identified several important differences between individual events and debate judging perspectives. It is not necessarily that the values or criteria are completely antithetical to one another, but rather that it becomes difficult for a judge to evaluate a performance using these different standards simultaneously. Issues of subjective standards of judging, intervention of the judge in the round, judge adaptation and decision making standards are examined here.

First, debate and individual events judges differ substantially on the role subjective standards should play in evaluating the quality of a given round. While both debate and individual events ballots use quality rating and ranking systems, their purpose differs. In traditional academic debate the first and foremost goal is victory. The win or loss is the first issue for the judge to decide and this decision is usually centered around the outcome of the arguments on the flow sheet. The assignment of points for speaking quality comes later, and—excepting speaker awards—these points are used primarily as tie breakers. Low-point wins can be assigned denoting lower quality speaking skills but a win on the flow sheet nonetheless. In individual events, the point and ranking system more directly reflects the perception of speaker quality. A competitor could not win the round and have a ranking of six. Issues of delivery, message, adaptation, decorum, etc., all play into the final decision and place the student in the round accordingly.

Put simply, it is far more acceptable for a student in debate to stand awkwardly, avoid eye contact, gasp uncontrollably for breath due to speed of delivery, and dress in a less professional manner since the debate will most likely be decided on the basis of logical argument. While presentation and style may affect how

clearly the message is received, these subjective criteria which we are familiar with in the world of individual events are clearly not of as much concern to the logically-centered debate adjudicator.

Second, debate and individual events judges differ on their willingness to become an active participant, to intervene, in the round. Debate judges, as discussed previously, have come to exist under a community enforced standard of non-intervention that holds that personal opinions and criteria are to be left outside of the debate. Individual events judges, however, seem fully willing to impose themselves on a round. The following example illustrates the differences between the two perspectives. It is fairly common knowledge that during the 50th Anniversary celebrations for the United Nations Chinese President Jiang Zemin met in an informal summit meeting with President Bill Clinton. This was a well publicized and widely reported fact due to its role in an extremely tense period in Sino-American relations. Consider a debate round in which one team asserts that the summit took place and, therefore, relations must be improving. The opposition argues that they have no knowledge of such a summit and, absent evidence from the other team, the argument should be disregarded. If the judge knows that the summit took place, but evidence is not present, many judges could side with the second team, contending that under the philosophy of non-intervention he or she cannot rely on outside knowledge to settle the argument. In contrast, a judge of extemporaneous speaking would almost certainly criticize a speaker who asserted that no summit had taken place, simply because the prevailing assumption is that the individual events judge brings with him or herself the knowledge and critical ability of the average audience member, as well as professional standards, for what constitutes a good speech.

Third, the differences between debate and individual events judges create differences in how students and their coaches go about adapting speeches to particular audiences. The process of judge adaptation in debate has become extremely specialized in recent years. The identity of many active judges on the policy debating circuit is defined clearly in the National Debate Tournament judging philosophy book. Similarly, many invitational tournaments require that judges fill out philosophy sheets to further define their judging

preferences. Some debate tournaments, including the national tournament, also employ "strike" sheets that allow a coach to block certain judges from being assigned to their students. When these factors are taken together, students have a fairly good idea of a judge's exact philosophy. Past experiences with certain judges further define this knowledge. Adaptation then becomes a fairly easy task.

In contrast, individual events judges have a far less defined paradigm. Where philosophies do exist they are generally not widely publicized. While students can learn about what a judge looks for by studying ballots over time, the decisions of judges still have a strong probability of varying depending on the particular event and subject matter. Just as individual events competition more closely mirror real life speaking situations, so too does the ability to adapt to the audience more closely mirror the imprecise science of adapting to an incompletely known audience.

Finally, judges in individual events do not rely on students setting standards for evaluation in the round. While debate judges—particularly those who espouse a tabula rasa or games paradigm—expect students to tell them how to evaluate the round, an individual events judge is never a tabula rasa. At no time would one observe a student in a persuasion round saying, "You should give the first ranking to the one of us whose problem highlights the greatest number of deaths. You should reject all qualitative standards for significance." The judges' preconceived standards are more important to the individual events round than standards articulated by the students.

THE CRITICAL LISTENER PERSPECTIVE

Given the incompatibility between debate judging paradigms and individual events judging philosophy, it is necessary to advance a judging perspective ideally suited for Lincoln-Douglas. We present the "critical listener perspective" as a means of guiding NFA Lincoln-Douglas judges. A critical listener perspective for Lincoln-Douglas debate presumes that the audience members (most importantly the judge) are the locus of the round. They are critical listeners who are capable of evaluating the debate based upon their

experience, specialized knowledge, and use of standards for what is educationally valuable and who permit subjective standards to influence how the decision is reached. This view assumes that the judge will consider both objective and subjective standards in evaluating a Lincoln-Douglas round and will not shy away from correcting perceived inadequacies in the presentation through the pedagogically beneficial act of critiquing the speech act and ranking it according to all of its merits.

The primary question this perspective should raise in the minds of traditional debate judges and proponents of traditional debate paradigms is: why reject traditional debate paradigms for a debate activity? The answers are quite simple and consistent with the philosophy that led to the creation of NFA Lincoln-Douglas Debate. First, to employ a traditional debate judging philosophy defeats the purpose of developing a new debate forum. Second, the new perspective better allows the NFA to streamline and integrate NFA Lincoln-Douglas into the larger individual events competitive framework, better equipping students for real-world argumentation.

First, Lincoln-Douglas was created for the specific purpose of creating a break from the practices of NDT and CEDA. The NFA wanted to create opportunities for students to debate in an environment that prized oratorical substance over the quantity of evidence. As the activity has grown, it has become clear that a desire exists to treat Lincoln-Douglas as an individual event unto itself. To use the same judging philosophies and norms that dominate the organizations that the activity initially rejected is to deny the individuality that the founders of the activity were attempting to achieve.

Second, Lincoln-Douglas cannot be effectively integrated into the competitive individual events tournament scheme so long as it is viewed as a traditional debate activity. To maintain such a status for it would require the creation of either two separate judging pools or the education of individual events judges in the ways of policy debating. Absent such steps, the activity would be perpetually relegated to inferior status as coaches, students, and judges struggled to define their identity in an activity with no clearly defined home. First and foremost participants in this activity need to accept that Lincoln-Douglas debate is now a popular and integral

part of the National Forensic Association and that it offers important training for debaters who wish to someday apply their skills in real world situations.

The critical listener model for Lincoln-Douglas debate would elevate the importance of subjective standards and those objective standards that have always been associated with good persuasion. For the judge, the experience of moving from a round of extemporaneous speaking, persuasion or rhetorical criticism to a round of Lincoln-Douglas debate should be a relatively seamless transition with little need for a stark paradigm shift. This may mean diminishing the significance of *logos* and elevating the importance of *ethos* and *pathos* appeals, or it may still mean employing the traditional stock issues of debate but weighing subjective standards in determining whether individual issues are won or lost. In the end, however, this new found freedom will create opportunity for students to adapt to Lincoln-Douglas judges as they would in other competitive speaking events or real-world speaking situations. For both judge and competitor the playing field will be leveled.

IMPLEMENTATION

Adopting the critical listener perspective would affect the practice of NFA Lincoln-Douglas on at least three levels: the NFA organization, Lincoln-Douglas judges, and Lincoln-Douglas competitors. First, NFA and its members must avoid the gross proliferation of rules for Lincoln-Douglas debate. While the process of altering the so-called "blue book" over the past few years has been healthy, micro-managing the activity could just as easily become its downfall as judges find it more difficult to keep up with all of the new requirements of the process. We must observe that every other individual event is described by the association in one to two sentences. The Lincoln-Douglas rules are now numbered in pages. For instance, the requirement that the stock issues paradigm be employed as the decision-making paradigm may be changed so as to simply "suggest" that the stock issues approach is a valid means of determining the issues in the round. The national organization can take the lead in encouraging the development of Lincoln-Douglas as a real world forensic event in which a wide

variety of decision-making processes are used by communicators.

Second, judges using the critical listener perspective should take a number of steps to insure that this judging philosophy serves a pedagogical function. Most importantly, judges should reward those competitors who are persuasive using the full range of persuasive tools available to them. Debaters who do not communicate in a "real world" fashion should be dropped in rounds. Judges may wish not to use the "flow sheet" method of debate evaluation, recognizing that being a good listener—as in any individual event—should be sufficient to test how well the message is received by the audience. In addition, judges should comment on all aspects of the debate: delivery, evidence, reasoning, etc. Considerable attention should be given on the ballot to offering suggestions for how the student can improve the rhetorical aspects of his or her performance. Finally, judges should consistently apply the critical listener perspective and not use debate paradigms sporadically. To make Lincoln-Douglas a traditional individual event, judges should promote a consistent judging philosophy.

Finally, students and coaches operating within this framework can take several steps that will increase not only their competitive success, but the educational value they achieve from the activity as well. Primarily, students should avoid replicating an NDT or CEDA style. While research is vitally important in Lincoln-Douglas, debaters should complement quantity of evidence with other, equally persuasive, appeals. Debaters should use emotional appeals, analysis, and commonly accepted truths in constructing their arguments. Debaters should avoid using debate jargon and should fully explain the implications of their statements and why their arguments are important. For example, instead of simply saying "T is a voter," the debater should explain that an affirmative case is beyond the scope of the resolution and is not fulfilling the initial requirements of debate.

In addition, students should use the same delivery skills they would use in a persuasion, prose, or impromptu round. The rate of the debater's speech has received considerable attention in the Lincoln-Douglas community, but very little attention has been paid to the other aspects of delivery. Debaters should avoid standing behind a desk, chair, or table. They should use eye contact with the

audience. Students should structure their speeches around main points, providing appropriate movement during transitions. Finally, debaters should adopt more of a narrative style in their speeches. Line-by-line refutation should be replaced with stories. Debaters should not be afraid to group arguments and argue in terms of issues, as opposed to arguments. For example, the debater would address the "harm" issue not in terms of individual items of evidence, but in terms of the overall persuasiveness of the issue.

Lincoln-Douglas debaters should present their speeches as they would in any other round. Skills such as effective delivery, audience adaptation, emotional persuasive appeals, and conceptual argumentation are highly valued in the individual events community. Lincoln-Douglas debate is uniquely situated to extend the use of these important skills to students who are interested in the practice of argument. In short, the critical listener perspective will better prepare Lincoln-Douglas debaters for effective real-world argumentation and allow the activity to achieve its pedagogical goals.

SUMMARY

Lincoln-Douglas debate offers National Forensic Association competitors several distinct lessons; the event emphasizes research, analysis, and refutation. However, the current state of Lincoln-Douglas does not allow for the full potential of the event to be realized. As currently practiced, Lincoln-Douglas resembles NDT or CEDA debate. Debaters do not use the presentational skills or emotional arguments in Lincoln-Douglas that they do in other individual events and judges are divided in their evaluation of the Lincoln-Douglas debate round. We have argued that current confusion about the activity is a result of widely disparate philosophies. Given the unique context of NFA Lincoln-Douglas, a new perspective is needed, the critical listener perspective.

The critical listener perspective, we contend, merges the demands of traditional debate with the philosophy of the National Forensic Association, its coaches and competitors. The perspective recognizes the need for evidence and analysis while at the same time embracing the rhetorical aspects of individual events. The critical

listener perspective, if adopted by students and judges, would result in a communicative activity which teaches students how to use not only evidence, but emotion and credibility in persuading audiences.

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Propositional Focus in Dialectical Perspective: A Call for Greater Consistency in the Theory of NFA Lincoln-Douglas Debate

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The National Forensics Association (NFA) has responded favorably to Roger Aden's (1989) call for an event merging the best of academic debate and individual events. The development of NFA Lincoln-Douglas debate (NFA L-D) has significantly expanded opportunities for students to experience the benefits of educational debate. Unfortunately, like many other forms of this activity, NFA L-D debate has failed to realize its full pedagogic potential. In the case of NFA L-D specifically, at least part of this failure can be attributed to ambiguities in the current rules.

The "Rules of Competition for NFA L-D Debate" (a.k.a. the "blue sheet" requirements) have been central to the development of this activity. These rules have in many ways proved useful. However, in some areas, they fail to resolve theoretical quandaries. Although the largest section of "the blue sheet" is labeled "Paradigm for Judging," no paradigm is evident. Instead, the blue sheet provides a list of ad hoc and conditional injunctions. In this essay, I argue that the current NFA L-D rules fail to establish an educationally optimal focus of, and perspective on, academic debate. The absence of a clear theory of NFA L-D frustrates consistency in evaluation, subverts substantive debate, and diffuses clash.

Initially, it will prove helpful to unpack two concepts that I will employ throughout: focus and perspective. A focus is what one is looking at and a perspective is where one is looking from. From the moon (perspective) one can see the entire African continent (focus) at once. The focus/perspective distinction is loosely analogous to product/process or end/means. The end (focus) of a basketball game may be the final score and the process would involve earning points by means of sending the ball through the hoop (perspective). In substantive debate, the focus is what the

participants are debating about; the perspective is the critical standpoint from which to resolve disagreements over evaluation of that focus. In this essay, I lean toward my own preference (a dialectical perspective on proposition focused debate) but ultimately argue for any of several approaches to enhancing consistency in the current rules.

FOCUS: THE END OF ARGUMENT

I believe that debate is a fundamentally cooperative activity (Patterson and Zarefsky, 1983). Certainly, some aspects of debate are competitive, but to concede this point does not necessitate a view of debate as generalized aggression or unrestrained conflict. One may, for example, acknowledge value in the competition of ideas without valuing the competition of egos. Therefore, while affirmation and negation conceptually compete, the affirmative and negative persons need not. Consensually agreed upon focus is essential to contained, productive, and ultimately cooperative, competition. Without a clear focus, debate threatens to degenerate. As Pfau, Thomas, and Ulrich (1987) put it:

Disagreement, when unchanneled, often results in nothing more than petty bickering. It is undisciplined and unproductive. Unfortunately, most informal argument is of this type. As a result, the term "argument" often carries a disdainful connotation. (p. 149)

Unfortunately, in my experience, intercollegiate debates frequently suffer from such quibbling. These debates lack a clear focus. While unfocused discussions are present in all forms of intercollegiate debate, the failure of NFA L-D students to channel disagreement is exacerbated by ambivalent "blue sheet" rules. These rules institutionalize diffuse clash to the extent that they preclude a singular focus. At least¹ two different foci are implied in the current rules: proposal and proposition. Initially, the argumentative focus seems to be the specific affirmative proposal. A focus on the affirmative proposal (plan) may be distinguished from a focus on the general proposition (resolution). The "blue sheet" rules state that "all affirmative proposals must fit within the

jurisdiction established by the NFA L-D resolution." Beyond this requirement, however, the affirmative seems to have no responsibility to the larger proposition. Although additional requirements are placed on the affirmative, these are developed in reference to the affirmative's specific proposal. Whatever the merits of the proposition, then, the focus of debate in NFA L-D rules seems to be the particular affirmative plan. It seems legitimate under these rules for the affirmative to admit that the NFA proposition is largely wrong, more false than true, even almost completely insupportable, and still "win the debate" because their particular proposal is an exception to the general propositional rule. The required focus of a National Forensic Association L-D debate is therefore quite different from the focus of the typical National Forensic League L-D debate in which negative debaters frequently and successfully present counterexamples that independently negate the proposition (without necessarily refuting the particular affirmative proposal). Clash in these NFL L-D debates is focused at the level of the proposition. Conversely, in NFA L-D, clash is initially focused at the level of the specific affirmative proposal.

While the affirmative proposal is an intelligible² focus for debate, this center suddenly shifts to the general proposition in the evaluation of counterproposals. NFA L-D rules state that "counterproposals must be non-topical." With a counterproposal, then, the focus is no longer the affirmative proposal but rather the NFA proposition. Even if a counterproposal logically negates the affirmative proposal, NFA rules instruct the judge to ignore it if it is also topical. The requirement that counterproposals be non-topical seems quite reasonable if the debate is seen as a test of the probable truth of the general proposition. However, as the NFA L-D rules clearly indicate, the proposition is not the focus of affirmative advocacy. It is merely a "parameter" that the affirmative proposal must not violate.

Not only is there a different focus for affirmative proposals than negative counterproposals in NFA L-D rules, but the focus shifts, yet again. This time, the switch is within the counterproposal provisions. While non-topicality rules shift the focus from proposal to proposition, counterproposal focus shifts back to the particular affirmative advocacy; more specifically, to a

certain aspect of that advocacy. NFA L-D rules mandate that "the counterproposal must deal with the problem area defined by the affirmative." Therefore, according to NFA L-D rules, the counterproposal must negate both the proposition (non-topicality) and the affirmative proposal's solvency for the particular problem unilaterally stipulated by the affirmative. The affirmative, however, need only affirm its own proposal.

Either proposition or proposal is a workable focus for debate. If the NFA proposition was the focus, the affirmative would win the substantive debate if the resolutive statement was proved more probably true than false; if it was probably more false than true the negative would win. On the other hand, if the affirmative proposal were the focus, arguments would center on the probable desirability of the proposal and the negative could win (for example) by showing that a counterproposal negated that desirability—even if that counterproposal also fell within the propositional parameter.

Unfortunately, the wandering focus in current NFA L-D rules makes it impossible to infer a theory of debate from which postulates for the solution of various argumentative problems might be deduced. A stable center would clarify the responsibilities of the participants. However, ambivalent focus often requires settlement and therefore reduces the probability of productive debate over substantive issues. Such focal controversies frequently arise in NFA L-D debates. For example, absence of a clear focus muddies understanding of—and subverts substantive debate on—extra-topicality, inherency, and counterproposals.

Extra-topicality

NFA L-D rules state that "topicality is a voting issue" but they remain silent on the issue of extra-topicality. How is a judge-critic to resolve a situation where some provisions of the affirmative proposal are topical but others not? What if the proposal, taken as a whole, is topical, but some or all advantages flow from provisions of the proposal that are not themselves topical. With proposition focus the answer is clear: only advantages flowing from propositional provisions can affirm the proposition. While

affirmatives may "claim" advantages flowing from extra-topical provisions, the proposition-focused judge would simply ignore these advantages in reaching a judgment about the probable truth of the resolution³. Suppose an affirmative debating the 1995-96 NFA L-D topic, "Resolved: that participation in one or more of the six principal bodies of the United Nations should be significantly restricted by altering the U.N. charter and/or rules of procedure," proposes a two-plank plan: plank one restricts the scope of participation in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and plank two sets up a solar energy development program. Advantage one details the benefits of restricting ICJ participation and advantage two extols the virtues of solar energy⁴. A proposition-focused judge would not see the second (solar) advantage (it would be out of focus) but might still end up voting affirmative because of the first (topic-linked) advantage.

With a focus on the affirmative proposal, the outcome is less clear. Rules for NFA L-D state that the affirmative proposal must "fit within the jurisdiction established by the NFA L-D resolution" and demand that if the "affirmative proposal has violated the parameters set by the resolution, then the decision in that debate should be awarded to the negative." So what of the ICJ/solar proposal discussed above? On the one hand, the proposal is outside resolutional jurisdiction. A jurisdictionally constrained policy maker could not enact the proposal since the solar provisions of that proposal are out of her jurisdiction. The solar provisions violate the parameters set by the resolution. So, a proposal-focused jurisdiction-constrained judge must vote negative (in spite of the ICJ advantage), right? Well, looked at another way, we can say that the proposal, taken as a whole, does restrict participation in the ICJ and is therefore within the jurisdiction/parameter of the proposition. So the judge proceeding from a focus on the proposal would consider both advantages, right?⁵

Which of these reactions to extra-topicality is best? The NFA L-D rules offer little guidance. Which of these proposal-focused reactions is correct? The proposition-focused judge would respond, "neither." For either reaction, the all-or-nothing decision implied by a focus on the affirmative's proposal threatens to subvert substantive debate on the proposition. Yet such a response seems

mandated by the rules. Or is it prohibited? The shifting focus of debate implied in the "blue sheet" rules preclude a theory of NFA L-D that might otherwise prove useful in resolving this problem.

Inherency

NFA L-D rules state that "the affirmative is required to meet" a burden to show "the inherency which prevents solving those harms or achieving those advantages or goals" identified by the affirmative. Since the rules also require the affirmative to prove the "plan's ability to solve" the harm, it seems that the rule framers wish for the affirmative to establish a barrier to solvency/achievement minus the affirmative proposal. A negative inherency argument, then, proposes that the harm can be solved in another way. Two other ways are examined here: change within the "status quo" and change without affirmation.

Pseudo-Inherency: Status Quo Adoption of the Affirmative

It is not unusual to hear a negative claim that the problem identified by the affirmative can be solved by the "present" system. In this formulation of inherency, the possibility (and perhaps probability) of "status quo" implementation of the affirmative plan (or a policy tantamount to it) is at issue. In what sense such a changed system can be described as the "present" system is unclear. What is more problematic, however, is the question of how such advocacy negates the affirmative proposal. As Schunk (1979) clearly puts it, "questions of whether the plan can or will be adopted are irrelevant to the policy question of whether it SHOULD be adopted." Strickland (1979) explicitly endorses Schunk's view and adds that "the capacity of the present system to adopt the resolution is irrelevant; the debate should center around the desirability of such action." Ritter (1974) complains that negatives frequently advance a "pseudo-argument" disguised as inherency: "Here the issue shifts from 'Should we adopt this policy?' to the irrelevant question of whether it is remotely possible to effect this policy 'within the present system'" (p. 2). Proposition-focused criticism of this

pseudo-argument has been especially incisive. Schunk (1978) argues that "a negative team, having accepted the topicality of the affirmative plan, is guilty of arguing the false issue of pseudo-inherency when it argues that the status quo has the structural capacity to adopt the affirmative plan" (p. 147). He concludes that if the negative suggests "adoption of a change which is tantamount to the affirmative plan" (which the negative concedes is topical) then they would be "affirming the resolution" (p. 148).

The suggestion that an action *could* or even *would* be undertaken hardly negates the claim that it *should*. How such an odd interpretation of the stock issue of inherency ever emerged is unclear, but the onset of "fiat" seems a likely culprit. Only the mythical, mystical, magical, and misunderstood concept of "fiat" could explain such substantial confusion. The view of inherency as status quo capacity might seem to flow from an exceptionally narrow proposal focus: the "fiated" plan is the proposal; an identical plan implemented by the "status quo" is therefore not the proposal. If one believes that the affirmative proposal is implemented by tyrannical, omnipotent, and instantaneous "fiat" then adoption through normal "democratic" governmental processes would clearly seem like an alternative to the affirmative. But let us face it, fiat is as real in debate as a "magical fireball" is in "Dungeons and Dragons." Fiat is only virtual reality. It is convenient shorthand with which to answer pseudo-solvency arguments:

Affirmative fiat should be another way of saying that the affirmative team's obligation is not to prove that the plan *will* be adopted, but only that it *should* be adopted. It does not mean that the affirmative debaters are themselves adopting the plan, or that the judge adopts the plan when he or she votes affirmative. On the contrary, if this plan ever really were adopted, it could be done so only by those persons in the position of authority to do so. (Schunk, 1981, p. 85)

Of course, "those persons in the position of authority" to adopt the affirmative proposal hold those positions in the "present" system. Status quo implementation of the plan is not an alternative to fiat,

it's a description of it. "Fiat" is nothing more than an efficient way to express the idea that the affirmative need not argue that the proposal/proposition would be adopted, but merely that it should. Unfortunately, what was once a linguistic convenience has taken on a tragic life of its own. As Ruf (1980) puts it, with fiat we have created "a monster" that is "distracting debaters' attention away from the original normative resolution" (p. 169).

In spite of obvious problems with the "status quo adopts the plan" view of inherency, affirmatives not infrequently take the bait and attempt to answer this pseudo-argument. These affirmatives suggest that the status quo "would not" (attitudinally) or "could not" (structurally) adopt the plan. Such responses are incomprehensible. Schunk (1981) states the obvious (is it not?): "There is no rationale for an affirmative arguing that a topical action *will not* be undertaken in order to demonstrate that the action *should* be taken" (p. 84). Patterson and Zarefsky (1983) agree that the pseudo-inherency notion "would lead to the absurd result of arguing that a proposal ought to be adopted precisely on the grounds that it will not" (p. 131). As NFA L-D judges continue to enforce a "status quo" view of inherency they not only teach the questionable equation "*would equals should not*" but they also impel the affirmative to advocate extreme proposals that few *real* policy makers would support.

Real Inherency: Logical Alternatives and Reciprocal Fiat

If the negative inherency argument is not about alternate implementation of the affirmative proposal, what is it about? Simply, it is about the implementation of an alternative proposal. The most reasonable interpretation of the inherency requirement is that the affirmative is required to show that solvency is prevented minus the affirmative proposal. "The legitimate stock issue of inherency," as Ehniger and Brockreide (1963) put it, is expressed in the question: "Is any policy short of the proposed one inherently incapable of mitigating the alleged problem?" (p. 225). If a policy other than the affirmative proposal can solve the problem, then the problem is not inherent. If, on the other hand, the affirmative

proves that the plan is necessary, then, they have established inherency. Quite literally, then, the legitimate negative inherency argument identifies a counterproposal.

While critics proceeding from proposal focus should require the affirmative to prove that their specific proposal is necessary, those adopting a propositional-focus would merely require a demonstration that the resolution is essential to solve the problem. Patterson and Zarefsky (1983) explain this later view:

Inherency is a causal relationship between the absence of the resolution and the continuation of the problem cited. It asks why the problem will continue as long as we fail to affirm the resolution, or—to state the same thing in different words—why affirming the resolution is a necessary condition for the solution of the problem, (p. 131)

Ritter and Brink (1972) agree that for the affirmative to prove inherency "the resolution must be essential for reaching the end; all means short of it must be inherently incapable" (p. 223). For the proposition focused, then, inherency shows that the resolution is necessary (or essential) to achieve solvency. As Flaningham (1981) puts it "the affirmative inherency obligation consists of establishing that advantages can be attained through resolutional action alone" (p. 3). Therefore, for the negative, "inherency issues should concern whether there are non-topical ways to obtain the desired benefits" (Schunk, 1981, p. 83).

In the current practice of NFA L-D, affirmatives frequently ignore the solvency of these alternate negative proposals, responding that they will not be implemented ("attitudinal inherency"). While such an answer might make sense in a world where the affirmative is required to defend itself against the possibility of "status quo" adoption of its own plan, there seems little reason to establish a double *should-would* standard in the evaluation of negative alternatives to the affirmative proposal. Establishing that alternatives to the plan would not be adopted does not prove they should not. "Attitudinal" inherency is thus a meaningless construct once one gets past the problem of status quo pseudo-inherency. I am arguing here merely for a reciprocal⁶ extension of the NFA L-D rule that "the affirmative need only prove that the resolution

SHOULD be adopted." Allowing the negative to "fiat" its alternative(s) equalizes access to the means of persuasion and better aligns debate with argumentation theory.⁷

The foregoing discussion suggests that the distinction between a negative inherency argument and a counterproposal is merely semantic and that attempts to distinguish "status quo" implementation, minor repair, and counterproposal are purely rhetorical. The central question should be: does the negative present a logical alternative to the affirmative? Unfortunately, as presently conceived, the rules of NFA L-D seem to imply a distinction between these two expressions (inherency and counterproposal) of what is essentially the same issue. The fact that in the NFA L-D rules inherency is discussed in the context of proposal focus and counterproposals are required to respect proposition focus seems especially problematic in light of this understanding of inherency as alternate solvency.

Counter Proposals, Counterproposals, and Competitive Focus

Establishing focus is also important to determinations of counterproposal competition. However labeled (inherency, minor repair, "justification" argument, counterplan, etc.), negative alternatives would not negate if they are not competitive. Simply, a negative proposal must counter if it is to be a reason to reject the affirmative advocacy. Deciding whether a proposal counters, however, may depend on the focus. If the proposition is the focus of debate, a counter proposal must counter that proposition. With such a focus, a topical "counter" proposal does not truly counter. Even if it is competitive in the more limited sense, such a "counterproposal" does not negate. If beneficial, it actually re-affirms the resolution. Conversely, if the specific affirmative proposal is the focus, then a negative counter proposal would need only counter that affirmative proposal. Under affirmative (proposal) focus there seems to be no reason for insisting that a competitive counter proposal also be non-topical.

A negative counterproposal would counter, or compete with, the affirmative plan/proposition if it establishes that the affirmative

(1) need not (redundancy), (2) cannot (mutual exclusivity), or (3) should not (net-benefits) also be affirmed. The redundancy standard would hold a counterproposal competitive if it produces all the same solvency as the proposal/proposition. A counterproposal would be competitive under the mutual exclusivity standard if its adoption renders adoption of the resolution/plan impossible. If adoption of the proposal/proposition and the counterproposal is possible but less desirable than adoption of the counterproposal alone, then it would be deemed competitive under the net-benefits standard. Despite what one sometimes hears at NFA tournaments, there seems to be no logical reason why a negative counterproposal should have to meet more than one of these standards to counter the affirmative. The central question should be: "Does the counterproposal present a reason why the proposal/proposition need not, cannot, or should not be affirmed?"

Given such an understanding of competition, there seems little reason to insist, as the NFA L-D rules currently do, that "the counterproposal must deal with the problem area defined by the affirmative" (redundancy). The rationale for this rule is unclear. Why should the affirmative team have the right to unilaterally dictate relevant substantive concerns? A counterproposal that increased membership in the Security Council in order to strengthen enforcement efforts, for example, would be mutually exclusive (and therefore competitive) with a proposal that decreased membership in that body to facilitate better problem discussion. This counterproposal would clearly counter, negate, and compete with the affirmative proposal, even though it would not deal with the problem area (discussion quality) defined by the affirmative. Debate could then center on the merits of the decision making advantage versus those of the enforcement advantage. Unfortunately, such a discussion is barred under NFA L-D rules. As a result, the current rule censors intelligent and germane argumentation and allows the affirmative to unilaterally dictate the normative focus of debate.⁸

PERSPECTIVE: THE EVALUATIVE STANCE

The focus of an NFA L-D debate is the proposition/proposal. A

perspective is the vantage point from which one views that proposition/proposal. Unfortunately, as with focus, NFA L-D rules currently mandate oscillating critical perspectives. The "blue sheet" establishes one perspective for evaluating the affirmative proposal, another for negative counterproposals, and a third that may (or may not) supersede the other two.

Initially, the rules mandate that the "official decision-making paradigm of NFA L-D is that of the Stock Issues: Harm (Advantage or Goals), Inherency, and Solvency." The rules go on to stipulate that topicality is also a voting issue, implicitly specifying a fourth "stock" issue. However, these three/four "stock issues" are applied only to the affirmative proposal. NFA rules establish an entirely different set of "stock" issues for negative counterproposals. For example, under NFA rules, a counterproposal must be non-topical, must address the affirmative's harm area, etc.

We can contrast these separate standards for evaluating affirmative and negative proposals with a single set of requirements applicable to both advocates. Unfortunately, the current rules offer no such transcendent perspective to guide the critic in resolving theoretical quandaries. What is the judge to do, for example, if an affirmative proposal is found to be non-topical and the counterproposal deemed topical? The current NFA L-D rules offer little guidance.

While separate stock issues burden affirmative and negative, both may also be constrained by "rhetorical" expectations. The consistent suggestion throughout the rules that NFA L-D is a "persuasive" event seems to hang over the heads of the participants. This dual requirement adds to the oscillating effect. While either advocate may have her speech judged persuasively deficient, it is unclear to students whether this rhetorical perspective or their respective stock issues will take precedence in any given decision. NFA L-D rules acknowledge this dilemma and attempt to resolve it for only one scenario: The "blue sheet" encourages the judge to give a speaker a loss—"even if the student has otherwise 'won' the debate on the basis of the stock issues"—if that judge perceives that the student failed to heed a warning about excessive speech rate.

Again, as with focus, the absence of a uniform perspective on NFA L-D makes it difficult for students to understand the

standards by which they will be evaluated. I believe that if the judge was offered a coherent perspective from which to evaluate the debate the educational potential of NFA L-D would be enhanced. I propose, in alternative to the oscillating rhetorical / stock issues standards, a dialectical perspective for NFA L-D. Before developing the arguments for this proposal, however, I wish to make clear the distinctions that I am drawing between rhetorical and dialectical perspectives on argument.

Rhetorical, Logical, and Dialectical Criticism of Argument

The distinct studies of rhetoric, logic, and dialectic emerged in the Western world at least as early the ancient Greek city states (Wenzel, 1990, p. 12). It is here that a "general reflection on argumentation crystallized out in classical logic, dialectic and rhetoric. These theories were at their most influential in the finely worked out form given them by Aristotle" (van Eemeren, Grootendorst, & Kruiger, 1987, p. 57). Aristotle felt that there were three major divisions of human inquiry: analytic (science-logic), dialectic (debate), and rhetoric (Bizzell & Herzberg, 1990, p. 144; van Eemeren, Grootendorst, & Kruiger, 1987, p. 57).

Contemporary argumentation scholars continue to ground inquiry in classical rhetorical, logical, and dialectical perspectives. As van Eemeren, Grootendorst, and Kruiger (1987) observe: "The sources for modern theoretical thinking on argumentation lie in classical logic, dialectic and rhetoric" (p. 55). Wenzel (1990), for example, notes that "all arguments can be regarded as rhetorical, dialectical, and logical phenomenon" (p. 9). These distinctions can be understood as perspectives from which to evaluate arguments. Hampe (1990) explains:

From the rhetorical perspective, a scholar wishes to know how effective an argument is and why. Logical criticism is concerned about the validity or strength of an argument. From the dialectical point of view, you might wonder whether an argument reflects all that is known about a topic, and whether an argument has proceeded in a way free enough to

permit all reasonable contributions to be properly evaluated. (p. 298)

In brief, the rhetorical perspective is interested in advocative effectiveness, in the successful influence of the audience. It is concerned with the speaker's discovering the available means of exercising power over the audience. The rhetorical perspective asks arguers to adapt advocacy for impact (Hample, 1990; Warnick & Inch, 1989; Wenzel, 1990). "Whatever works" summarizes the highly instrumental rhetorical perspective. In contrast, the logical perspective is focused on the soundness of argument, its rationality, validity, or strength, and the acceptability, relevance, and sufficiency of evidence (Hample, 1990; Warnick & Inch, 1989; Wenzel, 1990). Finally, the dialectical perspective is committed to interaction that facilitates the best possible decision making by encouraging well-informed evaluation resulting from candid, cooperative, critical and comprehensive discussion (Warnick & Inch, 1989; Hample, 1990; Wenzel, 1990).

The Dialectical Perspective: A Proposal

I propose an evaluative perspective for NFA L-D that is consistent, rather than oscillating; dialogical, rather than monological; and dialectical, rather than rhetorical. The current NFA L-D rules are oscillating to the extent that they establish differing decision rules. A dialectical perspective, however, could provide a uniform set of standard operating procedures. "Stock" criteria for dialectical evaluation of arguments are summarized by Wenzel (1990):

Good argument-as-procedure should measure up to the "four Cs." Good dialectical argumentation depends on the arguers being *cooperative* in following appropriate rules and committing themselves to the common purpose of good decision-making. Good argumentation is *comprehensive* in dealing with the subject matter as thoroughly as possible. Good argumentation is *candid* in making ideas clear and getting them out in the open for examination. Finally, good

argumentation is *critical* in its commitment to basing decisions on the most rigorous testing of positions the circumstances allow. (p. 24)

A dialectical perspective, then, is sufficiently complete to provide a consistent critical outlook for all participants. The four "Cs" offer touchstones that could orient affirmative, negative, and judge-critic in their quest for the best possible decision.

While a dialectical perspective could provide a stable evaluative stance, it would also provide several other benefits not realized by the rhetorical standard. Most fundamentally, a dialectical perspective could result in a kinder, gentler, more humane debate experience. This is because a dialectical view is inherently relational. While the rhetorical outlook envisions a solitary speaker delivering a monologue, an advocate proceeding from a dialectical perspective is aware that she is part of a larger dialogue. This connection to the conversation is the essence of the dialectical attitude. As Simon (1990) explains "when we cast aside the complicated intellectual verbiage, a few simple facets of dialectics remain. Dialectics, regardless of the version, teaches interconnectedness" (p. 230). Viewing affirmative, negative and judge-critic as partners in the process of productive decision-making offers a distinct alternative to a view of debate as a contest between affirmative speaker and negative speaker with judge as rhetorical referee. An acceptance of connection, then, has profound implications for debate practice. Specifically, a dialectical perspective promises an activity that is friendlier, less "masculine" in its assumptions, and more productive in educational outcomes.

Initially, a dialectical perspective for L-D would reward friendlier exchanges. Contemporary competitive debate has been plagued by several alienating practices. Some of these (i.e., the "spread") have been treated in an ad hoc manner in the current NFA rules, but a dialectical outlook would obviate the root motivational cause for such strategic excesses. The cooperativeness criteria alone would prove enormously beneficial (Makau, 1990). An explicit commitment to cooperation in decision-making would reward different exchanges than those fostered by the current "Rules of Competition" for NFA L-D. As Sharon Blinn (1992) explains:
[Cooperative argumentation] rests on the mutual

respect imparted to all participants in the dialogue. Certain competitive strategies such as filibustering to prevent a full exchange of views, or annihilating opponents to erode their ethos or merely to befuddle them, serve no useful function in cooperative argumentation. (p. 6)

From a dialectical perspective on argumentation, students are evaluated not on "how badly they beat their opponent" but on how well their arguments contribute to the quality of the judge's decision-making. A goal in competitive debate is to separate students into winners and losers, but as Blinn (1992) explains:

Standards for cooperative argumentation are intended to lead to a better-informed audience, one who has a deeper understanding of multi-faceted issues from several perspectives, one who can make critical judgments and act on those judgments—in short, an audience who is a "winner." (p. 4)

A cooperative-dialectical outlook, then, would reward more respectful, productive, and friendly exchanges than those promoted by the competitive assumptions of the contemporary academic debate community and current NFA rules.

The choice of evaluative perspective also has gender implications. In promoting a judicial stance that re-values "rhetorical" performance, the current NFA L-D rules norm, reward, and re-produce traditionally "masculine" communication behavior. In contrast, an interconnected-cooperative-dialectical viewpoint would be more accommodating to traditionally "feminine" ways of communicating (Bile, in press). As Anne Wilson Schaefer (1985) states the stereotype, "in the white male system the purpose of communication is often to confuse, to win, and stay one-up. In the female system the purpose of communication is to bridge, understand, and be understood" (p. 134). Shepherd (1992) agrees that "viewing communication, definitionally, in terms of persuasion, influence and power, is masculinely biased" (p. 206). A rhetorical perspective, then, effectively centers a "masculine" standard while marginalizing traditionally feminine ways of communicating. As Shepherd puts it:

We can maintain a view of communication as

influence only by continuing the subjugation of an alternative, feminine, view—one empirically associated with women—that defines communication in terms of relations, concern, care, and responsibility, rather than influence. (p. 206)

Alternatively, an interconnected-cooperative-dialectical perspective would open the conversation to voices traditionally silenced in a masculine-normed rhetorical activity.

Finally, a dialectical perspective would be more educationally productive. A dialectical perspective, for example, would counter monological assumptions ambient in the NFA judging pool. Although a monological standard of speech evaluation may be appropriate for the traditional individual events (IEs), debaters would benefit from a consideration of their speeches in dialogical context. While a good "persuasive" speech in one round may be as good in the next, seldom would a rebuttal speech in one debate be equally appropriate in another. A habit of evaluating speeches-in-themselves, however, may obscure this communication reality. The dialectical perspective would entail a more dialogical context of evaluation.

While a dialectical evaluative perspective might improve speech criticism, an interconnected-cooperative debate experience would also teach lessons that are especially important for our students as they prepare for life in the 21st century. Blinn (1992) concludes:

If Toulmin is right to characterize the late twentieth century as a broad context of interdependence and diversity, then a cooperative model of argumentation has a large role to play in this moral "ecosystem." As instructors, we have the task of teaching students that practical wisdom to guide reasonable, ethical action has little to do with winning and losing and more to do with adjusting and adapting to a world bound together, Lilliputian-like, as Toulmin put it, in a web of fine but numerous and influential connections. This adaptability depends on a genuine engagement of alternate perspectives to consider reasonable

adjustments to the status quo. We might say that cooperative argumentation is "ecologically" sound insofar as it cultivates a habitat for phronesis to grow, even as it encourages the virtues of veracity, mutual respect, adaptability and sensitivity to thrive. This soundness in turn meets the challenges of an impoverished public sphere by providing a social process that is equipped to address the seemingly intractable issues that must be met there. (p. 10)

A dialectical perspective, then, would provide unique educational opportunities, a more hospitable communication environment, and a stable evaluative stance.

CONCLUSIONS AND NEW BEGINNINGS

In this essay, I have argued that the current practice of NFA L-D suffers from an inconsistent perspective on and focus of clash. I further argued that NFA L-D rules exacerbate this condition by stipulating shifting foci and perspectives. The result is an academic debate experience that fails to achieve its full educational potential. The inability to infer any consistent theory of NFA L-D debate has frustrated attempts to deduce coherent solutions for several argumentative problems. Ambivalent focus has complicated debate on such issues as extra-topicality, inherency, and counterproposals. Oscillating evaluative perspectives add to the general confusion and work against a stable, dialogical, and dialectical vision of debate.

Academic debate is a tremendously valuable activity. NFA is to be congratulated for embracing its educational potential. It can finish the job by stipulating a coherent theory of Lincoln-Douglas debate, or by at least allowing one to emerge. As Schunk (1981) concludes, to the degree that academic debate can "weed out the theoretically irrelevant, the activity, and the climate for the activity, will become healthier" (p. 87).

NOTES

¹Two (or three) foci are discussed here: NFA proposition,

affirmative proposal, and affirmative identified problem area. An entirely different potential focus emerges near the end of the judging paradigm discussion in the NFA L-D rules. The judge is "encouraged" to give a speaker a loss "even if the student has otherwise 'won' the debate on the basis of the stock issues" if that speaker has failed to heed a warning about excessive speech rate.

²The affirmative proposal may be an intelligible focus of debate but the educational value of proposal focus has been frequently questioned (Bile, 1987; Berube, 1991; Paulsen & Rhodes, 1979; Rhodes, 1981).

³Assuming the negative wins the extra-topicality argument. None of the discussion of judging should be read as inviting (or even accepting) judge intervention. The examples used in this essay are simplified for the sake of convenience and readability. Suppose, for example, that the negative wins an argument that an advantage flows from an extra-topical plan provision. Then what?

⁴Again, this example is structured for clarity rather than representativeness. Unfortunately, affirmatives who plan to violate the parameter of the resolution seldom have an incentive to be this clear. Extra-topical advantages are frequently disguised by their apparent relevance to the topic area or their substantive similarity to topical advantages. Similarly, it is not always the case that extra-topical plan provisions will appear in separate plan planks. On at least one occasion on the 1995-96 NFA L-D resolution, an affirmative crafted a run-on sentence to combine topical and extra-topical provisions in a single plank.

⁵One reader of an earlier version of this manuscript suggested that a proposal-focused judge might avoid the all-or-nothing dilemma by treating different plan provisions as distinct proposals. Such a judge would be proposal-focused and might focus on different proposals at different points during the debate. This approach would expand an already diffuse focus.

⁶The argument for a dialogical, bilateral, or reciprocal approach to communication has been put forth by several theorists. Johannessen (1983) reviews arguments for a bilateral or dialogical view of communication. Foss and Griffin (1995) have argued for a reciprocal rhetoric. Bile (in press) has developed the case for a bilateral principle of argumentation and, by extension, academic

debate.

⁷On most contemporary intercollegiate resolutions the negative has not been logically required to defend the status quo. On these resolutions, affirmative constructive argumentation that is premised on a comparison of plan and status quo is argumentatively flawed on its face. The affirmative assumption that the negative must defend the status quo is fallacious in more ways than can be conveniently canvassed. For example, assuming that there are only two options commits the fallacy of false dichotomy; assigning an argument to one's opponent is a straw-figure fallacy; inducing the truth of a statement after testing it in a single environment is a hasty generalization; indicting an essential object on the basis of accidental qualities is the fallacy of accident; and assuming that a particular change is justified simply because some change is justified commits a faulty deduction. Whether or not the negative offers a "counterproposal" is irrelevant. A judgment about the logical adequacy of an affirmative argument can be made independently of the semantic stylings of negative argumentation.

⁸If there is a good reason to artificially limit the range of otherwise logical alternatives to the proposal / proposition (and it isn't clear that there is any such reason), a less extreme rule might require a counterproposal to be specific to the NFA topic. It is my understanding that the original wording of the rule was that a counterproposal must be "specific to the topic" dealing with "the subject matter of the resolution." Unfortunately, this rule was reworded by someone at some point in the process.

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Improving the Pedagogical Value of Debate: A Call for Oral Critiques

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As present competitors in NFA L-D debate, we recognize the activity not as a competitive end, but as an educational means to develop communication, argumentation, persuasion, and analytical skills. These skills are not only crucial in the forensics arena, but are skills we can carry forth in other academic and career pursuits. We are not alone in our beliefs. Most collegiate debate programs justify their expenditures to academic institutions with the rationale that debate uniquely supplements the student's educational growth (Smith, 1990).

While recognizing debate as an educational exercise, we argue that the means of pedagogical exchange between the judge and competitor is inadequate. At present, the ballot serves as the only medium for educational feedback. Few judges utilize other alternatives such as the oral critique. It is our experience as competitors in NFA L-D debate that few judges feel permitted to verbally evaluate the debate upon its conclusion while some are even unfamiliar with the concept. We attribute the judge's hesitations in offering oral critiques to the ambiguity in the Rules of Competition for NFA L-D debate, hereafter referred to as the "Blue Sheet." Under "The Philosophy of NFA L-D Debate," the Blue Sheet calls for competitors to "be evaluated on their analysis, use of evidence, and ability to effectively and persuasively organize, deliver and refute arguments." While the Blue Sheet recognizes the educational worth of feedback, it falls short in elaborating on how this evaluation should be communicated. We believe oral feedback which does not disclose the decision of the round should be specified as an option to supplement the ballot as a means of evaluation. As advocates of the oral critique, we will first analyze how the present ballot system fails in offering optimal educational feedback. Second, we will propose a model for oral critiques. Third, we will present the advantages of supplementing ballots with oral critiques. Finally, we will address relevant educational

concerns.

THE EDUCATIONAL LIMITATIONS OF BALLOTS

The present reliance on the ballot as the sole means of communicating feedback is extremely problematic. To begin with, there are many feedback limitations of the instrument itself. Given the "finite amount of space" provided on a ballot, Walter Ulrich (1983) explains "any discussion of an hour debate cannot cover all the issues." Within the limited amount of space, it is impossible for the debaters "to be evaluated on their analysis, use of evidence, and ability to effectively and persuasively organize, deliver, and refute arguments" as called for in the Blue Sheet. The judge must employ one of two options. They can either briefly, but inadequately, discuss all the relevant issues, or they can isolate one of the issues for an indepth review, leaving the other issues in question. In either case, the ballot fails as an educational instrument for the debater.

In addition to the ballot's inability to physically deliver a thorough critique, several other problems stem from the instrument itself. On many occasions, we have received incomplete ballot packets. Our own experiences with missing ballots along with that of others' indicates the problem is not rare or isolated, but expected with the shuffling of hundreds of ballots in the tabroom. When ballots are lost, so are potentially valuable comments and suggestions from judges. Many of the ballots that are received are also illegible. Illegible handwriting makes ballot comprehension difficult and sometimes, impossible. We do not blame the judges for what often amounts to cryptic ballots, but rather, the inadequate amount of time judges are given to write ballots and the pressure they are under from the tabroom to turn them in (we suspect this may also be the reason for unwritten ballots we have received on a few occasions). We therefore feel the ballot itself and the context in which it is written have compromised effective evaluations in NFA L-D debate.

The present ballot system is also educationally unsound because it employs delayed feedback. Since ballots are not received until after a tournament, the tournament becomes the educational experience as opposed to each individual round. This allows for a

competitor to continue possibly ineffective argumentation from round to round throughout a tournament which may have been corrected by more immediate feedback. The impossibility of educational growth during a tournament is especially a concern for programs in which students may compete in only one or two tournaments to fulfill class credit requirements or programs that are limited in traveling because of budgetary limitations.

Additionally, immediacy is important to the educational value of a round due to the biases in individual memories. As the number of rounds accumulate, the debaters' memories become muddled. Their flow sheets and their personal memories of the rounds may not coincide with either their competitor's recollection or that of their judge. By the time the debaters have an opportunity to read their ballots, often a day or two later, they may not remember the specifics of the round. In a hazy recollection of the tournament, the issues of round one may be muddled with those of round three. Due to selective memories, ballot comprehension becomes frustrating and difficult to apply in future competitions.

A MODEL FOR IMPROVED EDUCATIONAL VALUE

We believe that oral feedback should supplement ballots for optimal educational value. Feedback, oral or written, can address three areas relevant to debate: communication skills, strategy, and reasons for decision. Feedback on communication skills answers questions such as: was the constructive speech well-organized? Was the constructive speech well-supported with strong evidence carefully selected for its persuasive value? Was the constructive speech delivered well- good eye contact, polished nonverbals, appropriate rate of speed in delivery, vocal variety to create appeal and to emphasize key ideas in evidence and analysis? Did the rebuttal speeches align competing positions and then compare and evaluate the competing evidence and reasoning behind competing claims? Did the rebuttal speeches concisely and persuasively summarize the rationale for a decision? Did the advocates deliver their speeches in appealing ways? Was the cross-examination skillful?

Feedback on strategy answers questions such as: was the

argument in question complete, thoroughly developed or was it missing a critical piece of evidence such as a clear threshold in the case of a disad? Was the argument strategy or tactic executed effectively? Was the opposition's answers countered effectively in this debate? Were the strategies and tactics technically effective and persuasive? Are there ways to improve the effectiveness (or appeal) of the strategy or tactic employed in this round for future debates?

Feedback pertaining to the judge's decision making process addresses such questions as: what issues did the judge use to decide the debate? Why were these issues important? Why weren't other issues important? How were the individual arguments resolved to decide each of the key issues? What could the losing side do to have changed the outcome of the decision? Were there any missed opportunities? What should the student consider as a strategy if faced with a similar situation in future debates?

The oral critique model we advocate would answer the possible questions on communication skills and strategy, but would exclude feedback on the decision making process. In explaining their decision making process, it would be improbable that a judge could conceal their decision. We feel disclosures of decisions have no educational merit and serve only a competitive end. Some might therefore argue that feedback on the decision making process should be permitted in elimination rounds and at Nationals. We feel this decision rests with the NFA L-D Committee. Our recommendation is that NFA L-D rules restrict a judge's post debate discussions to communications skills and strategy.

Under this model, we believe all judges are capable of providing an educational oral critique. Some have suggested that judges with little debate experience may feel unqualified or uncomfortable in discussing a debate. However, NFA L-D debate is not simply premised on an argument, but the communication of an argument as well. Judges limited to an IE background would certainly be able to contribute oral comments and suggestions in the area of communication skills. Judges with background in debate, on the other hand, could contribute in the area of strategy. Since debaters encounter judges with diverse backgrounds at any given tournament, they could receive feedback through oral critiques that contribute to their growth as a debater in all areas. Also, we do not

advocate that the Blue Sheet should mandate post debate discussions; rather, we feel the Blue Sheet should legitimize the oral critique as a medium for feedback by specifying it as an option for judges.

THE EDUCATIONAL ADVANTAGES OF THE ORAL CRITIQUE

Use of oral critiques as a supplement to the ballot system will alleviate the aforementioned problems. In support of this claim, we will examine the more communicative advantages of oral critiques, the thoroughness they provide, and the benefits of their immediacy. We will also consider additional advantages of oral critiques.

To begin with, oral critiques are more logistically sound than the ballot. Unlike the ballot, they cannot be lost in the tabroom shuffle. They are also more comprehensible than the many illegible ballots competitors receive at the conclusion of a tournament. Forensics is also full of individuals who can talk faster than they can write and consequently, the oral critique is capable of delivering more information than the written ballot. They are also in keeping with the oral tradition of forensics.

In addition to these logistical advantages, oral critiques provide more educational feedback. In use with ballots, judges won't be forced to cram their analysis of the round and suggestions for improvement into a few inches of space on the ballot. What judges cannot fit into this space can be verbalized, allowing opportunity to address more issues in more detail. This process also allows for two-way communication, therefore a complete educational exchange. The questions which previously arose in response to the brevity or ambiguity of ballots can now be addressed directly by the judge. It should also be noted that judges are not mind readers and thus not capable of knowing with what issues the competitors may be concerned. For instance, a debater who has doubts about a specific aspect of argumentation can now ask the judge. This allows for personal growth of the debater in areas seldom covered on the ballot.

Compared with the ballot, an oral critique provides more immediate feedback. Research in the area of feedback generally

supports the idea that immediate feedback is more beneficial educationally than delayed feedback (Van Houten, 1980). One specific benefit of an immediate oral critique is that it best insures the retention of the judge's comments and suggestions for improvement. This advantage stems from the fact that the oral critique engages both the competitor and the judge in feedback when the round's issues are still fresh in their minds. Mark W. Smith (1990) explains:

The reason why immediate feedback allows for the most effective learning comes from the relationship between time and memory loss. Discussions held immediately at the end of the round prevent debaters and judges from forgetting the round, in whole or in part.. .in the period immediately after a round [the judge and competitor] have just experienced the competition and are more likely to lucidly remember each speech and each issue. There is less opportunity for the judge's and debater's memory processes to breakdown. Even if they do suffer from a recall lapse, each person has their flow sheets sitting in front of them for quick reference.

The immediacy of the feedback offered by the oral critique will help realize an educational objective of evaluations since the debaters can utilize comments and suggestions in later rounds before they are forgotten.

In addition to solving the ballots system's shortcomings in favor of logistics, thoroughness, and immediacy, oral critiques offer two unique advantages: an improved educational relationship between competitor and judge, and a more rewarding, less intimidating first time experience for the NFA L-D debater.

If debate is an educational activity, the debater is clearly the student. Conventional wisdom regards the competitor's coach as the teacher, but we feel the coach shares their educational responsibilities with the judge. After all, it is the judge who actually observes the debater's performance in the round and, under the Blue Sheet, is assigned the task of evaluating that performance. We feel the educational model advanced by the ballot system is

insufficient. As the classroom supplements the student's text, the oral critique should supplement the competitor's ballot. The present system would seem to support the idea that students need not attend class, but only read the text to educate themselves. However, we know that reading textbooks alone does not provide for optimal educational growth. This is why the classroom exists to provide a forum for educational interaction between the student and teacher. Crucial in this interaction is the opportunity to ask questions, an opportunity that does not exist in mere reading of the textbook. Oral critiques are "of significant educational concern since feedback usually is a component of instructional strategies to assist reading" (Langer and Keenan, 1993). So not only does the oral critique offer its own educational value, it also enhances the effectiveness of the ballot as an educational tool. As students, debaters have questions and an opportunity for educational interaction should be in place. Judges need to be just as accessible to the debater as the teacher is in the classroom. Currently, though, a psychological barrier exists between competitors and judges. The judge is perceived as an intimidating warm body who never speaks, but will eventually author an impersonal ballot instead that, often times, only contains the awarding of a win or loss for the competitor. The competitor and judge relationship could be improved through more personal verbal exchange offered by the oral critique.

Furthermore, the oral critique would be helpful for the new debater. Since part of the philosophy of NFA L-D debate is to lower the entry barriers for new debaters, it seems only natural to provide as much support and educational feedback as possible. The oral critique would allow for this. Many novices, especially from small programs or programs led by coaches with strong IE backgrounds and little or no background in debate, may not have even had the opportunity to have a practice round before being entered in a tournament. In these cases, it seems more educationally sound to give oral feedback after those first couple of rounds to keep them from getting discouraged. For example, simple informational observations such as "stand up during cross examination" or "be more assertive" could make a difference in their next rounds. The present ballot system delays useful feedback. By the time a first time debater receives their ballots, they might

already have become discouraged and may never give NFA L-D debate another try. For an activity that is relatively young and whose continuation depends on newcomers, judges should be permitted to provide encouragement to beginning debaters immediately after a round has been concluded.

EDUCATIONAL CONCERNS REGARDING ORAL CRITIQUES

One concern regarding post debate discussions that has surfaced while writing this manuscript is that debate will continue after the round during the oral critique. In the model we advocate, however, the critique's focus is on compliments and suggested improvements the competitor can utilize in subsequent rounds, not a disclosure of decision. If judges conceal their decisions in a carefully balanced critique of both the affirmative and the negative, competitors will not feel compelled to defend their positions argued in the round, after the round. Under our model, feedback will be limited to strategy and communication skills, so fear of continued debate should be offset. Also, it should be kept in mind that the judge is the discussion leader in the oral critique and in the position to selectively respond to or dismiss questions the competitors ask. Even if a competitor feels they have lost the round and attempts to defend their ground with the hope of reversing the judge's decision, we feel that just as teachers are able to handle a student's discontentment with a grade with patience, care, and respect, the judges too will be able to handle any response similarly to a perceived loss. We feel, however, that competitors will handle oral critiques with maturity and not become confrontational. In a survey of results on the announcing of decisions and providing oral critiques at an AFA-NDT district debate tournament, results suggested that students "...are not motivated solely by the prestige of winning and that they really do value the intellectual exchange made possible by a system that acknowledges the role of feedback and provides opportunities for dialogue between debaters and judges" (Hinck and Chandler, 1992). Additionally, we believe few debaters would become confrontational with a judge after a round for fear of offending the judge and compromising a favorable

decision.

Some question how oral critiques will impact what they believe to be already tight tournament schedules. We recognize that time is an important factor at any tournament. However, we feel that if the pedagogical value of NFA L-D debate is to be realized, some time should be allocated in the schedule after each round, particularly prelims, for a judge to give an oral critique if they opt to do so. We believe 5 to 10 minutes would be adequate. Building this time into the schedule may be more difficult at some tournaments than others, but generally the scheduling problems are surmountable. Even if a schedule was so tight as to prevent time for oral critiques, a judge would still have time to offer brief comments to benefit competitors in later rounds.

A remaining fear of the oral critique may be that the reason for ballots will diminish, eventually rendering them moot. We wish again to emphasize that we do not intend for oral feedback to replace the ballot, but wish it to supplement the ballot as an educational tool. Clearly, ballots are important, especially for coaches in assessing their debaters' level of skill and progress. However, we feel ballots are often cryptic and generally difficult for coaches and debaters to refer to. While less may be said on a ballot when an oral critique is given, the debater can better understand an oral critique and through the process of taking notes during feedback, better understand what a ballot means in later review with their coach. The ballot will also remain important in providing feedback on the decision making process, a form of feedback we do not advocate including in the oral critique.

CONCLUSION

We believe that the National Forensics Association has an obligation to realize its pedagogical objective in L-D debate by correcting the inadequacies of the present ballot system. We believe the pedagogical value of oral critiques cannot be ignored and should be legitimized as a means of feedback. We advocate specifying the oral critique as an option for judges in the Blue Sheet to accomplish this.

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Professional Resources

Weiss, Robert O. *Public Argument*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1995, pp. vii + 189.

At first glance, Robert Weiss's *Public Argument* is not apparently germane to the readers of the *National Forensic Journal*, for Weiss composed his work for audience-style debates. Indeed, the book contains little of interest to those in poetry or prose, impromptu or extemporaneous speaking, or ostensibly even to persuasive speaking or NFA-sponsored Lincoln-Douglas debate.

Yet, desultory perceptions often deceive. Weiss situates argument, or communication, in a public matrix in which the audience is the central rhetorical factor. Indeed, NFA-sponsored public address events and Lincoln-Douglas debate are posited upon the same intellectual and scholarly grounds as Weiss's: the needs of competent speakers and informed audiences in a democracy. That is why, for instance, Weiss holds in the last analysis: "we're going to trust our listeners to know a good argument when they hear one" (p. 8). As long as public address events and Lincoln-Douglas debate are fortunately constrained by their present audience-centered approach, those forensic activities will not implode as other intercollegiate forms have devolved.

Chapter 7, "Premises in Public Debate," is a helpful chapter, particularly to the novice communicator. Weiss treats the pros and cons of different types of evidence and the care the speaker must take in selecting warrants for the speech. Of special note is Weiss's specific and extensive listing of indexes and bibliographic sources that the researcher will want to master.

For those who wish to direct their students to the Toulmin model of reasoning, Weiss situates his discussion therein. Of particular note is Chapter 9 on "The Warranting Process." Weiss lists and defines the usual kinds of fallacies as well as discussing inductive and deductive reasoning.

But the main reason the forensic coach may want to follow Weiss's lead with regard to public argument regards Lincoln-Douglas debating. Given the ubiquitous tournament invitation that bemoans travel expenses, etc., the forensic team might overlook

speaking opportunities on its very own campus. To this end, Chapters 12 and 13 blueprint how to hold a successful audience-style, audience-centered debate. Weiss wisely notes that the audience could decide the debate by the traditional show of hands or voice vote, by a more sophisticated shift-of-opinion ballot, or, if the Lincoln-Douglas debate were to be purely an exhibition, by no vote at all. The synergism that obtains for debaters and the community when students communicate to real audiences on real issues, such as educational reform with the 1996 NFA L-D policy resolution, should not be dismissed.

Weiss also has an annotated bibliography of sources pertaining to audience-centered forensics.

My only caveat, a minor one at that, is the book's informal diction. Perhaps Weiss intended the contractions to enhance his conversational style in the book.

In all Weiss has composed a book that augments the educational mission of the National Forensic Association by reminding coaches and competitors that *Public Argument* is the *raison d'etre* of forensic competition.

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Jaksa, James, and Michael S. Pritchard. *Communication Ethics*, 2nd ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1994, pp. xii + 244.

Many ethical concerns pervade contemporary forensic practice. The ethical use of argumentation in intercollegiate debate has been questioned (Duffy, 1983). The ethical practices associated with the recruitment of transfer students has generated considerable discussion (Bartanen, 1988; McGee & Simerly, 1991). And, a host of ethical concerns have been raised regarding multiple practices employed in competitive individual events (Endres, 1988; Frank, 1983; Green, 1988; Thomas & Hart, 1983). As most forensic coaches and competitors can attest, these are but a few of the ethical concerns that generate questions, discussion, and controversy in our field.

A forensic coach or competitor can look in many places for guidance on ethical issues. Most major national forensic organizations offer guidelines for ethical behavior. A number of contemporary texts on forensics provide lengthy discussions regarding ethical practices in the field (e.g., Bartanen, 1994). Other forensic scholarship has attempted to establish new, comprehensive frameworks for the evaluation of ethical practices (e.g., Snider, 1992). But, can the forensic coach or competitor look beyond this field for guidance when confronted by an ethical concern or dispute? Jaksa and Pritchard's text is one of the best of places to look.

Although Jaksa and Pritchard's text is targeted toward students in communication ethics courses, its application can be made to a number of areas including contemporary forensic practice. This text provides guidance and practice in the examination and evaluation of ethical issues that have a communicative component. Indeed, the ideas and concepts discussed in the text can be applied to any form of public communication including debate and individual speaking events.

The nine chapters of Jaksa and Pritchard's text are divided into three broad sections: the need for ethics, methods of reasoning in ethics, and applications and cases. Each section is rich with informative material that illuminates the importance of ethics and the actual methods by which ethical decisions are made. The need for ethics is illuminated with a discussion of the value of the study of ethics, an examination of the post-Watergate crisis in confidence confronting contemporary society, and a positioning of the role that ethics plays in communication. Moral reasoning and the principle of veracity provide the context for the section on ethical reasoning. The section on applications and cases provides detailed illustrations of ethical decisions that might confront individuals, groups, and organizations. The specific case studies in this final section include an examination of the ethical questions surrounding the explosion of the Challenger space shuttle and the individual case of former Watergate conspirator Jeb Stuart Magruder.

The format of the text is readable and practical. The reader can easily follow the reasoning of the authors as they build a case for the study of ethics and then they detail specific methods by which that study can proceed. Further, the practicality of the text

is quite robust. The text deals with a number of real world issues and not merely the musings of theologians or philosophers.

The importance of this text for forensic coaches and competitors can be identified in several ways. Most significantly, any reader receives an informative introduction to the part that ethics can play in public communication, which should not be lost on the forensic coach or competitor. Forensics is still an intense, laboratory experience in public communication. A general recognition and understanding of the role of ethics in such a context can help the forensic coach and competitor in formulating and developing ethical standards to govern or guide their behavior.

The case studies in this text that point to ethical issues for individuals and groups can also be informative for the forensic coach or competitor. The forensic coach must often make decisions that may ultimately effect his or her own ability to secure funding for the program, to secure tenure, and to address other vital concerns. The coach and competitor must understand how to deal with ethical concerns that may influence the team or squad as a whole: recruitment decisions, allocation of scholarships, use of evidence trades, and so forth. The case studies in Jaksa and Pritchard's text are not specific to such forensic scenarios, but they do clearly illustrate the type of ethical reasoning that an individual or group might employ when confronted with the need to resolve an ethical dilemma.

Jaksa and Pritchard also provide a great deal of material that can help debaters to understand better some of the moral and value-based evidence that they may desire to use. A number of moral theories and standards are examined and illustrated at length in the section on reasoning in ethics. This material might enable the debater to understand better (and by extension to argue better) moral and value positions that often arise in both policy and non-policy debate.

If a forensic coach or competitor is looking for a list of shortcuts or easy answers to all potential ethical disputes, then they will be disappointed by this text, for it does not provide lists or reviews of contemporary ethical standards. Rather, the text works in a more heuristic manner, by exploring theory and practice, and it thus compels the reader to continue that exploration through

discussion and application. This is a valuable exploration not only for the broader communication discipline, but for the field of forensics as well.

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