

# Ethics in Speech Events: A Replication and Extension

DAVID A. THOMAS AND JACK HART\*

The forensic community shares a general concern within speech education to improve the teaching of ethical communication. Ethics codes including stringent rules for evidence used in debates and other speech contest events have been passed by the National Forensic League, the American Forensic Association, and the National Forensic Association. These rules typically specify types of contest behaviors that are forbidden to contestants, such as evidence distortion and fabrication.

For instance, the recently revised AFA "Code of Forensics Program and Forensics Tournament Standards for College and Universities" lists four rules in Article II dealing with Competitor Practices:

"1. Forensics competitors shall not use fabricated or distorted evidence...

"2. In individual events which involve original student speech compositions..., the speaker shall not commit plagiarism...

"3. Forensics competitors are expected to do their own research...

"4. All forensics participants are expected to compete honestly and fairly..."<sup>1</sup>

The NFA Guidelines similarly express explicit rules for contestants, such as:

"I. Eligibility of Materials. A. *Prepared Speeches*. No student may use the same speech or substantially similar speech for more than one school year."

"III. Authorship. A. *Prepared Speeches*. A prepared speech must be authored by the student using the speech in competition."<sup>2</sup>

These rules are typical, and of course their respective codes pro-

---

\* *The National Forensic Journal*, I (Fall 1983), pp. 74-95.

DAVID A. THOMAS is Director of Forensics and Associate Professor of Communication at the University of Houston, Texas 77004; JACK HART is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Kansas, Lawrence 66045.

<sup>1</sup>The "AFA Code for Debate Programs and Tournaments" appears in the *Journal of the American Forensic Association*, 11 (Fall 1974), pp. 76-79. Amendments to the evidence standards appear in the *Journal of the American Forensic Association*, 14 (Winter 1978), pp. 172-173.

<sup>2</sup>The "N.F.A. Guidelines for Competition" appears in the *National Forensic Journal*, 1 (Spring 1983), pp. 59-61.

vide appropriate definitions and fuller elaboration of intent and conditions. The formulation of explicit rules for evidence use is fairly recent, though the practices themselves have been traditionally deplored.

Prior to the acceptance of the most recent codes of ethics, the senior author of this report conducted a study, which he presented at a 1980 convention and published in revised form in this journal in an earlier issue.<sup>3</sup> The study consisted of a survey of the judges and contestants at an intercollegiate individual events tournament at Auburn University. The purpose of the study was to identify the attitudes of forensics community members toward a variety of hypothetical situations in which ethical issues might exist.

The authors of the present report conducted a second study to extend and replicate the findings of the 1980 paper. The earlier study was based on a very small sample (23 contestants and 23 judges) in one regional tournament. The present study sampled the opinions of the contestants in attendance at the AFA National Individual Events Tournament in 1982. The tournament was selected as a superior alternative to any other single tournament sponsored by a college of university, since it reflects the culminating event for the year for the majority of its participants.

A few minor revisions were made in the questionnaire, but the major change was to delete the instrument calling for respondents to rank order the various events according to their ethical ramifications. A new problem was inadvertently incorporated into the present study by making that deletion. Rhetorical criticism and impromptu speaking are listed on the cover sheet for students to check off, but without that ranking instrument, no items remain in the survey that mention those events. Rather than retabulate the findings to delete contestants who listed only rhetorical criticism or impromptu as their events at the tournament, the decision was made to retain them anyway, as it is likely that most of them were participants in the other rhetorical events throughout the year. In this sample, a total of 14 student competitors fit this category, of whom two listed only rhetorical criticism, and most listed only impromptu.

An important but unstated rationale for this study, or any similar study, is to examine all aspects of ethical practice in the face of occasional reports of cheating. In the present instance, however, that was not our major motivation. We are also concerned with an equally important rationale, which is to identify the extent to which

---

<sup>3</sup> See David A. Thomas, "The Ethics of Proof in Speech Events: A Survey of Standards Used by Contestants and Judges," *National Forensic Journal*, 1 (Spring 1983), pp. 1-17.

forensic participants identify rhetorical contest events with the rhetorical models which form their namesakes, or, stated differently, to what extent are the rhetorical events unique and independent games for competition and entertainment, unrelated to speech education?

The rationale that guided the present study is the same as the earlier one. This report, therefore, will summarize much of the material that appeared in the earlier article. This report stems from the assumption that three possible perspectives might govern one's view of ethics in forensic events. These include:

1. We may consider forensic events primarily as competitions, contests, or games. Rules are designed for efficient administration of tournaments (time limits for speeches, etc.), conformity (in the case of national tournament qualifiers), and fairness towards all contestants. Behavior by a contestant designed to circumvent contest rules and thereby gain a competitive edge could be considered an ethical violation.

2. We may consider forensic events as educational activities, simulations, and exercises to supplement classroom instruction in rhetoric, argumentation, and communication. (This study does not include interpretation events.) Forensic activities viewed from this perspective are consistent with the Sedalia Conference definition as "laboratories" for helping students learn to communicate arguments more effectively with a variety of audiences. Rules are based on academic or scholarly standards; violations of contest rules are thus the functional equivalent of cheating in an academic honesty code.

3. We may consider forensic events as actual rhetorical situations, in which persons attempt to communicate ideas and meanings to other persons. Contestants are primarily persons communicating with their audiences, rather than players in a game or students in a classroom. According to this perspective, the proper ethical framework to apply to forensic events would be the same as that used to evaluate rhetoric generally.

These three perspectives are not necessarily mutually exclusive, nor are they necessarily inconsistent with, or opposed to, one another. In theory, they may coincide in many respects. In practice, however, they are not the same. They stem from different paradigms of what the forensic enterprise entails. Rhetoric as a human activity entails the purposeful attempt of a speaker to influence an audience. It is rare that students in a speech contest attempt to influence their judges regarding the actual, stated contents of their speeches. The influence attempt is directed towards winning a superior rating when compared with other contestants. The educational model of forensics uses this competitive motive within a role

playing context. It calls for the contestant and the judge to simulate actual rhetorical situations in a laboratory setting, and to develop more effective techniques through the contest activity. Finally, the contest orientation of forensic tournaments sets up rules of fairness, scheduling convenience, etc., which are not necessarily related either to rhetoric or to educational simulations of rhetoric.

Rules of ethical behavior are always situational, bound to a given set of human purposes and motives. We judge the ethical behavior of a person according to these varying circumstances. When a speech tournament is based on a model of a game or contest, many of the contest rules bind the participant only within the playing of the game. Indeed, as many observers have noted, it is hard to imagine some of our contest activities anywhere except in a tournament, such as drawing three topics and speaking on a choice of one of them. Similarly, violations of contest rules have ethical ramifications only within the contest they govern. A contestant may be disqualified from a tournament for fabricating evidence, but he or she is not likely to be suspended from school for that tournament rule violation. If, however, a literal educational perspective is imposed on a contest, the coach may indeed attach an academic punishment to a student's rule violation. In the main, violation of contest rules does not mark a contestant as an unethical person outside the realm of the tournament situation; and conversely, student behavior outside a contest does not necessarily affect his or her ratings within the tournament context.

Our previously published article includes a brief discussion of some ethical theories pertaining to the evaluation of rhetoric generally. That discussion will not be repeated here. However, it is important to note that some contemporary theorists now dispute the notion that rhetoric is "amoral." Using a symbolic interactionist approach, in which rhetoric is thought to generate knowledge and social understanding, the practice of rhetoric is seen as having ethical impacts. When rhetoric is used to enhance the quality of life, it is most ethical. Using this theory, or similar theories, it is possible to mark off a range of values from greater to lesser, and to place relative morality of a given piece of rhetoric along that spectrum. It is possible, therefore, for an ethical view of rhetoric to go beyond mere prohibition of specified acts such as distorting and fabricating evidence.

This study is based on the earlier one which attempted to describe the ethical perspectives currently employed by forensic participants. Do they use a contest-oriented ethic, an educational standard, or a more general rhetorical standard of ethics? What is their operational definition of the term "ethics"?

## AFA NIET 1982 SURVEY

QUESTIONNAIRE, Rhetorical Events *ONLY*

- Informative
- Extemporaneous
- Persuasive
- Communication Analysis
- Impromptu

Demographic Data:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Address.

I am a COACH CONTESTANT in one or more of  
(circle one)

the listed events (check events).

The purpose of the study is to survey current opinions about the ethics of certain practices in the speaking events. A previous study along the same lines was conducted at a local school tournament, and the results are scheduled for publication. This survey questionnaire is designed to replicate and extend that earlier study, using the participants of the AFA NIET as the data base. We would like to have 100% participation by all coaches and contestants involved in the rhetorical speaking events.

The above demographic data is needed only to validate the scope of participation in the study. No responses will be attributed to individuals by name or school. All data will be tabulated and presented in statistical form. If deemed necessary, the researcher will use the demographic data as a key to followup inquiries and to request participation from eligible potential respondents.

Please complete both pages of this survey questionnaire. Do not omit any items. Your opinion is what is called for; it is not considered that there are "right" or "wrong" answers. If you feel compelled to qualify or explain any answer, you may do so on the back of the sheet. However, select *only one* response on each item *per se*. NOTE: To safeguard the integrity of the responses, you must complete the identification block on this page. QUESTIONNAIRES WITHOUT IDENTIFIABLE RESPONDENTS CANNOT BE USED IN THE TABULATION.

When you have completed the questionnaire sheets, turn in your survey booklet at the Judging/Information Table.

The researcher is Dr. David Thomas of the University of Houston.

## METHOD

This survey is designed to replicate and extend the study performed at the 1980 Auburn University tournament. At the 1982 AFA National Individual Events Tournament held at Mankato State University, judges and contestants in individual events classified as "rhetorical events only" were asked to complete questionnaires related to ethics in those events. There were two instruments used, based on similar instruments used in the 1980 study. Each respondent was asked to check off an identification as either a judge or contestant. Contestants were asked to check the rhetorical events in which they participated. Choices given included informative, extemporaneous, persuasive, communication analysis, and impromptu. No interpretation or dramatic events were included. Neither was after dinner speaking included, though some participants suggested that it should have been.

One of the instruments used was "Judgement Calls," a five-item forced-choice instrument calling for the respondent to label a specific situation as either a definite ethical violation, a questionable ethical behavior, or not an ethical violation. The other instrument used was "Your Opinion," a ten-item, Likert-type scale calling for respondents to express their agreement or disagreement with statements of opinion about certain ethical judgments. The questionnaire provided to contestants and judges read as follows:

**I. JUDGMENT CALLS. In these situations, how would you judge the *students* behavior? Use the following scale:**

NOT = This is not an ethical violation.

? = This is questionable ethical behavior.

IS = This is a definite ethical violation.

1. An Extemp speaker's file contains two dozen fully prepared speeches on topics likely to be drawn.
2. An informative speaker uses the same speech for more than one year of competition.
3. In an oration about seat belt usage, a contestant has an illustration about how his sister was horribly injured in an accident because she did not use seat belts. The orator has no sister.
4. A coach writes the outline, provides the research, and edits the final draft of a persuasive speech for one of his students. The student uses it in a tournament.
5. A contestant in informative speaking uses a magazine article *in toto*, verbatim, as the complete speech, without crediting or revealing the source.

II. YOUR OPINION. Mark the scale to reflect your opinion of each statement.

SD = Strongly Disagree    N = No Opinion,    A = Agree  
 D = Disagree                      or Neutral    SA = Strongly Agree

1. Orations which promote positive, universal human values (e.g., world peace) are more ethical than those which deal with narrowly focused problems and solution (e.g., junior high school football injuries).
2. Orations which advocate specific solutions are more ethical than orations which analyze a problem without suggesting or supporting any given solution.
3. Extemporaneous speeches which furnish an unambiguous answer to the question are more ethical than those which do not.
4. It is unethical for a speaker to go much overtime.
5. It is unethical for a speaker listed in the middle of his speaking order to come late in order to speak last.
6. Fabricating evidence is the worst ethical violation a contestant can commit in a rhetorical forensic event.
7. Student behavior motivated by the desire to gain an unfair competitive edge, such as distracting an opponent, should be considered an ethical violation.
8. The *most important* ethical rules to apply to the rhetorical events are those related to specific contest rules. Practices not covered by the rules should be considered as neither ethical nor unethical.
9. The *most important* ethical rules to apply to the rhetorical events are those related to educational and scholarly standards, e.g., plagiarism and original research.
10. A rhetorical forensic event should be regarded as rhetoric first and contest second. Topic, supporting material, and all other rhetorical choices should be aimed at enhancing the life of the individual, with the more significant considered as the more ethical and vice versa.

Data were collected on site by both researchers by distributing copies of the questionnaire at common meeting places such as the judging table and tournament dining facilities. At least some data was lost when questionnaires distributed at a breakfast were not collected before the dining room staff cleared the tables. According to tournament records, 281 students competed in the events tested, and 98 coaches and judges were in attendance. Of those numbers,

useable questionnaires were collected from 98 students and 63 judges (or 34.9 percent of the students and 64.9 percent of the judges). Almost all of the questionnaires returned were completed fully by the respondents. Two contestants failed to complete one of the two instruments. On a few items, one or two respondents failed to record an answer. For all calculations, the total of actual responses was used as the baseline denominator.

One additional feature was incorporated into this study that was not included in the earlier study. In the present project, respondents were asked to write comments to explain or qualify their answers to any of the items on either questionnaire instrument. There were many written comments, almost all in relation to some of the items on the "Your Opinion" instrument. Most comments were written by respondents who disagreed with the value judgment expressed in the item, and most were in the minority of respondents on those items. Table 3, "Respondents Questioning Definition of Item as Ethical Issue," has been prepared to illustrate the sense of disagreement with the ethical perspectives implied in the "Your Opinion" instrument by those who wrote out the reasons for their objections.

Caution must be used in drawing conclusions from the results of this questionnaire. While the sample is larger than the one used in the 1980 study, it remains a relatively small sample. Moreover, it is a select sample, taken as it was from the participants in a national championship tournament at the end of the season for which all participants had fulfilled qualifications. No attempt was made to sample the participants or coaches from schools not in attendance at this tournament. On its face, this study reports the opinions of a sample of national tournament participants about the items covered on the questionnaire. To some extent, these persons may be considered a good sample, because their presence at this tournament indicates a high degree of proficiency and involvement in forensics. But they cannot be considered as a representative sample of the whole community of forensic educators and students. When the results show a heavy preference for ethical positions that correspond with the contest perspective, this sample's selective nature must be remembered. A different sample (one drawn from professors of rhetoric, department administrators, high school participants, etc., for instance), might have produced different results. Combined with the lack of a control group, the study is descriptive rather than an experimental project.

This study, then, is still exploratory. It surveys attitudes and opinions of a select sample of forensic educators and contestants, and tabulates the results. The findings are not rigorously scientific, but they are interesting and important in suggesting areas of con-

cern to speech education in the teaching of ethical communication. Further refinements in the method could produce a more scientific study, and we would be very happy to learn that our article stimulates further research along these lines.

RESULTS

*Judgment Calls.*

The "Judgment Calls" instrument consisted of five statements which describe a contestant's behavior in a situation. Respondents were asked to check whether they regard the behavior as "a definite ethical violation," "questionable ethical behavior," or "not an ethical violation." The resulting data are displayed in Table 1, which shows the number and percentage of responses by judges and contestants. A chi square test was applied to the differences observed on all items to locate the opinions held most strongly by the respondents. Statistically significant findings are also indicated.

TABLE 1: SURVEY OF 1982 AFA NIET CONTESTANTS & JUDGES

Judgment Calls

ITEM	NOT		?		IS		BLANK	X <sup>2</sup>
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
1C	33	34.7	25	26.3	36	37.9	4	2.06
1J	21	33.3	19	30.1	23	36.5	—	0.62
2C	6	6.3	4	4.2	84	88.4	1	*130.12
2J	3	4.8	2	3.2	58	92.1	—	*32.6
3C	6	6.3	33	34.7	56	58.9		*39.16
3J	5	7.9	16	25.3	42	66.6	—	*34.38
4C	6	6.3	22	23.2	66	69.5	1 1	*60.37
4J	5	7.9	13	20.6	44	69.8		*40.4
5C	7	7.4	2	2.1	86	90.5	—	*138.78
5J	0	—	0	—	63	100.0	—	*189.00
N = Contestants 95 Judges 63 2DF X <sup>2</sup> Distribution *.001 = 13.816 (All reached .001 except IC & IJ)								

The results of the chi square testing show that significant differences were observed for both contestants and judges on four of five situations. Only Item 1 produced a relatively even spread of opinions across the three choices.

Item 1. An extemp speaker's file contains two dozen fully prepared speeches on topics likely to be drawn.

Responses to this item show that respondents had mixed feelings about it. Nearly equal groups of both contestants and judges selected each of the three choices. About a third considered the situation to be a definite ethical violation, another third felt that it is questionable ethical behavior, and the remaining third believed the practice is not an ethical violation.

Items 2-5 produced near agreement among all the respondents that the situations described are all definite violations. These items described the following four situations:

A speaker uses the same speech for more than one year.

A contestant in oratory fabricates an example to use in support of the speech.

A student uses a persuasive speech prepared to a great extent by the coach.

A student plagiarizes an informative speech from a magazine article.

These findings are fairly consistent with the results of the 1980 study. The first three items on the present survey instrument were taken verbatim from the earlier survey. Regarding the item about the two dozen prepared extemp speeches, the contestants in 1980 thought it was a definite ethical violation, but the judges' responses were divided. In the present study, neither the contestants nor the coaches were unified in a predominant opinion mode about the ethics of the practice. Regarding the item that mentioned fabricated evidence in an oration, contestants in 1980 failed to share a common opinion, but the judges agreed that the practice is a definite ethical violation. In the present study, both contestants and judges deplore the practice. Finally regarding the use of a prepared speech for more than one year's competition, all respondents in both studies were strongly in accord that the practice is a definite ethical violation. From this data, it would appear that consensus is easier to achieve on the belief that it is unethical to violate a contest rule, but the sample reveals mixed opinions on the status of a violation of ethical norms.

#### *Your Opinion.*

The "Your Opinion" instrument consisted of seven statements evaluating the ethical quality of certain forensic practices, and an

additional three statements identifying individual events with the three ethical perspectives discussed above. Each of the ten statements was preceded by a Likert-type scale calling for the respondent to check whether he or she strongly disagrees, disagrees, has no opinion or is neutral, agrees, or strongly agrees with the statement. The results are displayed in Table 2, "Your Opinion," which shows the number and percentage of responses given by contestants and judges to each item. A mean score was calculated by assigning a weight of 1 for "strongly disagree" through a weight of 5 for "strongly agree."

Since no statistical tests were performed on this set of data, it is not possible to label which of the findings (if any) represent a statistically significant degree of difference among the varied scores recorded for each item. These data describe the opinions recorded by the contestants and judges, and it may be readily seen that the respondents tended to have stronger opinions on some of the items than others.

On Item 1, over 70 percent of the contestants and nearly 70 percent of the judges DISAGREED with the statement that universal human values constitute a more ethical oration than a more narrowly defined problem area.

On Item 4, nearly 70 percent of the contestants and about 60 percent of the judges AGREED with the statement that it is unethical for a speaker to go much overtime (and less than 20 percent disagreed).

On Item 5, over 60 percent of contestants and over 80 percent of judges AGREED with the statement that it is unethical to come in late in order to speak last in a panel.

On Item 6, 85 percent of contestants and nearly 80 percent of judges AGREED with the statement that fabricating evidence is the worst ethical violation a contestant can commit.

So far, the results obtained on the above four items are consistent with those of the 1980 study.

On Item 7, 94 percent of contestants and 97 percent of judges AGREED that behavior motivated by the desire to gain an unfair competitive edge, such as distracting an opponent, should be considered an ethical violation. In the 1980 study, contestants did not agree so strongly; at that time, 17 percent of them disagreed with the statement, leading to the inference that unfair tactics in competition were acceptable ethical behavior to a substantial number of contestants.

On Item 8, 60 percent of contestants DISAGREED (and only 11 percent agreed) with the statement that the most important ethical rules in rhetorical events are those specified by the contest rules.

TABLE 2: SURVEY OF 1982 AFA NIET CONTESTANTS &amp; JUDGES

## Your Opinion

Item	SD		D		N		A		SA		Blank	X
	1		2		3		4		5			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
1C 98	<u>41</u>	<u>41.8</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>31.6</u>	18	18.3	7	7.1	1	1.0	--	1.9
1J 60	<u>22</u>	<u>34.9</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>34.9</u>	12	19.0	3	4.8	1	1.6	3	1.9
2C 96	14	14.3	16	16.3	22	22.4	33	33.7	11	11.2	2	3.1
2J 60	13	20.6	10	15.9	11	17.5	23	36.5	3	4.8	3	2.7
3C 97	9	9.2	27	27.6	24	24.5	27	27.6	10	10.2	1	3.0
3J 61	15	23.8	9	14.3	20	31.7	14	22.2	3	4.8	2	2.6
4C 98	4	4.1	12	12.2	13	13.3	<u>38</u>	<u>38.8</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>31.6</u>	--	3.8
4J 60	6	9.5	5	7.9	11	17.5	<u>25</u>	<u>39.7</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>20.6</u>	3	3.4
5C 94	7	7.1	9	9.2	16	16.3	36	36.7	26	26.5	4	3.5
5J 61	1	1.6	4	6.3	5	7.9	21	33.3	30	47.6	2	4.1

Fall 1983

87

Item	SD		D		N		A		SA		Blank	X
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
6C 98	1	1.0	10	10.2	3	3.1	<u>30</u>	<u>30.6</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>55.1</u>	—	4.3
6J 62	1	1.6	9	14.3	2	3.2	<u>21</u>	<u>33.3</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>46.0</u>	1	4.0
7C 95	1	1.0	0		1	1.0	<u>24</u>	<u>24.5</u>	<u>69</u>	<u>70.4</u>	3	4.5
7J 63	0	—	1	1.6	1	1.6	<u>12</u>	<u>19.0</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>77.7</u>	--	4.7
8C 96	<u>19</u>	<u>19.4</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>40.8</u>	26	26.5	7	7.1	4	4.1	2	2.3
8J 61	<u>13</u>	<u>20.6</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>47.6</u>	7	11.1	9	14.3	2	3.2	2	2.2
9C 96	1	1.0	5	5.1	18	18.3	<u>52</u>	<u>53.1</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>20.4</u>	2	3.8
9J 62	3	4.8	6	9.5	1	1.6	<u>29</u>	<u>46.0</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>36.5</u>	1	4.0
10C 97	5	5.1	16	16.3	25	25.5	<u>26</u>	<u>26.5</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>25.5</u>	1	3.5
10J 59	3	4.8	8	12.7	11	17.5	<u>27</u>	<u>42.9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>25.9</u>	4	3.3

N: Combined scores equal to or exceeding 50% agreement or  
 C = 63 disagreement are underlined.  
 J = 98

On that item, 68 percent of judges also DISAGREED.

On Item 9, over 80 percent of both contestants and judges AGREED that the most important ethical rules to apply to the rhetorical events are those related to educational and scholarly standards. (This wording improved on the 1980 study, which included an unacceptable phrase, "The only ethical standards to apply..." In the 1980 study, this exclusivity caused the respondents to split their opinions much more evenly.)

On Item 10, over 50 percent of both contestants and judges AGREED with the statement that a rhetorical forensic event should be regarded as rhetoric first and a contest second. This level of agreement is much lower than for Items 8 and 9, though still a majority of the opinions expressed.

Only on two items on the present study was there a relatively even spread of opinion across the Disagree/Agree scale:

On Item 2, about as many agree as disagree with the statement that it is more ethical for an orator to propose a specific solution to a problem than simply to analyze a problem without offering a solution. Likewise,

On Item 3, opinions were divided on the statement that it is more ethical for an extemporaneous speech to provide an unambiguous answer to the question than one which does not.

When interpreting these results, it should not be concluded that true consensus or unanimity was achieved on any of the items, with the possible exception of Item 7 which dealt with the unethical nature of contestant behavior motivated by a desire to gain an unfair competitive edge. On all other items, there was measurable opposition to the majority opinion; on some items, anywhere from 10-30 percent chose the "No Opinion, or Neutral" response. All of the statements consist entirely of value judgments and opinions subject to individual interpretations, so diversity among responses is more to be expected than consensus.

In the present project, respondents were invited to write comments to qualify or explain their answers to any of the items on either survey questionnaire. There were many written comments, but almost all were directed toward certain items in the "Your Opinion" instrument, reported as Table 2. Those who took advantage of the opportunity to include open ended comments were almost all among the group of respondents who marked their opinion as either strongly disagree, disagree, or neutral. Moreover, they were almost always in the minority position, except on Item 1 where disagreement was the majority opinion.

Because some of their comments may shed light on the subject of the ethical views of the respondents to the survey, it is relevant

to examine them. Table 3 shows the distribution of written comments according to which items were questioned as ethical matters, and also how the respondents marked their opinions on the items in question.

TABLE 3: Respondents Questioning Definition of Item as Ethical Issue

		Your Opinion						
Item	Total	SD	D	N	A	SA	Blank	
1C	10	4	2	4	0	0	0	
	21							
1J	11	5	1	3	0	0	2	
2C	8	3	1	3	1	0	0	
	21							
2J	13	3	3	4	1	0	2	
3C	11	2	0	5	1	0	0	
	19							
3J	8	3	1	3	3	0	1	
4C	4	2	0	2	0	0	0	
	12							
4J	8	1	1	2	2	0	2	
5C	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	2							
5J	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	
6C	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	0							
6J	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
7C	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	0							
7J	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
8C	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	4							
8J	4	0	2	1	1	0	0	
9C	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	2							
9J	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	
10C	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	
	3							
10J	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	
					J	4		
Questioned But No item Identification:						6		
					C	2		

Notice that Items 1-4 inspired the most verbal feedback. Regarding this group of items, one respondent wrote, "Questions of wisdom, skill, audience analysis and adaptation, are not specifically ethical questions." Some said that contestants who employed the hypotheti-

cal behaviors mentioned might be stupid, but not unethical.

Items 8-10 also inspired a few comments. These items were the broadly worded statements of ethical perspective most applicable to forensic activities. Typically, the comments made the point that it is difficult or impossible to rank order a hierarchy of ethical perspectives; they also commented that existing tournament rules, ethical codes, etc., are too ambiguous to apply to these items with any precise meaning. One comment compared an ethical code for forensics with a set of parameters for an NDT debate resolution, as to whether it should be binding or merely advisory.

More detailed discussion of the survey responses and the accompanying open-ended comments by respondents follows in the next section of this article.

### DISCUSSION

As in the 1980 study, the items selected for both instruments were designed to survey opinions about the ethical qualities of behavior within forensic activities. The items reflect each of the three ethical perspectives or contexts discussed in the opening section of this report, which include:

1. Items relating to an ethic based on following the rules of the contest;
2. Items relating to an academic or scholarly code of ethics; and
3. Items relating to a view of the ethics of rhetoric generally.

As an initial observation, we should note that there is apparently a major discrepancy between the preferred ethical perspectives the respondents *say* they favor, and the evaluations they attach to specific contestant behaviors that stem from those ethical perspectives.

Recall that on the second instrument, "Your Opinion," Items 8, 9, and 10 describe the three ethical perspectives. These items are repeated here, along with the respondents' ratings of them:

8. The most important ethical rules to apply to the rhetorical events are those related to specific contest rules. (Some 60 percent of contestants and 68 percent of judges DISAGREED; overall, less than 20 percent agreed with this perspective.)

9. The most important ethical rules to apply to the rhetorical events are those related to educational and scholarly standards, e.g., plagiarism and original research. (Over 80 percent of both contestants and judges AGREED.)

10. A rhetorical forensics event should be regarded as rhetoric first and contest second. Topic, supporting material, and all other rhetorical choices should be aimed at enhancing the life of the individual, with the more significant considered as the more ethical,

and vice versa. (Over 50 percent of both contestants and judges AGREED; less than 25 percent disagreed.)

At face value, then, we could conclude that the respondents overwhelmingly subscribe to an ethical perspective for forensics which is rooted in an educational paradigm; that a majority also favor a view of forensic events as the embodiment of actual rhetoric; and that the respondents reject a contest-oriented ethical perspective by a wide majority. The discrepancy between these stated preferences and the respondent's actual ethical perspectives becomes clear when their opinions of specific contest behaviors are examined.

Although contestants and judges alike reject the ethical perspective rooted in the "contest rules" field in the abstract, they still remain committed to it above all other perspectives when tested in hypothetical situations that arise in competition. The most strongly felt attitudes, and greatest degrees of consensus, were expressed on this survey on the items regarding going overtime, acting out of unsportsmanlike motives, speaking out of turn, using a speech more than one season, using a speech prepared by the coach, and so on. If these behaviors were to be seen in a situation outside a contest or tournament, it is very unlikely that many of us would judge them as being unethical. Yet within the forensic context, judges and contestants feel more intense attitudes about these behaviors than they do about almost any other value judgments stated on the survey. When bound to the situation, the ethical perspective shifts from an idealistic educational viewpoint to the paradigm of the playing field.

This is not to say, however, that the respondents do not apply the academic standards as well. This survey also supports the ethical view founded in educational and scholarly standards. A majority of respondents stated a favorable stance towards this perspective, and they were consistent in agreeing that evidence fabrication is the worst ethical violation a contestant can make, and that plagiarism of a speech is unethical. These standards are fully compatible with a rationalistic philosophy which applies equally well to the scientific lab or to applied technology. Forensic activities place a high premium on logic and empirical models of knowledge formation. In this connection, we do not make the argument that such a stance is not necessarily so much an ethical position as it is a limited theory of learning, though a case could be made along those lines. It is sufficient to note here that this particular theory of learning is most admirably suited to a rhetoric based on reasoning and argument, and it places low importance on intuition, creativity, and non-linear thought patterns. As such, this ethical view (or, if you will, this logical positivist mind set) would place little emphasis on non-linear rhetorical strategies such as dramatism or narrative imagination.

The survey findings do not support a view of forensic events as rhetoric generally, despite the 2-to-1 expression of agreement with such an ethical perspective in the abstract. Consistent with the findings in the 1980 study, even though a majority of respondents agreed with the global statement that "a rhetorical forensic event should be regarded as rhetoric first and contest second," they strongly disagreed with the application that contest orations which treat "positive, universal human values (e.g., world peace) are more ethical than those which deal with narrowly focused problems and solutions (e.g., junior high school football injuries)." The respondents to this survey, as to the earlier survey, were divided over whether an oration or extemporaneous speech meets a higher ethical standard when it provides a solution to the problem under discussion. As we saw in the earlier study, these applications are directly relevant to a consideration of the ethics of rhetoric.

Some respondents added verbal comments to their questionnaires, as reported in Table 3. As mentioned, most of the comments revolved around the "Your Opinion" instrument, especially items 1-4 and 8-10. At this point, we can provide more discussion of the contents of their commentaries.

A few comments were addressed to the purpose of the survey as a whole. John Wallen, one of the coaches who participated in the survey, indicated how clearly he grasped the underlying premises being tested when he wrote, "I seriously think that a major problem area for forensics professionals and participants is how we define unethical behavior, and whether the moral 'ought' question implies (or to what degree it implies) the 'good practice' question, and vice versa."

However, other comments made by respondents indicated either a failure to see the relationship between rhetorical ethical practices and forensics, or conversely, a clear understanding of the principles along with a definite rejection of such a relationship. For instance, one coach wrote, "I see a difference between 'illegal' and 'unethical,' and also between 'ethical' and 'good speaking.' These may co-exist but they are not synonymous." Another coach wrote, "...most of the questions...regard rule violations and differences between poor rhetoric and better rhetoric, but I don't think a poor speech means the speaker is unethical." Likewise, a contestant noted that "...most of these questions are about the quality, not the ethics, of a speech."

Item 10, to which a majority of respondents gave their assent, sets out an ethical perspective which evaluates the quality of a speech as an ethical dimension, with "the more significant considered as the more ethical and vice versa." At the same time, a majority of respondents disagreed with Item 1 in which the point at issue was

whether the more significant should be considered the more ethical. The written comments added by the respondents make explicit the confusion felt over this issue of the relevance of a broader ethical framework for forensics.

Another characteristic of the written feedback in open ended comments is worth noting. Many respondents seemed to feel compelled to construct contextual situations of their own, alternative scenarios, exceptions, and/or mitigating circumstances for the specific behaviors described in one or another of the questionnaire items. For instance, two respondents wrote that it is unethical for a speaker to go much overtime "only if the judge is not keeping time." Two other respondents challenged the researchers to "Define 'much!'" Regarding the item about a speaker coming in late in order to speak last, one respondent wrote that "it is okay if double-entered," and another wrote that it "depends on the tournament rules," implying that it would be rated as unethical if it were against the tournament rules.

Similarly, of the few comments inspired by the first instrument, "Judgement Calls," the respondents geared their remarks toward drawing out fine distinctions not stated in the items themselves. One judge wrote that the coach-written oration is "not unethical for beginners." Two comments said that the extemper's two dozen prepared speeches are not unethical "unless used in a tournament." One contestant offered the interesting comment that the items reflect unethical behavior only for coaches, not for contestants, unless the contestant performs any of the behaviors cited in overt violation of the coach's instructions.

Many of the comments were apparently aimed at explaining why the respondents wanted to avoid labeling behaviors or judgments as being either ethical or unethical. Some of the comments seemed to want to justify behaviors by offering conditions or qualifications that would make the behaviors acceptable. In the main, behaviors were judged as ethical as long as they were permitted under contest rules, or if there were mitigating circumstances related to the competition. As arguments, many of the comments could be used to support the contention that rhetoric as such is amoral, not moral. Therefore, forensics-as-rhetoric is not a viable position upon which to base ethical judgments of contestants' behavior.

#### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the present study replicated those of the earlier survey in practically all respects. The present study extended the findings of the earlier study in that respondents were permitted to incorporate written comments into their answers; and subsequently

those written comments were submitted to further analysis and interpretation by the researchers.

The study leads to the conclusion that forensic educators and participants share a basic concern for ethics in speech contest events. However, there seems to be a divided opinion over what ethical perspective should be applied to the events, and also over what particular practices in student performance fall outside the boundaries of ethicality.

This survey suggests that forensic participants, contestants and judges alike, are partial to an ethical perspective which views forensics as a contest or game. This suggestion stems more from their views towards situational applications than from their stated preference for a global perspective *per se*. They also favor an educational model in which violations of the rules of rationality equate to ethical violations. They do not have a clear vision of forensic events as actual rhetorical or communicative acts, and they do not apply the ethical perspective that governs responsible, accountable rhetoric to the symbolic actions of forensic participants. Contest rules provide the primary source of ethical guidelines; beyond the prohibition of certain violations such as fabricating evidence, it is difficult to identify specific, particular behaviors that forensic participants would consider as being either ethical or unethical.

One important unstated implication of this finding is that the ethical system in most widespread currency in forensics is punitive but not rewarding. A contestant may be penalized and ostracized for violating a contest rule; but there is no corresponding reward to a contestant for demonstrating an innovative rhetorical behavior in the pursuit of fulfilling what is considered to be a "higher" ethical standard. In other words, violating contest rules can cause you to lose; but employing rhetoric rightly (as defined by the contestant but not the traditional judge) cannot help you to win. Thus, beyond a certain minimal level of competence, there exists little incentive for mastering advanced rhetorical abilities.

Given the results of this study, it is plausible to believe that some judges might have a strong tendency to punish contestants who try to employ a different ethical standard. This situation might easily develop when a contestant deviates from the rationalistic model by using a more subjective, impressionistic, dramatistic mode of persuasion before a judge who insists on a logical, linear problem solving mode. Thus, as stated in the earlier study, it may be counterproductive to attempt to tie a contest behavior to a general ethic of rhetoric. This survey's findings indicate a serious polarization of attitudes toward an ethical system that is not contest-oriented.

Another implication follows from this one. As long as forensic par-

ticipants elevate the competition ethic over any other, the forensic community remains vulnerable to charges of irrelevancy. In competition, winning provides the ultimate justification for behavior. This rationale may appeal to a student government finance committee, but it is several steps removed from the educational aims of the departments of speech communication that support forensics as a program rather than as a student activity. This study indicates that for most participants, contestants and judges alike, the primary rationale for forensics is to develop excellence in contest techniques, not necessarily excellence in rhetorical skills. Stated in this way, it is only a short step to the question, why should any academic department want to support forensics?

The answer, for those of us among forensic educators who are committed to the worth of forensic programs, is to re-evaluate our attitudes towards the behaviors we teach our students in pursuit of excellence in the forensic events. The object of the re-evaluation must be to measure how closely our practices are aligned with the aims and goals of our educational mission. If coaches and contestants do not believe that training in rhetorical excellence should take priority, it is a safe assumption that many departments of speech communication do.

So our recommendations echo those we made in the study which this one replicates. The codes of ethics we legislate and enforce should go beyond rules to make tournament administration more convenient and efficient. If educational paradigms dictate our practice, then more educational objectives for rhetorical training than simply telling the truth and crediting one's sources should be incorporated into the codes. Further development of forensic activities should be pursued in convention programs and seminars during tournaments. The idea of a judging philosophy statement should be explored. Other measures should be taken to align forensic activities more closely with the curriculum, to communicate these interfaces to the coaches and contestants, and to implement them (whether through enforcement sanctions or through organization development techniques).

The result of an honest self-study must be a willingness to reform where reforms are indicated. If the contest orientation is inherently the most compelling motive for participants, at the least we must make sure that the contests we sponsor reflect the rhetorical skills we purportedly teach. Then, and not until then, will forensic programs have grounds for claiming to be an educational laboratory for training students to present their arguments in a variety of modes to a variety of audiences.

# The Abuse of Evidence In Persuasive Speaking

ROBERT L. FRANK\*

On April 27, 1981, six students emerged from a field of 160 contestants as finalists in the Persuasion section of the National Forensic Association's "I.E. Nationals." The tournament drew participants from over 120 colleges and universities across the nation. What follows is a report on the abuse of evidence by the nation's top six speakers. A comparison of the claims made by the speakers with original source documentation reveals a pattern of fabrication, distortion and deception of disturbing proportions.<sup>1</sup>

Three distinct ethical problems will be discussed: (1) the problem of sheer fabrication—fabrication of both sources and data; (2) the problem of source deception—that is, tactics used to deceive the listener as to the true source of evidence; and (3) the problem of plagiarism.

## FABRICATION

Fabrication of evidence—both sources and data—in these speeches was much more common than one might expect.

*Source Fabrication.* "Source fabrication," means either (1) the speaker attributed data to a wholly non-existent source, or (2) the speaker attributed data to a source that does exist but does *not* contain the information claimed.<sup>2</sup>

How widespread was the problem of source fabrication? Of the six speakers, four resorted to fabrication of at least one source cited in the speech. Of a total of 58 source citations, both complete and in-

---

\**The National Forensic Journal*, 1 (Fall 1983), pp. 97-107. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Speech Communication Association Convention, Louisville, Kentucky, November, 1982.

ROBERT L. FRANK is Director of Forensics and Assistant Professor of Speech at Berry College, Mt. Berry, Georgia 30149.

<sup>1</sup>These six speeches were tape-recorded and the tapes were transcribed in order to obtain the manuscripts used in this analysis. All speakers were contacted by registered letter requesting their assistance in locating sources that could not be found. Three of the six speakers responded to the specific inquiries raised in the letter to them.

<sup>2</sup>No attempt is made to distinguish those instances of fabrication that were "accidental" from those that were "deliberate."

complete, 13 were found to consist of fabrications. In several instances, the data or quote attributed by the speaker to Source "B" could be found word for word in Source "A," a source cited elsewhere in the speech. Thus, on the heels of a quote from *U.S. News and World Report*, Speaker 2 offered a quote attributed to the *Boston Herald American*. The second quote, however, never appeared in the *Herald American*; instead it came from the same *U.S. News* article the speaker had just cited.

Speaker 3 was considerably bolder in the art of fabrication. In an attempt to demonstrate the scope of the problem of acid rain, the speaker declared, "Acid rain levels in California, according to [Gene] Likens [of Cornell University] are ten time those of a quarter century ago." When this statistic did not show up in any of some twenty-odd articles written on acid rain by Professor Likens, I sent him a transcript of the speech; he replied in a letter, "As far as I know, I have never made such a claim in writing."<sup>3</sup>

Undoubtedly, the greatest amount of fabrication was committed by Speaker 4. Of a total of thirteen pieces of evidence used in the speech, eight appear to have been derived from fabricated sources.<sup>4</sup> The speech contains four direct references to "John Fentel, author of the book, *Estate Planning*." No such authority exists. The speaker offered a definition of "probate" attributed to *Black's Law Dictionary*. Neither the Fourth Edition (1957), the Fourth Edition, Revised (1968), nor the Fifth Edition (1979) of Black's offers a definition

---

<sup>3</sup>This particular speech contained no less than six additional pieces of evidence that simply could not be verified, most of it unattributed. One unverifiable source attribution, however, illustrates how the problem of fabrication may be more extensive than those instances that can be firmly documented. At one point, the speaker remarked: "The Canadian government's own studies confirmed that at least one species of trout is extinct from rain acidification, and studies at the University of Stockholm, Ohio State University, and the University of Oslo concur." One Canadian study apparently *did* report the *possible* extinction of one species of brook trout; this Canadian study is footnoted in an article in the *Environmental Law Reporter* that appeared to be the prime source for most of the speaker's data. To me, the probability that Ohio State or the Universities of Stockholm or Oslo have conducted studies on Canadian brook trout is very low. This gratuitous source attribution might fall under the category of "probable fabrication."

<sup>4</sup>Of the remaining four pieces of evidence, one consists of an unattributed "factual" illustration that, although highly improbable, cannot be proven to be a fabrication; one is a quote by an authority whose name and credentials are incorrectly cited, the quote itself twice-removed from its original source; one is a statement attributed to a book, although probably taken from statements made by the author in an appearance on a TV show; and one — and only one — appears to be actually and accurately drawn from an existent source cited by the speaker.

that begins to approximate that attributed by the speaker.<sup>5</sup>

The speaker's "definition" is immediately followed by the statement, "John Kellogg, author of the American Bar Association's publication, *Probate and Property*, indicated that as of last June, more than 73% of all the estates in this country end up going through probate court." There are four problems with this statement:

1. John Kellogg is *editor* of the *Probate and Property* Newsletter;
2. As editor, Mr. Kellogg has written little, if anything for *Probate and Property*;
3. No issue of the *Probate and Property* Newsletter during the years 1979-1981 contains any such figure;
4. Mr. Kellogg not only denies ever having written the above — anywhere; he stated in a phone conversation that, given available data, he does not even know how one could arrive at such a figure.

This fabrication is followed by a misattribution. The speaker attributes a description of the probate process to a Judge Walter P. Dahl of the Cook County court system in Chicago. It turns out that Judge Dahl appeared with Norman F. Dacey, an author also quoted extensively by the speaker, on the *Phil Donahue Show*.<sup>6</sup> It was Dacey who gave the description of the probate process, not Dahl.

These last few fabrications were at least remotely connected to an existent source; not so with some of this speaker's other fabrications. One of the more convincing statistics attempted to prove that the assets of the deceased were frozen for long periods of time during probate. The speaker averred: "According to the 1979 *Law Board Review*, more than 110,000 estates will have to set in probate court for over two years time period, because of improper planning and mismanagement." No such *Review* exists.

Speaker 5 cited more sources than any of the six speakers. Four separate sources cited did not contain the data attributed to them. Curiously, in all but one instance, the data falsely attributed to the given source was discovered in other sources cited elsewhere in the speech. One example will suffice. Like Speaker 4, Speaker 5 pre-

---

<sup>5</sup>The speaker told his listeners: "*Black's Law Dictionary* defines probate as checking to see that your will, or let's say your parents' will, is authentic." Both the Fourth Edition (1957) and the Fourth Edition Revised (1968) of *Black's* define "probate" as follows: "Originally, relating to proof; afterwards, relating to proof of wills. The act or process of proving a will." The additional definitions given stray even further from the speaker's definition. The Fifth Edition (1979) offers a revised definition: "Court procedure by which a will is proved to be valid or invalid . . ."

<sup>6</sup>*Donahue Transcript* #07610, July 16, 1980, p. 21.

ferred authoritative definitions: "According to Kathryn J. Bordicks, in *Patterns of Shock*, shock is sluggish or failed circulation to tissues and vital organs." Neither edition (1965 or 1980) of Nurse Bordicks' *Patterns of Shock* contains this definition. However, one *can* find this definition of shock, work for word, in a *Life* magazine article by Hillary Johnson, the latter cited later in the speech for information she does *not* provide in her article; although, the listener can find the information attributed to Miss Johnson in yet another source that is cited in the speech.

As for the other two speakers, no source fabrication can be documented. Speaker 1 managed to persuade the judges without any complete sources citations; Speaker 6 used so many nebulous citation ("a study in Philadelphia revealed") that it is impossible to verify his "sources" without his cooperation, which has not been forthcoming. Thus, four of the vague source references remain in the category, "Source Still Undetermined."

*Data Fabrication.* As one can see from some of the above examples, source fabrication was not always accompanied by data fabrication. Only two speakers invented facts and quotations to go along with their falsely attributed sources. Speaker 3's Liken quotation simply does not exist. On a smaller scale, the speaker had a habit of adding details that one does not find in the source cited.

One illustration will suffice. Compare the speaker's text with the text of his attributed source:

SPEAKER	SOURCE
<p>Weststone goes on to say the greatest danger from increasing acidity in rain is that water from acidified sources can activate previously inert toxic metals in our water pipes. Such metals include lead, cyanide, manganese, and arsenic. Sadly, almost every water system in the country uses pipes with traces of these inert toxic metals in them.</p>	<p>In addition, metals present in the environment but chemically unavailable, such as aluminum, iron, mercury, and lead, can be 'mobilized' by acid rain and snow in quantities sufficiently toxic to poison plants absorbing the metals through their roots, and affect fish as well. . . A related problem is that drinking water from acidified sources may mobilize toxic metals present in the water and thereby threaten human health.<sup>7</sup></p>

---

<sup>7</sup>Gregory Wetstone, "Air Pollution Control Laws in North America and the Problem of Acid Rain and Snow," *Environmental Law Reporter*, Vol. X, No. 1, January, 1980, p. 10 ELR 50002.

First of all, the speaker's source does not include manganese, cyanide, or arsenic in his litany of "metals" (cyanide is not a metal); and, secondly, the speaker's source does not indicate that "every water system in the country uses pipes with traces" of these metals. Finally, it is difficult to see how one justifiably translates "A related problem is ..." to "... the greatest danger ... is ..." It is certainly not difficult, however, to see the persuasive force of these added details.

Not surprisingly, the oration by Speaker 4 contained the greatest amount of data fabrication. The opening illustration about a widow who lost "her home and more than \$20,000" to the probate process proved to be an unverifiable and highly improbable story; neither he nor I can verify the closing quotation (he can't remember where he got it); all of the other statistics, save one, were fabricated.

#### SOURCE DECEPTION

A tendency to keep ultimate sources hidden from the listener was evident in all six speeches. This practice took several forms.

*Undisclosed Sources.* Three speakers relied heavily on sources that were never cited in the speech. In five out of the six speeches, a major undisclosed source was discovered.

Speaker 1 succeeded in keeping listeners in the dark regarding sources. Throughout the speech there are no complete source citations at all. There appear four incomplete source citations, including a reference to "a 1979 report of the National Institute of Neurological Disorders;" the actual report was one of twelve lengthy documents on research strategy published in 1979 by the National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Stroke.<sup>8</sup> But this report was not the speaker's source. Rather, the speaker obtained this reference from a handwritten note on an interoffice memo compiled and written by Abbey Meyers, Vice-President of the Tourette Syndrome Association.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, a vast majority of the

---

<sup>8</sup> NINCDS, *National Research Strategy for Neurological and Communication Disorders*, NIH Publication, No. 79-1910, p. 42.

<sup>9</sup>*Analysis of the Need for New Drug Development and Proposed New Drug Legislation*. Prepared by: Abbey Meyers, 1978. Mrs. Meyers is the chief spokesperson for the Tourette Syndrome Association. (Tourette Syndrome is a rare neurological disorder characterized by involuntary tics, jerking, and vocalizations.) After completing this nine-page typed document, Mrs. Meyers discovered the NINCDS report. She then went back and hand-wrote the data from the report on page 5 before sending it to state and local chapter personnel. Curiously, on her memo, Mrs. Meyers incorrectly dated the NINCDS source "1978"; somehow, the speaker managed to "correct" the date error for the speech.

data used by the speaker can be found in fact sheets, newsletters, and interoffice memos produced by Mrs. Meyers and the Tourette Syndrome Association. Yet, although Mrs. Meyers is quoted several times throughout the speech, none of these sources was overtly cited by the speaker.<sup>10</sup>

Speaker 6 was equally adept at concealing the primary source. A total of ten pieces of evidence in the body of the speech were used to indicate the existence of a problem. Seven of these pieces of evidence were actually taken from one primary source that was never cited in the speech, a *Chicago Tribune* feature series on the speaker's subject. Instead, the speaker merely cited authorities who were originally cited by the *Tribune* reporters in their articles.

The last speaker who drew heavily — albeit inaccurately — from an undisclosed source was Speaker 4. What little there was in the speech that was not pure fabrication had been derived largely from the text (transcript) of a *Phil Donahue Show*, a source never mentioned in the speech.

*Pseudo-citations:* It is not uncommon to find a single article in *Psychology Today* that contains references to a dozen or more studies. For example, one study cited in the *Psychology Today* article may be a journal article by Princeton psychologists "Schmidlapp and Schnortz." When a speaker locates the *Psychology Today* article, *Psychology Today* might be considered his primary source and the "Schmidlapp and Schnortz" article cited therein would be considered his secondary source. When a speaker attributes his information to "Schmidlapp and Schnortz" *without* also citing his primary source, the *Psychology Today* article, the speaker is resorting to the use of a "pseudo-cite." The pseudo-citation is a clever device by which a speaker can intimate that he has researched a dozen sources when he has actually researched only one.<sup>11</sup>

Of the total fifty-eight source citations in the six speeches, both complete and incomplete, fourteen source cites consisted of pseudo-cites. That is, nearly one-fourth of the source cites consisted of secondary sources never identified as such.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup>This also explains several of the speaker's minor factual errors. Except for one, these errors in fact can be traced to Mrs. Meyers' communications.

<sup>11</sup>This is not to deny that there might be occasions where pseudo-cites are used by a speaker without any attempt to deceive. The ethics of this practice are discussed in a later section of this paper.

<sup>12</sup>One critic of an earlier version of this paper wondered, "How do you know the speaker did not research the primary sources? Perhaps they did, and *that* is why there is no mention of the secondary sources." (The critic is using the terms "primary" and "secondary" in their conventional senses.) This question can really only be answered on a case by case basis. One exam-

Only one speaker refused to resort to the use of pseudo-cites. That speaker, however, discovered yet another approach to obtaining two sources for the price of one, "source-splitting." Here the speaker divides the details that identify the source into two parts. She attributes one fact in one part of the speech to one part of the source and later attributes another fact to the second part. Thus, during the first minute of the speech, Speaker 5 reported that "According to the 1980 *Journal of Trauma*, accidents are the third leading cause of death in the U.S. as a whole." One sentence later she noted, "In fact, Dr. David R. Boyd, Director of the U.S. Division of Emergency Medical Services said that shock is the number one killer in people under the age of 45." Actually, both "facts" derive from the same *Journal of Trauma* article by Dr. Boyd. This particular speaker managed to split three sources, thus creating the appearance of citing six independent sources for information actually derived from only three.<sup>13</sup>

### PLAGARISM

Plagiarism was evident in only one of the six speeches. In this instance, Speaker 2 plagiarized extensively. Following the statement of the thesis are ninety-two lines of text that function to describe the problem portion of the problem-solution speech. Forty-three of those ninety-two lines consist of whole phrases, sentences and paragraphs lifted word for word from a single unattributed source. In short, a free lance journalist by the name of Blake Fleetwood literally wrote nearly half of the substantive portion of this student's speech.

To demonstrate the nature of this plagiarism, examine a single passage from the text:

In the summer of 1979, two IRS agents demonstrated their power of seizure in a *brutal display* when they *smashed in the windows of Stephen and Mona Oliver's Volkswagen*, and proceeded to *drag the couple* out of the

---

ple might explain my methodology here. Speaker 6 quoted a Dr. Phillip Lee, citing only his qualifications. The quote appeared in a *Chicago Tribune* article that was never cited. Two phone conversations with Dr. Lee's secretary, who checked with Dr. Lee between calls, confirmed that the quote was the product of an interview by Dr. Lee with the *Tribune* reporters. Since the speaker's ultimate source (the *Tribune*) was not cited, I categorized the Lee citation a "pseudo-cite."

<sup>13</sup>Speaker 5 cited more sources, complete and incomplete cites, than any other speaker. She had a total of 15 cites.

car and through *the broken glass*. *The IRS assessed them \$4,700 for their 1977 taxes without giving a reason and seized their car. The frightening thing about the incident is that the agents were acting completely according to the law. They can take anybody's property, any time, and it's up to you to prove they're wrong.*

Speaker 2 did not attribute any of this information to a source. Yet every word that is *italicized* is lifted directly from the *Saturday Review* article by Blake Fleetwood. Both the substance and the form of expression belong to Fleetwood.

#### SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

*Summary.* For the purposes of this study, a "complete source cite" consisted of a source identification that would enable a researcher to quickly locate the referenced material; usually this meant simply the title of a book and the name of an author or simply the name of a journal and the year it was published. An "incomplete source cite" typically consisted of an author's name and credentials. If the source identification data *appeared* to qualify as a complete cite, yet obviously consisted of a pseudo-cite, this source was classified as "incomplete."

Using these operational definitions, there are a total of 58 source citations in the six speeches studied. Eighteen of these consist of complete source citations; six citations involve repetition of one or more of these eighteen situations; thirty-four are incomplete citations. Of the total of fifty-eight citations:

- a) 13 consist of fabrications
- b) 14 consist of pseudo-cites
- c) 6 constitute instances of source-splitting
- d) 8 remain in the category unverified or unverifiable

Only seventeen citations appear to be valid, accurate and free from the appearance of deception.<sup>14</sup>

Fabrication of facts and quotes, regardless of source attribution, appear to occur on a much smaller scale. Most of this fabrication is confined to one speech. There are at least eight fabricated "facts" and "quotes" in this speech. It cannot be said with certainty this is the full scope of data fabrication in all six speeches, since at least

---

<sup>14</sup>Several pseudo-cites turned out to be fabrications; thus, there is some overlap between these two figures.

twenty-six pieces of evidence remain in the category "Source Still Undetermined." Eight of these twenty-six pieces of evidence are linked to sources that cannot be located or verified. For example, one source attribution turns out to be the product of an interview; the interviewee denies ever making the claim attributed to him during the interview with the student. Nonetheless, because of the fallibility of human memory, the speaker's attribution remains unverifiable.

Finally, the problem of plagiarism was confined to a single speech. No further evidence of plagiarism was discovered.

*Implications.* While no coach of intercollegiate forensics will deny that fabrication and plagiarism constitute serious ethical breaches, many will contend that the use of pseudo-cites and source-splitting are perfectly acceptable practices. "There is an assumption here that an oral style demands as much documentation as the written style," wrote one critic of an earlier draft of this paper. Another critic contended that it was not appropriate to apply the standards of scholarly documentation used in a journal like the *Journal of the American Forensic Association* to a persuasive speech. I would agree with this claim; I would likewise agree that a speech requires less complete documentation than a term paper or journal article. Nevertheless, I find it difficult to believe that those judges whose rankings placed Speaker 6 in the final round at Nationals would have ranked this speaker quite so highly in earlier rounds had they known that seven out of his ten pieces of evidence used in developing the "problem" portion of his problem-solution speech came from a single source (the *Chicago Tribune* feature series). One hopes that in rendering their final verdict that judges take into consideration the quantity and quality of logical proof, and this judgment surely incorporates perceptions of the apparent scope and depth of research evident in the speech. To the extent that a judge is led to conclude that evidence in a speech is drawn from ten or more different sources, whereas it is drawn from only one or two in actuality, that judge has been deceived.

But is this deception morally objectionable? Let us say that a feature-writer for a local newspaper uses seven quotations by authorities in his article on a given subject. Five of the seven quotations were culled from a single obscure government report never mentioned by the writer. Few would question the ethics of the reporter's failure to "properly" document the quotations. Yet, this reporter is not participating in a contest in which the judging criteria include implicit or explicit evaluations of the scope and quality of his research. The reader of the feature who is deprived of ultimate

sources for these quotations can simply qualify or even suspend judgment. It is simply a matter of deciding how much credibility to ascribe to the evidence and, hence, the conclusions. Of course, when it comes to deciding how much credence to grant the ideas and evidence in a speech, a judge could do the same thing. He could decide to withhold or qualify his judgment. Nevertheless, the judge must make another type of decision. He must decide who did the better job of persuading. This decision entails the subordinate question "who did the better job of documenting his case?" As matters stand now, judges must depend upon the openness and honesty of the speakers in fully revealing their sources in order to render this latter decision effectively. This is so because of the well-established convention that a speaker is not expected to conform to MLA standards of documentation. We expect far less rigorous source citations of speakers than we do of writers.

The point is that, to the extent that a speaker capitalizes on this convention and deliberately misleads the judge into believing that the speech is more broadly researched than it really is, that speaker is engaging in unethical behavior.

The key word here is "deliberately." How will judges ever be able to tell the difference between incomplete source citations and pseudo-cites, between ethical pseudo-cites and unethical pseudo-cites? They probably will not ever be able to do so. Thus, the first suggestion toward a solution is to substantially weaken the convention that permits competitive speakers to submit anorexic documentation. Judges and coaches should demand more complete documentation and penalize its absence. "Stanford psychologist Dr. Schmidlapp reports that .. ." should elicit the demand that the speaker identify the source of this Schmidlapp quote: *Psychology Today*, *New York Times*, where? In addition, judges should be encouraged to ask questions about select source citations after the speech if they feel the need to.

The more serious abuses of fabrication and plagiarism are probably more difficult to curb. Coaches could be of enormous help in this regard, merely by spot-checking their speakers' research, asking to see photocopies of evidence or note cards. Some of the source fabrication revealed in this study *did* appear to result from sheer carelessness in note-taking. Thus, coaches need not feel they are impugning the integrity of their students by requesting to see their documentation.

Lastly, action should be taken at the national level to guard against the type of abuses reported in this paper. The final rounds of all major national tournaments should be tape-recorded and tapes or transcripts made available to researchers who might wish to

examine them for ethical violations. Organizations like AFA-NIET and NFA could encourage such research by contracting studies of the speeches in selected final rounds. (For example, finals in Extemporaneous and Informative Speaking could be examined one year, then Persuasive and Impromptu the next.) Besides inviting study, these organizations should consider instituting severe retro-active penalties for future blatant ethical violations such as the copious fabrication noted earlier in the work of Speaker 4 or the prolific plagiarism of Speaker 2.

# Ethics and Evidence Usage: Current 'Codes' in Individual Events

SHERYL A. FRIEDLEY\*

John Dewey in the 1920's suggested that moral rules in America were like castles built in air and had little contact with the affairs of everyday life. "What we need," Dewey said, "is to have these moral principles brought down to the ground, through their statements in social and psychological terms . . . . All the rest is mint, anise, and cumin."<sup>1</sup>

## *Introduction*

In general, Americans in the 1980's appear to be more concerned than ever with the issue of "ethics" and, as John Dewey stated, the need to have ethical principles "brought down to the ground." This surge of interest in studying moral behavior has led to the development of courses in ethical behavior as well as the development of more explicit codes of conduct in business, professional, and educational settings. It seems only appropriate then that we should explore the ethical nature of forensics, specifically, the ethical standards established by the forensic community for use of evidence in individual events competition. For purposes of this review, evidence will be defined simply as

data, consisting of statements of fact or opinion, which may be transformed into proof through the use of reasoning . . . and is usually attributed to a source other than the speaker.<sup>2</sup>

---

\**The National Forensic Journal*, 1 (Fall 1983), pp. 109-117. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Speech Communication Association Convention, Louisville, Kentucky, November, 1982.

SHERYL A. FRIEDLEY is Assistant Director of Forensics and Associate Professor of Communication at George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia 22030.

<sup>1</sup>James Hassett, "Is It Right? An Inquiry Into Everyday Ethics," *Psychology Today*, (June 1981), p. 49.

<sup>2</sup>David A. Thomas, "The Ethics of Proof in Speech Events: A Survey of Standards Used by Contestants and Judges," *National Forensic Journal*, (Spring 1983), pp 1-2.

Evidence of this nature is typically used in the following original speech events found in national competition: persuasive speaking/oratory, informative speaking/expository, after dinner speaking, rhetorical criticism/communication analysis, extemporaneous speaking, and impromptu speaking. These original events usually require the speaker to posit claims which may be supported by evidence attributed to sources other than the speaker. While evidence used to support claims in literature may also be examined, such evidence usage in individual events will *not* be the focus of this article.

#### *Ethical Use of Evidence in Original Speech Events*

Most textbooks which focus on the coaching of individual events address the use of evidence in the original speech events from a "qualitative" rather than an "ethical" perspective. Discussion of evidence usage for specific individual events typically includes a description of the types of supporting evidence available as well as traditional tests of evidence credibility. Discussion of the ethical use of evidence in the original speech events is limited almost exclusively to a discussion of plagiarism. For example, Faules et al. "suggest" that the individual events of extemporaneous speaking and persuasive speaking be evaluated in part by "sure use of supporting material"<sup>3</sup> and note that writing the original speech should be the primary responsibility of the student rather than the coach;<sup>4</sup> the authors provide no clearly-defined guidelines for the ethical use of supporting material in the original speech events. Klopff and Lahmart provide a bit more specificity concerning the ethical use of evidence when they note that "not more than 150 words of quoted material should be used and that direct quotes are set off by quotation marks; plagiarism is forbidden."<sup>5</sup> In both these noted texts on coaching forensics there is no amplification of the term "plagiarism" or the many variations of willful distortion which may be considered unethical for individual events competition. The bulk of evidence usage discussion in these texts focuses on such concerns in debate competition.

While the textbooks on coaching forensics provide little focus on the ethical use of evidence in original speech events, the forensic community as a whole has clearly demonstrated a concern for the ethics issue. The National Developmental Conference on Forensics

---

<sup>3</sup> Don F. Faules, Richard D. Rieke, and Jack Rhodes, *Directing Forensics* (Denver: Morton Publishing Co., 1976), p. 250.

<sup>4</sup>Faules et al., p. 65

<sup>5</sup>Donald W. Klopff and Carroll P. Lahman, *Coaching and Directing Forensics* (Skokie, 111.: National Textbook Co., 1976), pp. 206-207.

at Sedalia brought forensic scholars together for the purpose of identifying common concerns and establishing common goals for the forensic activity. Among several issues addressed, the conferees offered a resolution which introduced the ethical goal of forensics and role of coaches in furthering this goal. The resolution stated the following philosophy:

Forensics should promote adherence to the ethical and scholarly obligation of the advocate, including respect for the integrity of evidence, accurate representation of the ideas of others, and rigorous examination of beliefs.<sup>6</sup>

This resolution specifically encouraged forensic scholars to pursue an understanding of evidence used to make claims in contest speaking (debate and individual events) and urged forensic contestants to present that evidence in an ethical manner. Addressing the issue of evidence usage in both debate and individual events, the Sedalia Conference offered this resolution:

Evidence should be evaluated not by its quantity, but by its quality determined in part by its credibility and audience acceptability. Thoroughness and care must be exercised in finding, recording, and documenting evidence. Advocates should recognize their ultimate responsibility for all evidence they use, whether discovered by them or by others.<sup>7</sup>

The conference report noted that discussion following this resolution focused on the concern for both inappropriate and inaccurate use of evidence. For the most part, the conferees felt that inaccuracies in evidence usage were the result of carelessness or deliberate distortion. Regardless of intent, however, forensic scholars viewed ethical evidence usage as the responsibility of the individual competitor in contest speaking. In addition, the conferees noted that even if the evidence had been commercially reproduced with inaccuracies, the *user*, is still accountable for its ethical consideration in the contest setting.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup>James H. McBath, ed., *Forensics as Communication* (Skokie, 111.: National Textbook Co., 1976), p. 16

<sup>7</sup>McBath, p. 33

<sup>8</sup>McBath.

## EVIDENCE 'CODES' IN INDIVIDUAL EVENTS

Since most forensic textbooks do not address the ethical aspect of evidence usage in original speech events extensively, it seems most appropriate to review the guidelines established by two organizations which offer national competition in these events—the National Forensic Association and the American Forensic Association.

*National Forensic Association Code of Ethics:* The Rules and Ethics Committee of the National Forensic Association proposed an official "Code of Ethics" which was adopted by the organization in Spring, 1979. Although the document represents an attempt to outline ethical guidelines for the individual events speaker, the only section of the code which specifically addresses the use of evidence focuses on the authorship of supporting material. The National Forensic Association codes states the following:

.. . those portions of any research speech which are the ideas or actual words of any other author than the competitor should be credited to the actual author.<sup>9</sup>

While this specific guideline focuses solely on the issue of plagiarism, there is little amplification of the term "plagiarism" or the many variations of willful distortion which may also be considered unethical for contest speaking. Further, the organization offers no specific guidelines for documenting evidence used in the speech; specifically, to what extent source citations should occur in the text of the speech itself. This ethics document governs evidence usage only at "Individual Events Nationals" hosted by the National Forensic Association and the Executive Council of that organization holds the exclusive right to disqualify any student who violates this code.

*American Forensic Association Code of Ethics:* The American Forensic Association Professional Relations Committee recently revised the "Code of Forensic Program and Forensic Tournament Standards for Colleges and Universities." Article II entitled "Competition Practices" outlines perhaps the most detailed set of ethical standards for evidence usage in contest speaking proposed by any forensic organization. This code, published in June, 1982, focuses on *three* major issues: fabrication, distortion, and plagiarism. The revised text outlines the following definitions and guidelines for the contest speaking in both debate and individual events:

---

<sup>9</sup>Report of the National Forensic Association Rules and Ethics Committee, adopted at the National Forensic Association's National Individual Events Tournament, April, 1979.

1. Forensics competitors shall not use fabricated or distorted evidence.
  - A. *Evidence* is defined as factual material (statistics and examples, and/or opinion testimony offered as proof of a debater's or a speaker's contention, claim, position, argument, point or case.
  - B. *Fabrication of evidence* refers to falsely representing a cited fact or statement of opinion as evidence when the material in question is not authentic. Fabricated evidence is so defined without reference to whether or not the debater or speaker using it was the person responsible for fabricating it.
  - C. *Distorted evidence* refers to misrepresenting the actual or implied, content of factual or opinion evidence. Distorted evidence is so defined without reference to whether or not the debater or speaker using it was the person responsible for distorting it. Distortions include, but are not limited to:
    - (1) quoting out of context.
    - (2) misrepresenting the evidence so as to alter its meaning.
    - (3) omitting salient information from quotations or paraphrases. ML A Standards will be considered advisory with respect to this standard.
    - (4) adding words to a quotation which were not present in the original source of the evidence without identifying such an addition.
    - (5) failure to provide complete documentation of the evidence (name of author(s), source of publication, full date, page numbers and author(s) credentials where available in the original) when challenged. Debaters and speakers are expected to be in possession of the forms of documentation listed here at the time they used any evidence which was challenged.
2. In individual events which involve original student speech compositions, (oratory/persuasion, informative/expository, after-dinner/epideictic, rhetorical criticism, impromptu, and extemporaneous or other

similar speaking contests), the speaker shall not commit plagiarism.

- A. *Plagiarism* is defined as claiming another's written or spoken words as one's own, or claiming as one's own a significant portion of the creative work of another.
  - B. A speech in individual events competition is considered plagiarized when the student presenting it was not the principal person responsible for research, drafting, organizing, composing, refining and generally constructing the speech in question.
3. Forensics competitors are expected to do their own research.
    - A. Persons other than the forensic competitor (undergraduate students, graduate students or instructor/coaches) are not to be charged with the responsibility for doing a forensics competitor's research.
    - B. This provision shall not be construed to prevent coaches or assistants from engaging in limited research designed to:
      - (1) teach research techniques
      - (2) provide limited examples of high school quality research
      - (3) identify areas of research which students should pursue, and
      - (4) provide the coach with the working knowledge necessary to function as effective critic with respect to the debate or speech topics being investigated by his/her students.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, this revised code established specific guidelines for governing ethical evidence usage surrounding the issues of evidence fabrication, evidence distortion, and plagiarism. With these guidelines clearly defined, Article V of the code then proceeds to outline the penalties for violators:

3. In instances of evidence distortion and/or fabrication, the judge(s) shall automatically award the decision

---

<sup>10</sup>“American Forensic Association Professional Relations Committee Code of Forensics Program and Forensics Tournament Standards for Colleges and Universities,” *AFA Newsletter*, June, 1982, pp. 12-13.

in the debate to the opposing team and give the offending speaker zero speaker points, noting the violation of the rules of evidence on the ballot as the reason for the judges' decision and points. In individual events, the judge(s) will treat evidence distortion and/or fabrication by giving the offending speaker zero points and by dropping that speaker from the speaker rankings to be assigned at the end of the round. The judge(s) shall note the violation of the rules of evidence on the ballot as the reason for the points and no-rank given.

4. Speakers found guilty of plagiarism will be disqualified from the round in which plagiarism occurred, with zero speaker points and no rank assigned and plagiarism noted on the ballot as the reason for the judge's action.
5. A judge who makes a decision on the basis of evidence distortion, evidence fabrication or plagiarism will immediately report his/her action to the tournament director. The tournament director will, as soon as possible, investigate the incident and determine if the offending speaker should be declared ineligible for further competition, elimination rounds or awards at the tournament. Directors should base such decisions on the severity of the case involved.
6. Tournament directors must report, to the Chair of the PRC, any and all instances of judge decisions granted for reasons of evidence distortion, evidence fabrication or plagiarism. If the Chair receives, in any given academic year, two such complaints involving the same student, the student will be declared ineligible for national competitions or awards sponsored in whole or in part by the AFA for a period of 12 calendar months from the date of the second offense. The student will be informed when notification of the second offense is received. The student has the right to appeal that the penalty should not be imposed, under the appeal procedures outlined in Article IV, Section 4 of the code. Notice of the student's ineligibility for national competitions sponsored by the AFA will appear in the AFA newsletter, with a letter by the AFA President sent to appropriate officials at the offending student's school.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup>AFA Newsletter, p. 14.

Penalties outlined by the American Forensic Association Code of Ethics concerning evidence usage clearly address the student in question and may include implications for the offending student's coach and school. Beyond disqualification from regional and national tournament competition, public notification in the *AFA Newsletter* and to "appropriate school officials" may hold additional ramifications for those who surround the competitor.

#### Conclusion

The growing concern over ethical behavior and specifically the ethical use of evidence in contest speaking is apparent. Thomas R. Nilson in his book *Ethics of Speech Communication* reinforced the ethical obligations of communicators when he wrote the following:

Every act of speech is essentially a social act, influencing the attitudes or behaviors of the receivers. Therefore, rather than attempting to divide communication into moral and nonmoral, we will think of every communicative act as having an ethical component — as carrying some degree of ethical charge. Virtually every act of speech, then, involves an ethical obligation.<sup>12</sup>

For forensic educators there are three specific ethical obligations which become apparent. First, it is the obligation of the forensic community to outline those "ethical guidelines" of the contest speaker in individual events as specifically as possible. Efforts such as those by the American Forensic Association's Professional Relations Committee to define and specify unethical evidence usage as well as outline specific penalties for such ethical violations in the competitive setting should be applauded. Identifying and encouraging positive, appropriate, ethical behavior as well as identifying and discouraging negative, inappropriate, and unethical behavior in individual events competition is essential if we are to educate our speech competitors on ethical issues. Second, individual events educators must be willing to examine the uses of evidence in the competitive setting to assess the extent of ethical abuses. While debate educators have been willing to undertake such study over the years,<sup>13</sup> individual events research in this area has been extremely

---

<sup>12</sup>Thomas R. Nilson, *Ethics of Speech Communication* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1966), p. 12.

<sup>13</sup>See for example Donald Klopff and James C. McCroskey, "Ethical Practices in Debate," *Journal of the American Forensic Association*, (January 1964), pp. 5-7; Robert P. Newman and Keith R. Sanders, "A Study of the

limited.<sup>14</sup> Finally, forensic educators and critics must be willing to hold student competitors accountable for their ethical choices concerning evidence usage. While questions of ethical evidence usage are difficult to confront when suspected violations occur, ethical standards become innocuous if they are ignored. As growth in this activity occurs, a heightened awareness of professional and ethical standards upheld by the organizations which support the activity is essential.

---

Integrity of Evidence," *Journal of the American Forensic Association*, (January 1965), pp. 7-13; Keith R. Sanders, "Toward a Solution to the Misuse of Evidence," *Journal of the American Forensic Association*, (January 1966), pp. 6-10; James A. Benson, "The Use of Evidence in Intercollegiate Debate," *Journal of the American Forensic Association*, (Spring 1971), pp. 260-270.

<sup>14</sup>This author could locate only one such study reported by Robert L. Frank in a paper entitled "Use and Abuse of Evidence: NFA Persuasion Finals, 1981" presented at the Speech Communication Association Convention, Louisville, Kentucky, November, 1982. A revised version of this paper immediately precedes this article.

# 'Winning' Orations? A Study of Select Interstate Oratorical Speeches

CHRISTINA L. REYNOLDS\*

Responses to the word "oratory" have gone through an interesting evolution. During the 4th and 5th centuries B.C., Greek citizens who could speak effectively in legal settings, political arenas, and ceremonial situations were respected and admired. The Greek educational system included specific training in the art of oratory. A similar respect for oratory can be observed in the Roman tradition.<sup>1</sup>

A contemporary conception of oratory and orators still calls up memories of the past: Edmund Burke's calculated and lengthy speeches to the British Parliament, William Jennings Bryan's stirring "Cross of Gold," Winston Churchill's artful address to an entire nation during World War II, and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s expression of his dream for all citizens of our country.

Yet for many of our colleagues who educate students in oratory today, especially those involved in the intercollegiate activity of forensics, a vivid, conflicting vision emerges: Orators' facial expressions are grave and solemn. The subject matter of the oration is always "weighty" — people are dying/being robbed/losing jobs/being deceived/facing gloom and doom. Orators' hands sweep out expressively and the words flow smoothly from their mouths.<sup>2</sup> A vision such as this one has its ramifications in the forensic community. All too often, coaches/judges grimace when they are handed a ballot envelope for an oratory round. The typical response to this situation may very well be "Why are *they* assigning *me* to judge this round?"<sup>3</sup>

---

\**The National Forensic Journal*, 1 (Fall 1983), pp. 119-135.

CHRISTINA L. REYNOLDS is Director of Forensics and a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis 55455.

<sup>1</sup>"A Brief History of Rhetoric," in *Rhetorical Perspectives on Communication and Mass Media* (2nd ed.) Richard J. Jensen, Robert L. Schrag, and Janice E. Schuetz, eds. (Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt, 1980), pp. 1-7.

<sup>2</sup>Formulative version of this description created by Robert L. Scott, in "Oratory," *Contest Speaking Manual* (Skokie, 111.: National Textbook Co., 1964), p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> This response is a synthesized version of that given to the writer by five coaches in response to the question "What is the first thing you think of when you see your name listed on the schematic as a judge for a persuasion round?" Editorial license has been taken in the creation of the synthesis.

It would seem that few educators in the forensic community are pleased with "what is happening" in intercollegiate oratory competition. Many educators express disdain for the speeches given by student orators. The difference between what student speeches "should" be and what they actually "are" becomes a point of contention. To reconcile the two we must have an idea of not only what should constitute a college oration, but also of what the students say in competitive orations and how they choose to say it. Through an examination of a specific group of orations developed for and delivered in competition, this study attempts to discern whether or not students grasp and utilize elements of good oratory in forensic competition.

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

When asked the question "What are the characteristics of a good oration in intercollegiate forensics", most coaches/judges would respond that the speeches should be well structured, argued, supported, and delivered. Texts in the forensic field corroborate those views. Dunham suggests that "in the true sense of the word," an oration "should include ideas, organization, style, and delivery of the finest calibre."<sup>4</sup> The speech should be developed to influence audience attitudes, and emphasis should be placed on adaptation to the specific audience.<sup>5</sup> Scott concurs, stressing meaningful topic choice, "carefully ordered and well-supported ideas," and "grace and precision" in style.<sup>6</sup> Klopff and Lahman point out commonalities in their discussion of what makes a winning college oration: contemporary and problematic subject matter, utilizing experiences that relate to the problem, focused persuasive purpose, and direct address that highlights concrete and vivid content.<sup>7</sup>

The educational nature of the judging/coaching process in forensics suggests that the above consensus of ideas about good oratory is related clearly to students on ballots and in coaching sessions. This does, of course, assume that the ideas in the literature are correct and that these ideas are being communicated to students by coaches and judges. In turn, the student implements such ideas and

---

<sup>4</sup>Robert E. Dunham, "Coaching Individual Events" in *Directing Forensics: Debate and Contest Speaking*, Don F. Faules and Richard D. Rieke, eds. (Scranton, Pa.: Omtermatopma Textbook Co., 1968), p. 232.

<sup>5</sup>Dunham, pp. 232-233.

<sup>6</sup>Scott, pp. 3-23.

<sup>7</sup>Donald W. Klopff and Carroll P. Lahman, "Original Oratory," *Coaching and Directing Forensics* (Skokie, 111: National Textbook Co., 1967), pp. 205-208.

suggestions in the speech-making process and in competition. Yet dissatisfaction with the students' persuasive speeches still exists. What accounts for this paradox? The vast majority of forensic literature on oratory was written by past and present coaches of the event, and it reaches us in new editions that vary little from the original texts. Thus, we must ask whether these ideas are being conveyed to students in coaching sessions and on ballots, and if students are using these concepts in their development of college orations. This study attempts to answer the question of persuasive strategies employed by student orators by analyzing the texts of orations given at the Interstate Oratorical Contest.

#### *Background of the Interstate Oratorical Contest*

The oldest of competitive forensic events in this country is Oratory, or Persuasive speaking. Its birth as an intercollegiate event was in 1874, under the auspices of the Interstate Oratorical Association (IOA).<sup>8</sup> The IOA is composed of approximately twenty state collegiate forensic organizations. The organization's purpose is to conduct an annual competition in Oratory. Participants in the contest are the top two finalists in each of the respective state contests. In this sense, the state competitors represent the member state's oratory participants.

The first Interstate contest was held on February 22, 1874, in Galesburg, Illinois. Students from Wisconsin, Iowa, and the host state were the first entrants. Judges considered excellence of thought, style, and delivery; the person receiving the highest rating was awarded first place and \$100. An annual contest has been held every year since then.

From 1887 through 1936, each state was represented by its best orator. In 1936, the members of the organization decided to hold two divisions — one for men and one for women. This dual division format continued until 1973, when the association voted to return to a single division with each state represented by two orators. Monetary awards continued until 1953, when the membership voted to discontinue the practice.

In 1891, the first *Winning Orations* was published. It consisted of the first and second place speeches for the years of 1874-1890. A second volume was published in 1907. From 1908 until the 1930s, each state or college which sent a representative to the contest was responsible for publishing the speeches. In 1934, the IOA finally

---

<sup>8</sup> The author is indebted to Professor Larry Schnoor, Executive Secretary of IOA, for providing this history of the Association.

took full responsibility for the publication of all orations delivered at the contest. The publication continues today as *Winning Orations*.<sup>9</sup>

As the students compete with their peers in each state to qualify for the competition, Interstate orations may be seen as representative of orations given by students in other forensic competition. Thirteen speeches given at this contest are the focus of this study.

#### *Review of the Literature About Intercollegiate Oratory*

A review of the literature directly pertinent to the study and practice of college oratory reveals a scant, periodic interest in this type of discourse. Most essays concerned with intercollegiate oratory do not examine the discourse itself. Instead, researchers direct their attention toward justifying the worthiness of the activity in forensics and the field of speech communication.

From 1915 through 1919, five articles in the *Quarterly Journal of Speech* focused on intercollegiate oratory; four of these examined the merits of competition, not the facets of persuasive speaking itself. R.D.T. Hollister, in "Common Faults of the College Oration," discussed a need for balance between mental and emotional thought in persuasive speeches.<sup>10</sup>

From the publication of these first essays until 1981, only twelve further ventures into the subject of oratory have appeared. Of these, two essays examine facets of oratory intrinsic to the discourse. James Golden discusses trends in organization, and Hope and Hale survey strategies of speech introductions.<sup>11</sup>

In 1981, the Speech Communication Association published *Dimensions of Argument: Proceedings of the Second Summer Conference on Argumentation*. Nine essays that address the issue of intercollegiate individual events as argument were presented at the conference and published in this volume.<sup>12</sup> The *Dimensions* essays articulate the often overlooked relationship between individual events activity and argumentation theory and pedagogy. This body of re-

---

<sup>9</sup> Publication responsibility lies with the Executive Secretary of the Interstate Oratorical Association.

<sup>10</sup>R.D.T. Hollister, "Common Faults of the College Oration," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 4 (May, 1918), pp. 311-323.

<sup>11</sup>James Golden, "Achieving Excellence in the College Oration," *Speech Teacher* 14 (September, 1965), pp. 184-192; B.W. Hope and J.C. Hale, "The Introduction to the College Oration: Is It 'Speech' or 'Declamation?'" *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 9 (Winter, 1973), pp. 367-370.

<sup>12</sup>*Dimensions of Argument: Proceedings of the Second Summer Conference on Argumentation* (Annandale, Va.: Speech Communication Association, 1981), pp. 295-411.

search also affirms a conception of good oratory as it is expressed by the authors of forensic texts. Accordingly, this study focuses on content-oriented persuasive strategies as manifest in the student orations.

#### METHOD OF THE STUDY

Thirteen speeches given at the IOA contest comprise the sample for this study: they were delivered during a period from 1974 through 1981. These dates were chosen because males and females competed in separate divisions for the 38 years before 1974. The thirteen speeches, published in *Winning Orations*, were chosen for similarity in "subject type;" that is, all of the orations addressed a subject that is subsumed under a common issue, personal and public health. Specifically, these orations speak to human diseases. The fact that thirteen speeches given at the IOA contest over an eight year period share similar subject matter suggests that they are not an uncommon form of persuasive speech in forensic competition.

In order to discover what the characteristics of these competitive orations are and whether they include the elements of good forensic theory, this study begins from a perspective which allows classification of similar strategies and techniques into common genre. Herbert Simons identifies genre as "recurring patterns of rhetorical practice."<sup>13</sup> Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Jameison explain genre as a "constellation of recognizable forms" that are bound together by some explanatory principle; there is an "internal dynamic" present that explains what is going on—processes and relationships—within the discourses." A classification by occasion (forensic tournaments) or intended effect (e.g., to change audience's beliefs, attitudes or actions; to win a trophy) would suggest that competitive orations may be understood from such a perspective. Accordingly, this study examines these thirteen speeches in an attempt to uncover common elements such as re-occurring patterns and strategies that work together to form a persuasive speech. Once these commonalities are isolated, this study discusses the characteristics of those strategies and the relationship between one strategy and another. Finally, this study attempts to discern whether these strategies are constituents of previously discussed conceptions of good oratory.

---

<sup>13</sup>"Genre-alizing About Rhetoric: A Scientific Approach," in *Form and Genre: Shaping Rhetorical Action*, Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jameison, eds. (Falls Church, Va.: Speech Communication Association, 1978), p. 36.

<sup>14</sup>"Introduction," in *Form and Genre*, pp. 9-32.

PERSUASIVE STRATEGIES IN ORATORY: THE DREAD DISEASE SPEECH

A thorough examination of the speeches revealed common elements of structure, claims, and support for claims. The way that students argue in these orations reveals a shared concern with ethos, actuation, and significance, in much the same sense that the intercollegiate debater is concerned with the same in "building" a case.

The thirteen speeches in this sample all address the issue of personal and public health. The subjects of these orations are what have come to be known in forensic circles as "dread diseases." The "dread disease," the student contends, can be cured, or at least decreased in severity and frequency of occurrence. The diseases addressed include: anorexia nervosa, athlosclerosis; infant heroin addiction; hyperkinesis; "obsolete" diseases like measles, diphtheria, mumps and tetanus; food poisoning; colon cancer and diverticulitis; obesity; sickle cell anemia; heart disease; hypertension; and fetal alcohol syndrome. Fetal alcohol syndrome was a popular disease in recent Interstate oratory competition — there are three speeches on this subject in this sample, given at the contest in 1980 and 1981.<sup>15</sup>

*Speech Structure and Claims*

The "problem-solution" organizational pattern is the primary structural strategy of the "dread disease" oration, present in all of the speeches in the sample. The types of claims that students make in the speeches can be understood in light of the predominant organizational pattern. If the student's goal is assumed to be to persuade the audience to accept the existence of a problem, and then to take some sort of action to remedy the problem,<sup>16</sup> the claims that students make throughout the oration should facilitate this goal. In reference to the subject matter, the claims made are both reasonable and effective. Consider the following illustration of claim-making as it is manifest in the speeches studied:

<i>ORGANIZATION</i>	<i>CLAIMS</i>
Statement of the Problem	Disease "X" is a Problem:
Definition	This is disease "X" —its symptoms —its effects on a victim

<sup>15</sup>See Appendix for full list of speeches included in this study.

<sup>16</sup>Many people would argue with the realism of that goal, yet the assumption is justified in light of the chosen organizational pattern.

Scope	Disease "X" —afflicts many people —touches us all in some way
Significance	Disease "X" —costs us lives —costs us money —costs can be lessened by eliminating/curtailing/ controlling disease "X" Disease "X" —can be eliminated/curtailed/ controlled —mechanisms exist to do so —we're not acting to do so, therefore, we should act to eliminate/ curtail/control disease "X"
Statement of Solution	There is a solution to the problem of disease "X":
Action	
Public level	We should act on a public level in this manner
Personal level	We should take these actions ourselves
Visualization	
Positive	Action will have advantages for all of us
Negative	If we do not act, disease "X" will continue to cost us

Notice first that the claims made by the students in the problem section of their speeches are fundamentally declarative; that is, something is the case (disease "X" affects all of us; is curable/preventable/controllable; costs us lives and money). When a student advances the solution to the problem of disease "X," the orientation of the claims shifts to that of policy: If the disease can be eliminated, etc., then we should act in these ways to eliminate it.

The students also present a lack of action as an element of the problem of disease "X". They articulate the steps that we could be—but are not—taking to solve the problem of the disease. The solution of the speech includes specific ways in which we should act and the

benefits we will attain by acting.

Regardless of the specific disease addressed in these orations, the types of claims made by the students are indicative of a common pattern. The organization of the claims just outlined is consistent across the thirteen speeches studied, signifying specific forms of proof appropriate to this rhetorical form. The organizational similarities as seen in the pattern of claim-making represent the students' sound understanding of the interdependence of form and content in speech development. The subject matter is well-suited for persuasive speaking, and it is presented as problematic and meaningful through a common pattern of claim-making.<sup>17</sup>

### *Strategies of Appeal*

Few people would challenge the Aristotelian notion that ethos may be the most effective strategy of persuasive appeal. Yet, as a norm, the credibility facet in intercollegiate oratory appears as either a secondary concern of forensic judges, or of little concern to the orator. Logue finds in her study of orations given at the 1981 AFA National tournament that:

. . . the credibility mode (defined here as personal involvement or authoritative appeals) appears to be undemanded by forensic judges, and likewise, generally not addressed by persuasive speakers. While the speaker's authoritative appeals seem to make little difference in the forensic event, expert evidence appears to be expected. Few speakers ever attempt to state what motivated them to persuade on the topic or whether they themselves are part of their own solution.<sup>18</sup>

If ethos is understood by the audience as the speaker's personal concern, involvement, or authority as demonstrated in an oration, then ethical appeals surface in these speeches in three forms: evidence that takes the form of expert testimony; the orator's involvement with the subject addressed; and personal and public "responsibility" concerning the subject. Like most orations, these speeches are similar to others in their use of expert testimony and appeals for public

---

<sup>17</sup>W. Scott Nobles, "Analyzing the Proposition," pp. 164-165; and Karen Rasmussen and Daniel DeStephen, "Building Cases," pp. 180-181, in *Decision by Debate* (2nd ed.), Douglas Ehninger and Wayne Brockriede, eds. (New York: Harper and Row, 1978).

<sup>18</sup>Brenda Logue, "In What Ways is Argument Applied in the Prepared Speech Events?" *Dimensions*, p. 389.

involvement. While it may be the case that students do not address their personal involvement with the subject in many competitive orations, it is not so in the "dread disease" speech. This study found that the orator's involvement with the subject matter is a prevalent and significant factor in how a student argues for the acknowledgment of the problem of a "dread disease."

*Expert Testimony:* All persuasive speeches in forensics demonstrate a heavy use of expert testimony to support claims and reinforce perceived credibility of the information being offered, as well as that of the speaker. For the students who use expert testimony in "dread disease" speeches, this strategy services to highlight the validity of both the evidence being offered and of the claims being made in the speech. For example, in "Dietmania," Jan Hubbard claims that athlosclerosis is a serious medical condition that develops in chronic dieters. June Hubbard (Jan's sister), an anesthetist who practices in Chicago, is cited by the orator: "In an interview I had recently with Chicago anesthetist June Hubbard, she stated that people who go on crash diets, and who for one reason or another have to have emergency surgery have a higher risk on the operating table than do regular patients."<sup>19</sup> Hubbard continues by noting that athlosclerosis is the cause of the risk, as "the vessel walls [in the patient] eventually enlarge and close off causing a heart attack."<sup>20</sup> The listener infers the validity of Hubbard's information because it is the testimony of one who has direct experience with the disease, an anesthetist who is present at operations where this disease makes its presence known. Notice also that Hubbard implicitly suggests a more personal contact with the problem of the disease by citing a relative who can testify to its dire effects.

Brian Pollard addresses the horrors of a newborn's withdrawal from heroin. In support of his claim that the problem of infant addiction is widespread he says: "In New York City alone, the number of babies born to addicted mothers has risen so sharply that Dr. Leonard Glass, associate pediatrician at Harlem Hospital, uses the word 'epidemic' to describe it."<sup>21</sup> Glass' qualification to speak to the prevalence of this problem is implied by Pollard's statement of the expert's occupation (a pediatrician who treats this disease) and of where he works (Harlem Hospital).

In discussing diverticular disease, Ruth Brenner cites Dr. Neil

---

<sup>19</sup>"Dietmania," *Winning Orations* (Interstate Oratorical Association, 1974), p. 7.

<sup>20</sup>Hubbard, pp. 7-8.

<sup>21</sup>"Infant Addiction," p. 15.

Painter, "the world's foremost authority" on the disease who defines the characteristics of the illness.<sup>22</sup> In "The Silent Killer," Todd Ambs quotes Dr. Theodore Cooper, who speaks to the potential for the control of hypertension.<sup>23</sup> Ambs is careful to note Cooper's occupation: Cooper is the Director of the Heart and Lung Institute. All orators in this sample use expert testimony, both implied and explicitly acknowledged, to validate the assertions they make about the diseases they discuss. The experts all share common background: they are involved in the medical profession as doctors, nurses, directors of prestigious research institutes, etc. The field of medicine and disease mystifies—and often frightens—the layperson. Such a prevalent use of expert testimony in these speeches works for the orator in two ways. It functions to fulfill the orator's need for support of the claims he or she is making about the problem of disease "X" and its solutions, and it provides the listener with information that he or she would not normally have about disease and health. The information is valuable because it increases our understanding of frightening diseases. But more importantly, the information is from someone whom we wish to believe and trust—the medical professional. In relation to the subject matter of these orations, expert testimony is an appropriate and effective method of support; these students use this evidence in an efficient and potent manner.

*Personal Involvement:* What motivates a speaker to address a particular subject can be, and often is, a powerful appeal. For the "dread disease" orator, it may be the most effective strategy. In these orations, a personal involvement with the disease and its effects is claimed often and (unlike orations on other subjects) quite explicitly. Consider the cases in point from this sample: David Keenan was a misdiagnosed hyperkinetic child; Ruth Brenner was acquainted with two women who were victims of colon cancer; Timothy Friedrichsen is a person suffering from obesity; Wendy Fletcher's father died of cardio-vascular disease. The speakers explicitly draw their relationship to the disease, illustrating how the disease affects themselves and those around them. This is a valuable persuasive strategy: the orator's credibility is reinforced in the eyes of the audience because this speech is not "just another oratory in the round;" the subject is personal and meaningful to the speaker.

Claims of personal *motivation* are not explicit in these speeches. Instead, the speakers declare their relationship to the subject mat-

---

<sup>22</sup>"The Essential But Forgotten Ingredient," (1977), p. 72.

<sup>23</sup>*Winning Orations* (1980), p. 47.

ter fairly early in the oration and then interweave through the discourse how they (or their loved ones) were affected by the disease. The strategy works well because the qualification of the speaker to address the issue is established early in the oration; the ensuing arguments that the speaker makes about the subject are understood in a more sympathetic light by the audience/judge who listens. In effect, the strategy encourages a personal response from the audience to both the speaker and the subject.

*Personal/Public Actuation:* Speakers argue for actuation (involvement) on the part of the audience at both the personal and public levels. Though actuation is a common element of most persuasive speeches, the lines of reasoning that call for audience action in "dread disease" orations are distinctive.

Claims concerning the scope and significance of the problem often establish the need for personal and public action. The speaker illustrates that the audience is in some significant manner affected by the existence of the disease, even though the audience member or their loved ones are not physically afflicted with the illness. In his speech on obesity, Friedrichsen argues that the disease is not only pervasive—"one-third, possibly one-half of the nation is overweight, one out of every five Americans is too fat"—but that the disease hits us all where we live, our pocketbooks: "Fat related heart attacks cost American industry 132 million work days last year, with wage losses in the billions."<sup>24</sup> In other words, Friedrichsen illustrates that we are all paying for the effects of obesity. Ambs establishes a similar monetary harm in his oration on hypertension: "A recent major manufacturing study found that on the average, businesses spend over \$300 per employee, per year, for illnesses caused by hypertension."<sup>25</sup>

Establishing significance through statistical inference of a disease's prevalence is often employed by the orators to identify the problem with the audience. The strategy functions as a pre-emption to the "this disease is too obscure; it will not happen to me" argument in the minds of the audience members. The statistics alone may not point to a wide-scale infiltration of the disease in the population, but the orator will do his or her best to suggest the disease's potential for touching the audience. In "A Child is Born," Annmarie Mungo discusses Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS). She suggests the seriousness of the disease's prevalence through her interpretation of particular statistics: "... FAS will affect 5,000 babies this year.

---

<sup>24</sup>"The Great American Fat Race," (1979), p. 21.

<sup>25</sup> Ambs, p. 47.

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcohol conservatively estimates that two of every thousand births show symptoms of FAS, the third largest birth defect in the United States."<sup>26</sup> Mungo gives more impact to the fact that the disease affects 5,000 babies by identifying FAS in terms of frequency of occurrence as a birth defect. Kathy Winnegar uses statistics from the same source in a different manner but for the same reason, to establish the scope and frequency of FAS for the audience: "There are 95 million drinkers in this country. Nine million of them are alcoholics. The National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcohol estimates that 1 of every 500 births show symptoms of FAS, the third largest birth defect in the United States."<sup>27</sup> Winnegar's use of statistics on drinking and the appearance of FAS symptomatically suggest the potential for the disease's scope. Thus, the audience can interpret the problem more intimately; FAS could affect the health of their children or the children of their loved ones, given the prevalence of alcohol consumption in this country. "Dread disease" orators may have a more difficult time finding large numbers to utilize as proof of scope and significance (most diseases are not as wide-spread as income tax fraud or potholes on our highways, for example), but they do a good job of assigning significance to the statistics that are available.

Students also argue for involvement on the part of the audience by appealing to a person's sense of altruism or personal and social responsibility to those affected by these diseases. One of the more blatant instances of this strategy can be seen in Christina Reynolds' oration on Sickle Cell Anemia:

I've been asked, "How does the affect me? This is a disease that predominantly affects blacks." Well, when a tornado ravaged Xenia, Ohio, it didn't affect the majority of us in this room directly, yet the entire nation rallied to Xenia's aid. And, when an earthquake rumbled through Nicaragua, it didn't affect one of us here directly, yet the whole world lent a helping hand. So when a child is afflicted with one of the most devastating biological natural disasters — Sickle Cell Anemia — do we stop short in our concern because it doesn't affect us directly? Can we allow our concerns to be dictated by racial, social, or even ethic boundaries? I hope not.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup>*Winning Orations*, (1980), p. 49.

<sup>27</sup>"Fetal Alcohol Syndrome," (1981), p. 39.

<sup>28</sup>"You Can't Kiss the Pain Away," (1979), p. 83.

Ambs makes the same sort of argument for involvement on the part of the specific forensic audience:

So often, those of us in forensics use persuasive ploys instead of getting right to the heart of the problem. As a result, we tend to perform, instead of persuade. And you in turn as an audience listen but don't hear. *Please*, if you do nothing else today, hear what I'm saying. There are people in this country who are dying because they have high blood pressure and there is not enough being done about it. You could be one of the 11 million Americans who has high blood pressure and doesn't even know it. Don't let yourself or someone that you know become a number on a fatality sheet.<sup>29</sup>

Ambs' strategy of appeal to the audience is explicit. His use of the specific situation in which he speaks (the forensic tournament) is not uncommon in oratory, but it is very prevalent in the "dread disease" speeches. Reynolds pursues the same goal of actuation via social responsibility. She is much more indirect and altruistic in her appeal, and her challenge to the audience is buffered by the natural disaster metaphor, but the strategy is still potent. In effect, Reynolds implies that the audience should feel guilty for not taking action when others are unable to care for themselves. Ambs makes the same implication by pointing to a tendency toward apathy on the part of the persuasive speakers and their audience. This strategy goads the audience into listening to the substance of the speech; the speakers lay responsibility for solving the problem of disease "X" on both themselves and the audience. This is a good strategy to utilize because it does effectively involve the audience.

*Examples and Illustrations:* Unquestionably, examples and illustrations are the most common types of evidence used to support claims in these thirteen orations. Hypothetical examples are rarely used by the student, but the supporting material that does appear in every speech is what many forensic coaches/judges have termed the "little Mary Jane" story:

The cut Bill received from Jenny's plastic toy was so tiny that he simply cleaned it with an antiseptic. Five days later his arms and legs felt sore, his neck and jaw were

---

<sup>29</sup> Ambs, p. 48.

stiff. Soon Bill's face became grotesquely twisted. Finally, in the throes of a violent spasm, his spine snapped in half. Jenny's Dad was dead . . . not of an exotic, incurable disease . . . no, Bill died of tetanus.<sup>30</sup>

We are, as humans, afraid of pain, and the dread disease orator takes full advantage of this aspect of our psyche. In every speech we are offered the worst that the disease can inflict on its victims. Case studies such as this one attach a real human element to statistics about the disease's prevalence and descriptions of the disease's effects. If the case studies are not vivid enough, a more objective illustration of how the disease progresses is usually implemented as well:

This is a heroin baby. Born addicted and premature of an addicted mother. It's only nine minutes old and within minutes will start the pains of heroin withdrawal. The symptoms are unmistakable. The baby is racked with a peculiar coarse tremor. Its arms twitch, its knees jerk convulsively toward its chest. Its tiny hands claw at its face and its arms until they are raw. And all the while the baby cries with a tense high-pitched shriek.<sup>31</sup>

Every oration in this group had at least two such types of visualization in the text. They appear at particular places in the organization of the speech: the introduction, the definition of what disease "X" is, and the visualization step. Rarely are examples and illustrations such as these used alone. If one case study is presented, another is sure to follow within the next few sentences. Accordingly, the stories tend to build in severity or vividness. It is also common to find a "dread disease" speech, like many other college orations, introduced through a victim-specific example. But the audiences of "dread disease" speeches then hear the "continuing saga" of the effects of the disease on the victim throughout the speech. This particular tact also involves concluding the speech with the end of the victim's story or, sometimes, life.

The heavy use of examples and illustrations in these speeches is effective because it works in several ways. Illustrations that articulate the disease's symptoms and course provide a clear, tangible picture of the oration's subject matter; the reality of the disease is driven home to the audience. Case studies that assign names to the

---

<sup>30</sup>Barbara Preston, "Time to Start Again," (1975), p. 69.

<sup>31</sup>Pollard, p. 15.

victims also support the reality of the problem in human terms, thus statistics become more than just numbers in a speech. When that case study victim is a parent, relative, or friend of the speaker, the audience cannot help but to acknowledge the saliency of the issue to themselves as well.

The aforementioned characteristics of subject matter, speech organization, claims made, and strategies of supporting those claims are distinguishing elements of the "dread disease" college oration. The culmination is that these strategies do "work" for the orator; they are common across the thirteen speeches. Interestingly, seven of these thirteen orations were successful, in the competitive sense, at the contest: all seven made semi-final rounds; three advanced to the final round in their respective years.

#### DISCUSSION

The "dread disease" oration involves interesting and disturbing subject matter and an argumentative organizational pattern that is well-adapted to both the subject matter and the audience. The speakers make heavy use of expert testimony, case studies, and illustrations as evidence for claims, and they concentrate on developing both the audience's and their relationship to the subject matter. What then is the tie that binds these elements into what we now call the "dread disease" oration? The power of these speeches can be understood when we explore the relationship between subject matter and ethos for both the orator and the audience.

The subject matter of these speeches, disease, is undoubtedly an asset for the orators. The diseases are serious dangers to health and life, and most often are novel topics in relation to the myriad of subjects that are addressed in forensic oratory. Our cultural ignorance about medicine and disease aids in building an initial amount of curiosity in the subject in the eyes of the audience. And, these orators take advantage of that novelty and curiosity by establishing a personal connection to the subject and then by building an audience relationship to both the subject matter and themselves.

In this sense, perceived credibility as established through the oration becomes the primary concentration for the orator. These students spend a significant amount of time constructing and solidifying the personal connection between audience, subject matter and themselves. In effect, they succeed in eliciting a two-pronged response from the audience and/or the judge: the listeners find themselves in a role that involves more than functioning as a critic of the students' command of the principles of persuasive speaking, they are compelled to consider the ways that the speech content bears on their own lives. The student then continues to build his

or her credibility by using methods of proof that reinforce audience involvement: examples and illustrations, especially the case study, attach an individual human element to evidence like statistics and expert testimony; claims about the disease and its effects are presented as audience-specific in the speech's organization; and audience action is called for in a way that illustrates specific benefits for both unseen victims of the disease and the immediate audience. In essence, the "dread disease" speech manifests itself as a study of ethos. These students demonstrate an acute understanding of its import as a persuasive strategy, and utilize its potential through subject matter that has an inherent initial appeal to the audience.

#### IMPLICATIONS

Although this sample is small, and of a very select type of subject matter, this study does demonstrate that there are accepted practices of speech-making in oratory. These student orators exhibit through their speeches an awareness of the relationship between form and substance, and they utilize persuasive strategies to make their ideas relevant to the audience. These speeches evidence the students' understanding of sound structure and organizational strategy in speech composition. The students implement a sensible and consistent strategy of claim-making. These speeches also show an effective use of methods of support for the claims being made; the students take great care in relating their ideas to the audience in personal terms. Thus, what surfaces in the "dread disease" speech is—in the best sense of the word—a "winning" oration: these students comprehend and make use of the elements of good oratory.

Whether the students learned about what makes a good oratory from textbooks, their coaches, or ballots, they understand the concepts and are using them effectively. These orations were successful in both the educational and competitive sense of the word. Thus, it may be that our dissatisfaction with oratory evolves from something other than the discourses themselves. Our discomfort may be related to the repetitive nature of the event, our evaluation of the same student—giving the same speech—from tournament to tournament, or the many successive week-ends that we spend listening to the same speeches. Issues concerning the ability of the student orator to create and deliver a speech may not be a primary element of the "problem" of intercollegiate oratory competition.

Forensic educators work within the constraints of the activity, and we interpret those constraints in reference to a number of factors—event descriptions, talent of the student competitor, his or her willingness to learn, and what is regarded as successful in terms of benefits. The findings of this study can be understood as represen-

tative of what we envision as a good persuasive speech: students can develop and deliver, with the aid of their coaches, very thoughtful and relevant orations.

APPENDIX

*Winning Orations* (Interstate Oratorical Association)

1974:

"Dietmania," Jan Hubbard, pp. 7-9.

"Infant Addiction," Brian Pollard, pp. 14-16.

1975:

"Probability or Certainty," David Keenan, pp. 34-37.

"Time to Start Again," Barbara Preston, pp. 69-71.

1977:

"The Death of Goldilocks," David Proctor, pp. 23-25.

"The Essential But Forgotten Ingredient," Ruth Brenner, pp. 62-64.

1979:

"The Great American Fat Race," Timothy Friedrichsen, pp. 21-24.

"You Can't Kiss the Pain Away," Christina Reynolds, pp. 82-85.

1980:

"The Effects of Alcohol on the Unborn Fetus," Lois Melkonian, pp. 1-3.

"The Silent Killer," Toddy Ambs, pp. 46-48.

"A Child is Born," Annmarie Mungo, pp. 49-51.

"Title Unknown," Wendy Fletcher, pp. 75-77.

1981:

"Fetal Alcohol Syndrome," Kathy Winegar, pp. 38-41.

# Review of Professional Resources

MILLARD F. EILAND, Editor

## Two Overlooked Forensic Resources: NPR and PBS

Over the past four years I have coached a number of forensic students who do not like to read. Some of them do it poorly, some well; almost all read if they have to read. Most students read as an obligation rather than a pleasure. To relax they watch television, attend movies, and listen to music. Until a few years ago I expected these students to do what they liked least - read thoroughly - to prepare for forensic competition. I was frequently disappointed in what they were willing or able to accomplish and with their desire to do what I viewed as acceptable undergraduate research. Comments on tournament ballots supported my perception that these students needed to know more before they could be expected to perform competitively. The problem was especially obvious in extemporaneous and impromptu speaking where a tenuous grasp of current events, fundamental political and economic concerns, and social issues is very difficult to conceal.

Part of my solution to this problem has been to ask students to do what they are willing to do: watch television and listen to the radio. They were already aware of commercial television and most watched "60 Minutes" and "20/20" with some regularity. A few even tuned into "Nightline." What these students were not aware of was the wealth of information awaiting them through Public Television and National Public Radio. It was these resources I wanted to tap. To utilize these media resources I needed to 1) determine what programming might prove most helpful to particular students, 2) discover when such programming airs locally, and 3) inform student of the programs and schedules with sufficient lead time for them to view/listen.

Exploring National Public Radio was not a difficult task. I arranged to receive a monthly programming log from the nearest NPR station (a university radio station). Some entries offered program notes; others did not. After a week or two of listening it became apparent several programs would be helpful. Public Television proved more difficult, but only slightly. The local channel was happy to provide a monthly program guide in exchange for a \$15 annual membership. The program guide proved both more comprehensive and more descriptive than *TV Guide* listings. It also pro-

vided more lead time, as it listed the schedule for a full month. Armed with schedules, in one month I was able to determine that a number of programs held considerable promise for forensic students. Those programs are indicated in tables 1 and 2.

As the tables indicate, I discovered programming appropriate to both public address and oral interpretation events. To inform students when appropriate programs would be aired, I simply distributed a one-page calendar at the beginning of each month. I also discussed particularly pertinent programs with appropriate stu-

National Public Radio			
Program	Frequency	Comments	Helpful For
Morning Edition	M-F	A	1,2,3
All Things Considered	D	A	1,2,3
Market Week	W	A,E	1,2,3
Washington Week in Review	W	A,E	1,2,3
Common Wealth Club of California	W	B,H	1. 2. 3. 4. 6
BBC Science Magazine	W	D	6
Focus	W	D,E,H	1,2,3,4,6
National Press Club	W	B,H	1,2,3,4,6
City Club Forum	W	B,H	1, 2, 3, 4, 6
Common Ground	W	F,H	1, 2, 3, 4, 6
About Books and Writers	W	C, D(book)	5,6
National Radio Theatre of Chicago	W	G	5

Public Broadcasting System			
Program	Frequency	Comments	Helpful For
Nightly Business Report	M-F	A	1,2,3
MacNeil/Lehrer Report	M-F	A	1,2,3
Washington Week in Review	W	A, E	1,2,3
Market to Market	W	A,E	1,2,3
Nova	W	D	1, 2, 3, 4, 6
Frontline	W	D,H	1, 2, 3, 4, 6
Tony Brown's Journal	W	D,F	2, 3, 4, 6
Firing Line	W	C,H	2, 3, 4, 6
American Playhouse	W	G	5
American Short Story	W	G	5

---

 Key to Tables 1 and 2

<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Comments</u>
M - F = Monday through Friday	A - News and features
D = Daily	B - Speeches with questions afterward
W = Weekly	C - Interview
<u>Most Helpful For</u>	D - One issue per program
1 - Debate	E - May be rebroadcast
2 - Extemp	F - Focus on international/ Intercultural relations
3 - Impromptu	G - Dramatization
4 - Other public address events	H - Current events/ Personalities
5 - Oral Interpretation events	
6 - Depends on topic/speaker	

---

dents. Faculty in Theatre, English, Political Science, History, Intercultural/International Relations, and Foreign Language also received our calendars with appreciation. Only one problem remained: getting students to use these resources.

National Public Radio has proven to be an easily integrated tool. Most students own or have ready access to an FM receiver, and most are not adverse to playing the radio when in their rooms. Frequently students who begin their exposure by using NPR as compulsory background noise develop into regular listeners after their interest is piqued by an offbeat feature or a particularly insightful news/information piece. The timing of several programs also helps. "Morning Edition" is usually available when students wake up. Those with clock radios are encouraged to set them on the appropriate frequency. The noon hour also offers appropriate programming with regular features ranging from "Washington Press Club" and other current events programs to "About Books and Writers" with Robert Cromie prying into contemporary authors and their works. The late afternoon offers more prime exposure with the acclaimed "All Things Considered" providing something for almost everyone.

Public Broadcasting has proven more difficult, because it requires greater disruption of the collegiate lifestyle. Student ownership of television sets is less frequent, and access to such receivers is more likely to be communal (student centers, dormitory lounges), so we encourage our students to meet at a common location where they may make up a majority of viewers. Generally the programs we recommend are evening fare. "Frontline," for instance, airs locally at 9 p.m. on Wednesdays at a time when students are likely to be al-

ready involved in something else. "American Playhouse" and "American Short Story" pose similar problems. "Freedom to Speak" aired in Iowa at 11 p.m. on Sundays - hardly prime time. We have found special programs to be less problematic, as students have proven more willing to make an occasional exception to their schedules than they have been to reshape their lifestyles.

Students who have used NPR and PBS to develop analytic insight and broaden perspective have noticed the difference on their ballots. Quality points have increased more dramatically than ranks, but both have risen. Comments from judges became more specific, as students were able to provide more meaningful responses to questions in extemporaneous and impromptu speaking. Perhaps most important, students who used the media became more aware of how much - and how little - they knew. Some became both more confident and more curious. As a result of the latter occurrence, they began to read. They read to expand knowledge, to verify/disconfirm views, to broaden beyond the NPR/PBS perspective. Not surprisingly, they also felt better about themselves as people.

Electronic media have proven helpful tools in our forensic program. Rather than a substitute for print media, they have provided a valuable supplement. They have encouraged students to seek information and challenged them with a variety of perspectives. Public radio and television programs offer a valuable resource for the forensic community.

Robert W. Greenstreet  
*Graceland College*  
*Lamoni, Iowa*

## EDITOR'S FORUM

# The Japanese Way of Debate

CARL B. BECKER\*

For at least the past two thousand years, Japan has been a highly sedentary society, growing rice in the same places and patterns every year, with only sporadic contact with the outside world, and even less geographic mobility within its own borders. Japan faced almost none of the stimuli which rocked Europe through the centuries - invasion of few creeds and races, trade and commerce with different cultures, or even the uncertainties of nomadic life - any of which might have militated for more flexible values and world-views. In a sedentary and largely illiterate, rice-growing culture, the repository of knowledge is the one who remembers more harvests than anyone else-the elder. The average Japanese equates age with knowledge and authority in a way unthinkable in an America still steeped in the individualistic mythology of the westward movement.

Early in any conversation, the Japanese person is compelled to ask the age of the person to whom he is speaking, especially if the other person is of the same sex and approximately equal class. For it is incredible to the Japanese that any two people could be exactly equal, and age is the prime discriminator. In fact, the Japanese language almost demands a deference in the use of words towards anyone as little as a year older than oneself, and one cannot feel comfortable speaking in Japanese unless he knows that the politeness level of his language is suited to the age of the person he is addressing. This attitude is reflected in the home training of children, of whom is demanded strict obedience to elders. More than once have I been shocked to hear mothers telling their young children, "If your sempai [any older child] tells you two and two make five, agree with him, and if he tells you to carry his books, (you) carry them." If such deference is true even of children a year apart, how much more so is it true toward parents. The only answer permitted from a child in such a situation is "Hai!" (yes, I understand). It should be clear from the outset, then, that what is important in traditional Japanese society is not the truth of propositions nor the value of

---

\**The National Forensic Journal*, 1 (Fall 1983), pp. 141-147.

CARL B. BECKER is a Fulbright Lecturer of American Thought and Literature in the Faculty of Letters, Osaka University, Japan.

ideas, but the authority of the person who utters them.

This attitude and hierarchical system is inevitably reinforced during the child's school education. In the course of 10 to 12 years of school education, the child must learn at least 2000 characters, each of which has several pronunciations and innumerable compounds. The characters themselves are stylized hieroglyphs - pictures of what they represent. One need not translate the picture into language in order to grasp its meaning, and written sentences are sometimes more like murals - strings of pictures - than like logical formulae. In fact, recent studies tend to indicate that Japanese sort language into different hemispheres of their brains than westerners do. The character for river looks like a river, and the character for fire looks like fire. But how, then, do you envision characters for words like assumption, premise, or argument? Some of these words did not even exist, especially with the nuances they have in English, before the 1860's, and even those which did cannot be explained pictorially. So, in a basic and pervasive, continuing part of his education, the schoolboy learns that there is no asking "why?" - he simply must memorize the character and its readings without question. Of course the same is true about the letters and spelling rules of any western language-but the point is, that by the time a western child is 8 or 10, he has learned all the letters by heart, can find new words for himself in a dictionary, and can read a wide range of material from baseball cards and cookbooks to the Declaration of Independence. The Japanese child, by contrast, can read only books written specifically for his age level, with 200, or 400, or 600, or however many characters he has learned - certainly not a newspaper or an adult cookbook. What this also means is that the school system sets up an unbridgeable gap between students of different grade levels, and those even one year more advanced have access to information which those one year inferior do not. Again, the system works to defend the Japanese presupposition that age equals authority - and again, the possibility of argument between younger and older becomes almost nil.

Debate, argument, even questions such as "why" or "how" are taken frequently as attacks upon the position or authority of the person rather than innocent appeals - if there were such a thing. It is sufficient that the leader direct and the inferior follow; if he knows the how and why himself, he is certainly under no obligation to share or argue that knowledge. It is legitimate for superiors in Japanese, therefore, to respond to "why" questions with answers which translate literally as "that's okay," "you fool," or "there is no *why!*" I was cautioned by my seniors at my university that I should not ask so many questions, because the professor would downgrade

me for doubting his authority. Similarly, I had the American habit of including reasons within my apologies for things. So when I apologized for entering a room late, I might explain that I had had another errand, or my bus had been slow. After a few such incidents in the course of the year, a superior took me aside and said, in effect, "Dammit Becker, why do you always have to defend yourself? Your reasons don't matter to us. If you're late, it can't be helped. Just bow your head low, apologize humbly, and keep quiet. Understood?" I shall not soon forget the rebuke - although I admit I was pleased that he thought I was Japanese enough to criticize, as he would never criticize a foreigner.

Another problem with "why" questions is that they tend to be answered by causal or historic accounts, as opposed to solution-seeking directions. Thus, when I ask a friend why my rice is sticking to the fry pan, he first responds with "rice sometimes sticks that way when it's fried." When I repeat my question, he says something about rice gluten being like glue - which is all too obvious, but does not improve my frying any. Finally, as my rice is about to burn (and I to expire in frustration), he turns down the fire. Such a case might sound cute in an anthology of Zen masters' tales, but it points to the reluctance or inability of many Japanese to constructively analyze and verbally find solutions to problem situations. Even sadder cases may be found in the interminable faculty meetings — sometimes lasting six or seven hours on a single issue-to which the concluding summary is, "It certainly is a difficult problem." Difficulties, in the minds of many Japanese, call for endurance, even long-suffering, but not necessarily solutions. Such a fundamental assumption embedded in Japanese thought and speech also tends to stifle debate. When problem issues have been identified, many people are content to agree on the difficulty in preference to disagreeing over its possible resolution.

Given this socio-cultural context, then, it is not surprising to learn that the very words which refer to thinking - logic, debate, and communication - have different nuances than their so-called English equivalents. The word commonly used for "think" (*omou*) is not to reason, but to *feel*, and the Japanese conceive of the mind as centered in the heart and not the head. To say yes (*hai*) or even "I understand" (*wakatta*) does not mean that the speaker understands anything in a cerebral sense, but rather that he will follow the dictates of the superior insofar as he can, without question. The word for argument, *giron*, suggests the opposite of the Japanese ideal of harmony; it points, not to resolution, but to irresolvability. The word for debate, *benron*, is composed of two characters which may be interesting to analyse briefly. The first is the character for

word, or saying, surrounded by two characters meaning bitter or distastefully salty or spicy. The second is a compound of the same word for saying, coupled with ideographs for the gathering of many books or pages. The connotation, particularly of the word *ben*, is not wholly favorable. The self-justification for which I was criticized is this same *ben* (*benkai*), and lawyers are *bengohshi*. But a person studying law calls himself a scholar of law, and lawyers avoid courtroom debate as far as possible. Such is the current concept of "argument" in Japanese society.

True, there have been serious attempts to introduce democratic debating principles to Japan, both in the 1870's and 1880's, and again in the 1950's, when free speech had been re-established. However, these movements did not spread widely, and for several reasons. First, the importance of argument had not yet been recognized in either law or government, much less business circles. Similarly, there were not yet enough educated Japanese to overcome popular prejudices against any forms of confrontation, to make the idea of *amicable* argument comprehensible. Both Confucian *Analects* and Buddhist *sutras*, the "Bibles" of the Japanese society, looked with suspicion and distrust at silver-tongued rhetoricians. Finally, the Japanese language itself favored vague rather than blunt denials, and tended to become highly fettered with honorifics so that the central points were often lost. There are still advocates of debate in Japanese, and the language use is rapidly changing, so in another couple of decades we may find interscholastic debates in Japanese as well. For the present, 99% of all such activity is in English.

Japanese who have visited the states have been shocked not only at the speed of American debaters' speech, but at the technical jargon used in debates, of the sort that only a highly trained judge can make sense of the language, much less evaluate the legitimacy of the argumentation being done. In Japan, if argumentation is not communicated and persuasive to an audience which understands but a modicum of English, it is drifting away from the purposes of interscholastic debate.

Those suppositions which may be taken as self-evident or acceptable without proof also differ considerably between American and Japanese debaters. Americans might be much more inclined to assume the value of individual rights and freedoms or to challenge their opponents' assumptions about anything at all that might be considered a value. Among the common Japanese assumptions are that war should be avoided at all cost, that America is an ally - or at least that Russia is an enemy (as it still holds Japanese territory and constantly violates Japanese air and sea space). There is also

the tendency to assume that the Japanese Constitution, and certain aspects of its socio-economic system, such as the control of the government by certain major banks and industries (*zaibatsu*) are incapable of changing and not the sort of thing, therefore, about which we may profitably debate. In recent years, some teams have come to realize that *any* aspect of the status quo can indeed be analyzed and challenged, but this draws mixed reactions from audiences which sometimes feel that debate should be constrained within the realm of the possible or feasible, rather than becoming a purely academic argument without relation to probabilities and social realities. So the assumptions about what constitutes a legitimate argument, and its premises, are still firmly Japanese.

One final problem is the absence of a strict sense of contradiction in Japanese argument. A cross-examination in a practice debate I observed illustrates this vividly. The proposition had to do with the teaching of ethics and social responsibility in the schools which has been outlawed (or at least suppressed) since the American occupation because of the travesties it incurred before the war. One side had built a case on the premise that religions are essentially good. The cross-examination went something like this:

"Are you asserting that all religions are essentially good?"

"Yes, that is our stand."

"Yet surely some religions have advocated practices ranging from cannibalism to the waging of war on non-believers."

"Yes, we know that."

"But you still say that all religions are good?"

"That's right."

"Do you favor war over cannibalism?"

"Of course not."

"Yet you say that even religions which advocate such things are good?"

"Yes, they are good for the people who believe in them."

"Even if the religions lead these same believers to wicked or destructive actions?"

"Yes. I fail to see your point."

At this point the questioner lost patience and changed the subject altogether. Midway through the argument, as I listened, I was thinking, "Good, here's a clear contradiction which should indict the answerer." But as I kept on listening to the rest of the entire debate I became increasingly flabbergasted at the contradiction which seemed to be tolerated. Of course I am aware that western debaters or logicians could escape from this apparent dilemma through any

of a number of tactics: in the ways they defined "good," in claiming that the social coherence provided by the religion outweighed its apparently negative influences, or even by arguing the relative merits of war or cannibalism in certain geographic and historic contexts. But the Japanese team here clearly had none of these ploys in mind as I confirmed in discussing the issue with them after the debate. This is simply one example of a situation in which the laws of contradiction seem to make no impression on some Japanese. Such occurrences are frequent enough to upset an analytically trained logician.

The western observer is tempted to conclude that something downright unethical is going on here. He insists that the Japanese can't have it both ways: he cannot admit contradictions within his linguistic system without fearing the relativization or even destruction of his whole value structure. Yet, as scientists have recently pointed out, there are ways in which physics itself seems based on paradoxes, and in some cases Japanese language may mirror the paradoxical nature of the universe better than the non-contradictory Aristotelianism of western language. So we must refrain from imposing hasty value-judgments on even so different a language system as Japanese.

Debate in Japan has grown from a handful of "eggheads" in Tokyo in 1950, to several dozen schools in the sixties, to over a hundred schools and thousands of students in the eighties. But debate still faces major handicaps within Japan in the sense of being contradictory to the Japanese world-view and way of doing things. A man who cultivates debate and logical argumentation, it is feared, will be more likely to become a rabble-rouser or a malcontent, and will lose his abilities of respecting elders and traditions. Worse yet, some of the better debaters in Japan have themselves admitted that they feel less comfortable in Japan, or less able to mutely intuit the intentions of their fellow men, after lengthy training in analysis and argumentation. I should like to believe that argumentation is a skill which can be cultivated and applied to certain situations without warping either the sensitivity or the Japanese-ness of the practitioner, but, at the very least, this requires care in the educational process.

The case is even more strongly put when it comes to women. Japan is in many ways among the least "liberated" of Asian societies, and argumentation of any kind violates the much treasured stereotype of a silent and obedient wife. When two women from the University of Hawaii debate team demonstrated their skills in front of a large audience in Tokyo, one Tokyo debater (male) told them, "You are very beautiful and I admire your

skills - but I could never live with women like you." This is of course a question of culture and taste, subject to change. But as long as Japanese men prefer servants to intellectual sparring-partners, the market for women debaters is likely to remain slim. In the more rural areas of south and west Japan, would-be women debaters feel pressure from parents and even teachers to stay away from debate even if their peers will admit them on the team.

Liberated American women may feel outraged at the role- and status-differences which make it less possible for women to debate in Japan than men. Here, again, we must refrain from self-righteously imposing our own values on a culture which has a longer history of peace and prosperity than any we can claim in the west.

In the past, the Japanese values of age-authority, group harmony and the aesthetic preferability of vague over specific statements have led to a distrust of precisely those speech communication skills most prized in the west. In recent years debate and forensics have begun to make some headway in Japanese society. But as we have seen, the practice of forensics in Japan requires not merely the mimicry of a western verbal sport but the revision of a whole realm of standards concerning the nature of "good" communication. By the same token, the viability and success of the Japanese communications systems over many centuries should serve as a warning against premature or categorical judgments of Japanese speech communication as "unethical" or "inferior" simply because it embodies value assumptions very different from our own.