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S&G went to an entire online format with volume 41/2004 of the journal. The journal will be available online at: www.dsr-tka.org/ The layout and design of the journal will *not* change in the online format. The journal will be available online as a pdf document. We hope enjoy and utilize the new format.

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Superman and Wonder Woman: French Champions for HIV/AIDS Prevention or Failed AIDS Campaign?

Stephen M. Croucher
Terry L. Rentner

Abstract

In 2004, the French government sponsored an AIDS/HIV prevention campaign; AIDES.ORG using photos of AIDS infected Superman and Wonder Woman to persuade adolescents to adopt preventative behaviors. This article asserts campaign organizers cancelled the campaign because it failed to provide audience efficacy and incorrectly manipulated fear in its campaign messages. Moreover, this article compares the AIDES.ORG campaign to other AIDS/HIV campaigns and argues effective health communication campaigns must provide efficacy to facilitate adoption of desired preventative behaviors. The Social Norms Approach is offered as an alternative method for developing effective health communication campaigns.

Introduction

Between 34.6 and 42.3 million people are currently infected with the AIDS virus (UNAids, 2004). The AIDS virus is spread primarily, but not exclusively, through human sexual activity or drug use, and the spread of AIDS has been accelerated by the increase in global trade, travel and migration (Bardhan, 2002). In the wake of rising global infection rates, “communication campaigns remain the best way to prevent the spread of AIDS in the absence of an inoculation against HIV infection” (Tondo & Snyder, 2002, p. 59). Currently more and more information about AIDS is obtained from mass media sources (Agha, 2003; Myhre & Flora, 2000; Witte, Cameron, Lapinski, & Nzyuko, 1998). Thus, designers of AIDS prevention campaigns are consistently looking for different mass media through which to present their message to particular target audiences.

One specific audience of importance is teenagers. Teenagers are a high-risk group because many of them do not believe themselves to be at risk of contracting HIV, the virus that causes AIDS (Yun, Govender, & Mody, 2001). Byron (1998) stated the number of teenagers infected with HIV doubles every 14 years in the United States; similar statistics are present in most Western European nations as well (UNAids, 2004). As European nations are confronted more and more with the AIDS “pandemic,” these nations have developed campaigns to enhance preventative measures. In France, campaigns such as “No one is immune,” “Condoms protect you from everything, even being laughed at,” and “Everyone can be affected by AIDS” have targeted general audiences through TV, radio, leaflets, cinema spots, posters and home videos.

In 2004 aides.org, a French AIDS prevention organization produced “Everyone should be concerned with AIDS” or “*On est concernés par le Sida.*” The campaign depicted Superman and Wonder Woman (see Appendix), two heroes of the comic book world, as infected with the AIDS virus. The two superheroes are shown individually in separate pictures, connected to respirators, IV’s and lying in hospital beds. Each superhero is thin, pale and appears to be on the verge of death. The bottom of the poster includes the phrase “*On est concernés par le Sida,*” or “Everyone should be concerned with AIDS.” Leaflets and brochures were distributed during the summer of 2004 to individuals between the ages of 13 and 25, a high-risk infection group. However, after fewer than three months, the campaign was cancelled by AIDES.ORG and French Department of Health. This article examines this campaign and asserts reasons for its apparent failure to alter the beliefs of its target audience. First, this article reviews Johnson and Witte’s Health Belief Model (HBM) as a schema of analysis for a health communication campaign, discusses the use of fear appeals among youth and describes an alternative model as the basis of health communication campaigns. Second, the HBM will be applied to the “Everyone should be concerned with AIDS” campaign. Last, conclusions examine the apparent failure of the campaign, discuss the necessity of focusing on campaign efficacy and offer social norms programming as an alternative to fear-based campaigns aimed at youth.

Review of Literature

Pfau and Parrott (1993) defined health campaigns as communication campaigns, including planning, implementation and evaluation. Various communication theories have discussed how to create persuasive health communication messages, including the health belief model (Airhihenbuwa & Obregon, 2000; Becker, 1974; Johnson & Witte, 2003; Stiles & Kaplan, 2004), the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Michael-Johnson & Bowen, 1992), and the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Bennett & Bozionelos, 2000), to name a few. When synthesizing these theories, Johnson and Witte (2003) asserted that commonalities emerge within the theories, and these commonalities make up their four-part health belief framework. The following review of literature outlines Johnson and Witte’s model.

Johnson and Witte’s Health Belief Model

Johnson and Witte (2003) provide a four-part framework outlining the four variables that need to be addressed in order to produce a persuasive and behavioral change inducing health campaign: stimuli, motivational variables, appraisals of environment and resources and outcome variables. Designers of health communication campaigns according to Johnson and Witte (2003) must first “decide how to effectively reach the target audience and get them to listen or attend to their messages” (p. 474). To get an audience’s attention Johnson and Witte propose cues to action (part of the original health belief model) “such as vividness, repetition, and placement in the mass media, among others, that communicate this is important to your health” (2003, p. 474). The repetition of a

single message stresses the importance of producing a core, focal message for an effective health/persuasive campaign (Parrott, Egbert, Anderton, & Sefcovic, 2003). Authors are keen to point out that cues to action can be internal or external. Generally, internal cues are more affective, while external cues are more cognitive in nature (Albrecht & Bryant, 1996).

Depicting diseased lungs on cigarette packages in Canada and the Netherlands is an example of a vivid image that designers have used to generate behavioral change (Stivoro, 1997). Truth.com, an anti-smoking campaign, employs repetition and placement in its ads. In one on-air commercial, different people are shown falling (in the same repetitive, emotionless manner) to the ground dead due to the ills of smoking. Moreover, the airing of these commercials on different television channels, at all hours of the day, places the message(s) of Truth.com within numerous mass media outlets.

While cues to action (stimuli) are important to generating desired behavioral responses, “motivation is central to how a message is processed and whether or not action is taken” (Johnson and Witte, 2003, p. 477). Two motivational responses have dominated the literature and campaigns for more than 25 years, fear appeals and threat. Ruiter, Abraham and Kok (2001) define a fear appeal as “a persuasive communication attempting to arouse fear in order to promote precautionary motivation and self-protective action” (p. 614). The arousal of fear through images, slogans and other media, can create cognitive, affective, behavioral and physiological responses (Dillard, 1994; Rogers, 1983). Such appeals have been shown to be effective in the fight against HIV/AIDS, but only if used correctly and in moderation (Witte, 1992a).

Johnson and Witte justifiably regard the delicate nature of fear appeals, whereas too much, or too little fear can have little persuasive value. Individual thresholds for fear are either innate or learned. Such thresholds are determined by biological and sociocultural contexts along with individual differences and experiences (Nabi, 2003). Parrott, Egbert, Anderton and Sefcovic (2003) state: “too often, health messages intended to arouse fear fail to include message components to address self-efficacy” (p. 640). The failure of many campaigns to provide more than just a fear appeal is one explanation for the breakdown of many fear-based campaigns.

Closely related to fear appeals is threat, or “a danger or harm that exists in the environment, whether it is formally acknowledged by an individual or not” (Witte, 1998 as cited in Johnson and Witte, 2003, p. 478). When confronted with a threat, individuals must evaluate the likelihood of the harm’s affecting their life.

When the audience evaluates its situation and appraises its resources and surrounding environment, the audience is appraising options to avert threats. Response and self-efficacy are both integral to appraising resources and environment in the wake of persuasive/threat based communication (Johnson and Witte, 2003). Witte (1992a) defines response-efficacy as whether or not the prescribed action helps the audience take steps to avoid the threat. Campaigns that provide logical responses to threats generally have heightened response-efficacy (Witte and Morrison, 1995). Self-efficacy is an individual’s perception that he or

she can complete the behavior prescribed by the persuasive campaign. Ultimately, it is the function of health campaigns to provide the audience with specific knowledge about the behavior or illness under question or the desired behavioral change (Parrott, Egbert, Anderton & Sefcovic, 2003). To increase self-efficacy, campaign designers can also incorporate participatory messages to increase audience feelings of self-efficacy, while at the same time heightening the audience's commitment to a particular practice.

The primary purpose of a persuasive campaign is an intent to modify behaviors, the actual modification of current behaviors or adoption of new behaviors. Johnson and Witte (2003) state: "Behavioral intentions refer to the plans individuals have about whether or not they intend to perform the recommended behavior (from adoption to discontinuance)" (p. 487). The HBM as proposed by Johnson and Witte identifies three types of responses: 1) no response where the threat can be denied or ignored; 2) danger control response, in this case the individual does what the campaign suggests; and 3) fear control response, where individuals take steps to control their fear such as denial and avoidance.

Ultimately, Johnson and Witte (2003) state that effective health communication campaigns:

Create the motivation to respond to a health threat and also cause the audience members to believe they have the appropriate resources to take action. If any link in this chain is missing, audience members will possibly ignore or misinterpret the message, leading to unintended message outcomes. (p. 488)

Fear Appeals among Youth

Perloff (2003) argues that fear-based campaigns tend not to work as well, because of what he refers to as "unrealistic optimism" or the "illusion of invulnerability." This often describes adolescents in that they do not see themselves as the typical person who is at-risk and may succumb to harm. For example, one study of college students found students underestimated their own susceptibility to HIV but overestimated their peers' risk of contracting HIV (Thompson et al., 1996). Other researchers assert fear appeals tend to be more effective if the danger is more immediate than a threat that may happen in the future (Chu, 1966, Kok, 1983; Klohn & Rogers, 1991). Most adolescents do not identify with such health concerns as HIV, smoking or drinking as immediate threats to their health, thus dismissing the long-term effect of such fear messages. Additionally, youth tend to overestimate their ability to change their behavior before any long-term negative health effects will occur (Dejong & Winsten, 1998). In addition to not identifying with long-term risks, adolescents often do not see immediate personal health risks. For example, students who are sexually active but who are not IV drug users or do not consider themselves promiscuous will not identify with fear tactics related to these behaviors.

In his study on developing an anti-smoking campaign for youths, Meyrick (2001) argues a message can be effective without using strong fear appeals. According to Meyrick, fear appeals must arouse "an appropriate level of anxiety to

promote paying attention to the recommended solution. It must also be credible and perceived to be applicable to the target audience but not so threatening as to provoke undesirable defensive behaviors” (p. 104).

Recent studies on fear-based campaigns conclude these studies are difficult to implement and rarely succeed, despite their initial appeal (Dejong & Winsten, 1998; Hale & Dillard, 1994). Other researchers also recognize fear tactics among youth have limited effects and may even be counterproductive. For example, adolescents may better relate to how smoking affects their breath than their lungs. More and more communication campaigns are reflecting this move away from fear and instead emphasizing social influences. Austin suggests adolescence is a time of experimentation where youth do not want to hear preaching but solutions (1996). Therefore, campaigns need to emphasize “moderation and intervention, more than prevention” (Austin, 1996, p. 123).

New Approach in Health Communication

A new approach in developing health communication campaigns targeted at youth is gaining momentum in the field. This approach is based on attribution theory applied to a groundbreaking study by Berkowitz and Perkins on social norms and alcohol use among college students (Berkowitz & Perkins, 1987). By 1998, Perkins and Berkowitz and other scholars developed this further into what is coined the social norms approach – a scientific - based approach widely used in addressing alcohol, smoking, weight management and other health issues that plague the youth population (Perkins, 2003). The approach is based on providing accurate information about healthy behaviors that may promote change and lead to more healthy behaviors. This is an alternative to the more traditional scare tactic methods used in so many health campaigns. Instead, it focuses on peer norms in terms of what the majority of the target audiences actually think and do. The social norms approach uses credible data drawn from the target audience to correct the misperceptions a target audience has about a behavior and communicates the actual behavior. This is done in a way that avoids preachy, negative messages, unrealistic images and over-the-top fear appeals – all approaches known to have little influence in changing behaviors among youth.

Aides.org Campaign

During the summer of 2004, aides.org conducted a campaign to persuade adolescents to take steps to prevent contracting the AIDS virus. The two images in this campaign depict two superheroes, Superman and Wonder Woman, portrayed in stark contrast to their conventional portrayal. Normally, Superman and Wonder Woman are shown as muscular and invulnerable to anything, except for kryptonite in Superman’s case and an Amazonian lasso in Wonder Woman’s case. Showing these comic book icons in such vulnerable states captures the attention of the audience. By portraying these two superheroes as AIDS victims, the campaign organizers make the message salient to the audience. Thus, the use of such vivid images effectively fulfills Johnson and Witte’s first criterion of a successful health belief alteration campaign, stimulus.

Second, motivational variables within the messages work to create awareness, change behavior or both. In the *aides.org* campaign “Everyone should be concerned with AIDS” organizers used fear-based appeals to make juveniles aware of the dangers of AIDS, and thus motivate them to change risky behaviors in order to protect them from AIDS. By depicting superheroes as vulnerable to AIDS, the campaign attempts to induce the fear that anyone can contract the disease, therefore bypassing the typical adolescent mantra, “It can’t happen to me.” Since the audience is perceived as vulnerable, attempts to create an emotional response to the message make the audience more impressionable to the message’s effects.

The third criterion, appraisals of environment and resources, involves granting efficacy to the audience. When message designers introduce a threat, positioning efficacy immediately after the threat is the best tactic for promoting action because it communicates that the receiver has control over whether the harm will befall him or her. Without efficacy, the receiver feels powerless and either ignores fear-based claims or actually takes action counter to recommended actions.

In the case of “Everyone should be concerned with AIDS,” explicit efficacy was not created. The logo of this organization is a condom, so it is assumed the audience would use a condom to prevent AIDS. However, Johnson and Witte argue, it is essential, especially when dealing with juveniles, that efficacy be explicitly stated. In the case of this campaign, simply showing a condom is not enough, campaign organizers needed to be more specific and explicitly recommend the audience use a condom to prevent contracting HIV/AIDS. When there is no means of prevention introduced in the message, it weakens the message’s effectiveness because the target audience does not have a specific method of preventing the undesirable outcomes.

Another criterion of the Health Belief Model is outcome variables, which might prevent the audience from following the recommendations of the message. Audiences are more likely to take an action if it does not violate any established social norms or rules. On posters for “Everyone should be concerned with AIDS” the small condom logo implies condom use. In France, condom use is socially acceptable because of the French people’s regard of sex as a part of everyday life, not something to be hidden out of sight (Foucault, 1980). However, since the campaign did not provide efficacy, it is unable to represent outcome variables in its target audience, specifically because the campaign leaves it open to the audience as to how Superman and Wonder Woman contracted HIV/AIDS. These two superheroes could have contracted the disease from unprotected sex, drug use, blood transfusion, etc.... Thus, if the campaign provided more information about how the disease got into the relationship or explained how to avoid contracting the disease, the audience could evaluate the proposed action and decide whether to take action or not.

Discussion

This analysis suggests two implications with regard to the development of HIV/AIDS preventative campaigns and adolescents. First, this analysis reveals that campaign organizers are more apt to focus on stimuli and less prone to provide efficacy. Second, the following discussion argues that the *aides.org* campaign was not successful because it not only failed to provide its audience with efficacy, it also did not take into account the limitations of fear appeals and the existing norms among the target audience.

Efficacy in Health Campaigns

Researchers argue that effective health campaigns need to include explicit efficacy to reach specific audiences (Witte, Cameron, Lapinski & Nzyuko, 1998; Myhre & Flora, 2000; Agha, 2003). However, as this case study reveals, efficacy is a regularly underdeveloped element of health communication campaigns. While health campaign designers devote a great deal of attention to drawing attention to their message, stimuli or fear appeals (Witte, 1992b), they are neglecting probably the most important element of preventing inappropriate health behaviors, efficacy.

Witte, Cameron, Lapinski and Nzyuko (1998) emphasized the importance of efficacy in AIDS campaigns in their analyses of HIV/AIDS prevention campaigns in Kenya. The authors analyzed 17 different posters/pamphlets by having focus group members complete face-to-face surveys, and focus group meetings were also transcribed to ascertain focus group members' attitudes and opinions of different campaigns. The research showed how participants were more prone to be persuaded by campaign pamphlets than posters in taking preventative measures against HIV/AIDS. Witte et al (1998) asserted that in all of the campaigns "perceived susceptibility and severity to the threat were emphasized and perceived self-efficacy and response efficacy were neglected" (p. 359). For example, in the "AIDS kills: use condoms" campaign, respondents stated the posters suggested condom use as a preventative measure. Yet, the audience was unaware of how to use a condom, because "there were no skills or instructions regarding condom use presented in the poster" (1998, p. 353).

In another campaign, "Let's care for AIDS orphans," respondents stated the poster was effective in persuading the audience that AIDS was a serious threat, but according to group members the campaign did not make any mentions of the skills needed to prevent getting AIDS. In regard to this campaign, "this poster provided no skills for performing the recommended response. Neither response efficacy nor structural barriers were mentioned by the respondents" (Witte, et al., 1998, p. 354).

This campaign, and the overwhelming majority of the 17 other posters and pamphlets analyzed by Witte et al, found that campaigns suggest individuals "should protect themselves but did not specify how to do so" (1998, p. 353). Granted, protection from HIV/AIDS may seem to entail simple acts to many audiences, but this is not always the case. In fact, failing to specify how to protect oneself from HIV/AIDS even causes confusion for audiences who are unaware of AIDS prevention or general health care procedures. Thus, the lack of

explicit efficacy hinders the campaign's overall rhetorical significance among its target audience, adolescents (Witte, Cameron, Lapinski, & Nzyuko, 1998).

Fear in Health Campaigns

While lack of efficacy offers one explanation, the type of fear appeal used in this campaign offers another explanation as to why this campaign failed. While many researchers agree messages containing threat and efficacy information may work, fear appeals must threaten the individual (Perloff, 2003). Frankenberger and Sukhdial (1994) reviewed literature from marketing, health and science, adolescence, communication education and psychology and concluded fear appeal messages among youth must "personalize risk" and past efforts have not been successful in doing this (P. 140). In the case of the *aids.org* campaign, the risk was personalized to Superman and Wonder Woman rather than the target audience. Youth were likely to recognize these superheroes but not identify with them. Adolescents were more likely to perceive these superheroes did something that put themselves in harms way, and without knowing what this was they were unable to identify with the risk.

In addition, much like the story "Goldilocks and the Three Bears," the level of fear has to be "just right." Too little is not perceived as a personal risk and too much is seen as unrealistic – especially among a target audience who not only sees itself as invulnerable but as risk takers. While the creators of the *aids.org* campaign could argue the superheroes are regarded as invulnerable and as risk takers, it could also be argued that the fear was so overwhelming that it was seen as unrealistic. Much like the 50s and 60s driver's education films that displayed horrific car crashes, the notion that Superman and Wonder Woman could get AIDS seemed almost preposterous.

Social Norms in Health Campaigns

Manipulating fear in health campaigns is a very delicate balance between injecting too much and too little. One solution to the dilemma is to not use fear appeals at all. Instead, health campaign planners should consider alternative messages such as those used in the Social Norms Approach. For example, a study on the cartoon character Popeye's love of spinach and its impact on children revealed "children watching the spinach-eating sailor did not question why eating that green stuff made him stronger and more energized; the social norm surrounding the nutritional value of spinach did not have to be restated," (Lovett, 2005, p. 837). This also translated into an increase in spinach sales by children's demands (Lovett, 2005). Lovett concluded Popeye, as part of a multi-faceted approach to child health and nutrition education, "demonstrates that social norms directed at children about food and nutrition can have large and lasting effects," (p. 838).

The same approach could prove effective for AIDS campaigns aimed at youth. What is being offered here is the social norms approach that focuses on the positive, healthy behaviors. These behaviors are documented through survey research and are reinforced through social norms marketing efforts (Berkowitz,

1999). The communications efforts focus on what individuals can do, not on what they should not do (Berkowitz, 1999).

While not a magic bullet by any means, the use of social norms programming as part of a multifaceted campaign to change attitudes and behaviors offers an alternative to the more traditional health campaigns. The more traditional health campaigns tend to use AIDS statistical data that highlight only the negative findings, such as the number of youth infected. But, for example, if adolescents knew the majority of their peers practiced safe sex and how they practiced safe sex, this may correct misperceptions they had about their peers and sexual behaviors while providing them the efficacy to practice the safe behaviors themselves. Furthermore, because the messages are drawn from statistical data and personalized to the target audience they are likely to increase credibility and impact among the target audience.

Conclusion

In the case of the *aides.org* campaign, efficacy was not provided to its target audience. As previously mentioned, the campaign ads state, "Everyone should be concerned with AIDS," but the ads do not tell individuals what they can do to prevent getting AIDS. Moreover, since it is not explained as to how Superman or Wonder Woman contracted HIV/AIDS, the audience is left wondering exactly what preventative steps they should take. Should the audience avoid using drugs, having unprotected sex, or what other steps should the audience take? These efficacious questions must be addressed by campaign organizers and expressed in the campaign in order for its target audience to be persuaded to take appropriately prescribed preventative steps. Future health communication campaigns must take into consideration their audience's knowledge of health care procedures. It is insufficient to simply grab an audience's attention without providing them with as specific instructions as possible for avoiding unhealthy health behaviors.

Future health campaigns also must consider the impact of fear appeals. How does one correctly manipulate fear? When is it too much and when is it not enough? Without a clear understanding of the target audience, the message is likely to be seen as not credible and therefore have little short-term impact and even smaller long-term impact. In addition, if fear appeals are used to persuade an audience, they will only be partially effective; the fear must be accompanied by efficacy (Witte, 1993).

This study does have its limitations. The main limitation is that this analysis is based on a single case study, of a French campaign. While the article does discuss how the same arguments about the *aides.org* campaign are applicable to HIV/AIDS in Africa campaigns analyzed by Witte et al, a future study should compare and contrast two or more campaigns simultaneously. Such an analysis would more than likely reveal results similar to those present in this analysis. Furthermore, the use of social norms campaigns has shown success in the areas of high-risk drinking, tobacco use, sexual assault and other health issues, but little has been done using social norms in HIV/AIDS campaigns.

Teenagers remain a pivotal target audience in the war against the spread of AIDS/HIV. AIDS is no longer an epidemic; the disease has transcended pandemic status. Ultimately, this article asserts future health communication campaigns must provide audiences with explicit efficacy in order to bring about sufficient behavioral change carefully consider the impact of fear appeals and focus on the social norms of a particular target audience. Thus, as more and more campaign designers look to the mass media as an outlet of prevention, new techniques such as the social norms approach are needed to alter behaviors.

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Appendix





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Universalism in Policy Debate: Utilitarianism, Stock Issues, and the Rhetorical Audience

William D. Harpine

Introduction

Argumentation theory often includes a system of stock issues for propositions of policy. Some seem to arise from the ancient Greek theory of *stasis* or other concepts of ancient rhetorical theory (Thompson; Parker 12-15; Hultzen). Others appear to have developed independently (Gough; Pelsma, "Contest;" Pelsma, "Difficulty Problem"). Stock issues are held to be useful for analysis in debate. Often enough, they are also believed to give useful criteria for decision-making: an argument for change that meets the stock issues' requirements may be worthy of belief. Examining the latter of these two claims, this paper maintains that stock issues analysis can be improved by incorporating the principles of utilitarianism. In particular, stock issues analysis is more valid if it *looks beyond the advantages and disadvantages of the speaker's audience and considers the preferences of larger, even universal groups*.

This essay concentrates on the ethical dimensions of the decision criteria that the stock issues imply. As Swift points, out, "from the birth of rhetorical study, as evidenced by Aristotle's works, ethics in relation to rhetoric has been highly valued and constantly studied" (46). A comparison between stock issues and the ethical theory known as utilitarianism shows how those criteria can be refined and clarified. In particular, utilitarianism implies that one has duties toward persons who are not members of one's in-group, family, or nation. Stock issues analysis, in contrast, may tacitly endorse an amoral kind of thinking. To put the point in rhetorical terms, utilitarianism requires decision-making to consider the welfare of all who are affected by the decision, whereas stock issues analysis often tempts a speaker, and an immediate audience, to consider only the benefits that might accrue to the immediate audience. Concerning Levinas' theory of ethics, Arnett writes that "Levinas's argument is that we miss the phenomenological reality of human life when we begin with self. He begins with ethics and attends to the Other" 42). Although this takes a broader perspective than this essay, the idea is similar: to broaden the reach to which the "should" of a proposition of policy applies.

The purpose of this essay is to look beyond the current formulations of stock issues. The idea is to make use of the insights from previous theories and accounts of stock issues to create a theory of analysis that is better grounded and that therefore offers a more reasonable way to conduct argumentative analysis. The essay shows how utilitarian theory parallels the concept behind stock issues analysis, proposes the importance of ethics for argumentative analysis, differentiates approaches to utilitarianism, and concludes by examining the implications of utilitarianism for argumentation.

Stock Issues and Utilitarian Philosophy

To begin, the decision-making criteria that stock issues imply bear a striking resemblance to the criteria of the ethical theory known as utilitarianism. Roughly speaking, utilitarianism judges an action or social practice to be right if it yields desirable consequences. Utilitarianism is a theory of morals, and not necessarily a decision-making procedure (Eggleston 451, 461; see also Louise). Nonetheless, the argument below shows how utilitarian principles can enlighten argumentative analysis. The distinction is a close one: utilitarianism argues for what is right, which may differ from what people know, believe, or say. It is, however, reasonable to hope that utilitarianism's criteria, if followed accurately, will lead people to make right decisions. By finding a foundation for the stock issues in ethical theory, this essay undertakes to elevate the level of stock issues analysis. Not proposing to find fault in previous theories of stock issues, this essay does employ methodological principles that differ from some previous theories:

A theory of stock issues for policy debate should be based on a theory of ethics. This is because a proposition of policy advocates what *should* be done, not what *will* be done (see, e.g., Freeley and Steinberg 58-59). Moral issues predominate in debate, however implicitly, for ethics is the study of what people should do. This does not imply that debaters and their audiences always have moral issues in mind. All the same, debates on public policy surely encounter moral issues early in the game. One could not reasonably think that the most ethical argument will always be the most persuasive. Thus, perhaps the objective of stock issues analysis ought to be to find the most reasonable arguments, not necessarily those most likely to be effective.

A theory of stock issues should apply generally. Indeed, the concept of stock issues—the very word “stock”—implies generality. Applying a theory of ethics to the stock issues implies generality in an even broader and more important sense. In any case, many previous writers about stock issues suggest that they apply universally; consider Ziegelmüller and Kay's discussion of stock issues as “certain specific obligations” that “exist in the advocacy of any specific change of policy” (Ziegelmüller and Kay 172).

Many systems of stock issues imply a criterion that the policy judged to be most advantageous is the best. If a proposed policy seems likely to have a greater weight of advantages than disadvantages, then the audience should be moved to adopt that policy. For example, Ziegelmüller and Kay's argumentation textbook reviews the five stock issues of jurisdiction, ill, blame, cure, and cost. The authors term the stock issues to “identify the inherent responsibilities of the advocate.” They also state that “the case for a proposed course of action can be lost if the cost of that action is as significant, or more significant, than the ill it is

designed to cure” (Ziegelmueller and Kay 172-178). Freeley explains that his slightly different stock issues for a proposition of policy imply several questions. Two of these are: “will the plan achieve the claimed *advantages*?” and “will the plan produce no disadvantages as great as or greater than those existing in the status quo?” (64). Similarly, in their discussion of the stock issues, Rieke and Sillars ask, “Is the proposed change desirable? (Will its advantages outweigh its disadvantages?)” (62). None of these, however, clearly states advantages to *whom*. They leave open the question of the audience.

One cannot help but to be struck by the similarity of these systems to the basic principle of utilitarianism. Thus, maybe utilitarian concepts can help to flesh out the theory of stock issues. The basic idea behind all the different versions of utilitarianism is to maximize goods while minimizing harms. Bentham’s original formulation of the principle of utility was “that every action is right or wrong—worthy or unworthy—deserving approbation or disapprobation, in proportion to its tendency to contribute to, or to diminish the amount of public happiness” (24). Bentham’s formulation receives little sympathy from modern philosophers, who generally doubt that any single good, such as happiness, can be the basis of morality. A similar criticism could be levied against Mill’s dictum that the “creed” of “Utility . . . holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness.” Mill then defines happiness as “intended pleasure, and the absence of pain” (169). Richard Hare’s version of utilitarianism, to which this essay turns in a moment, is currently the most respected.

Historically, there are two major versions of utilitarianism. Some authorities (Bentham, for example) advocate *act*-utilitarianism, holding that the most just action is that which maximizes good. Others, such as Toulmin, take the view that the most just action is that which accords with societal *rules* (Toulmin 144-147; Rawls, “Two Concepts”). (Wenzel has applied Toulmin’s rule-utilitarianism to argumentation theory, with results much different from the stock issues). The fundamentally conservative argument behind rule-utilitarian theories is that following societal rules of morality is likely to maximize good results. Hare’s updating of this theory combines some of the best features of act- and rule-utilitarianism. Hare argues that, for most of our moral thinking, we refer to rules that we learned during our upbringing. He assumes that following these rules will tend to produce, on balance, a more orderly and beneficial society. Hare also believes that, when two moral rules fall into conflict, we engage in moral reasoning in which we evaluate the likely consequences of the act itself (Hare, *Moral* 44-64; see Scanlon 129). Hare does not believe that any one good, such as happiness or pleasure, is the goal of the principle of utility. Instead, Hare advocates the position that ethical beings try to maximize persons’ rational preferences (*Moral* 140-146).

Now, utilitarians are generally interested in considering the benefits to society as a whole. Rhetoricians are sometimes only interested in persuading a particular audience. This stand does not necessarily lead to ethical argument. The interests of a particular audience could conflict with the audience’s moral obligations.

The Audience and Ethical Obligations

Argumentation is more ethical, at least from a utilitarian perspective, when it considers a more general audience. Aristotle pointed out that, when they consider deliberative policy, people choose to do what they believed would be advantageous (Aristotle 1358b). That usually meant doing what was to the benefit of the polis, the city-state. Athenian speakers sometimes showed a concern for the welfare of other city-states only when they faced a common enemy. Thus, Aristotle comments that “deliberative speakers often grant other factors, but they would never admit that they are advising things that are not advantageous [to the audience] from what is beneficial; and often they do not insist that it is not unjust to enslave neighbors or those who have done no wrong” (bracketed expressions are the translator’s) (Aristotle 1358b).

Poulakos argues that Isocrates built “a conception of rhetoric as a citizenly instrument meant to promote actions for the benefit of the polis.” He interprets Isocrates’ view as “to the extent that students of rhetoric would learn to understand themselves as citizens, they would never put oratory to evil use; for, by definition, they would use the art in a citizenly manner.” This implies the welfare of the polis as the aim of rhetoric. Speakers in the Athenian assembly were expected to advocate the benefit of the entire polis, and not merely of the citizens gathered at the Athenian Pnyx for a particular debate (Poulakos 24-25). (Given the structure of the Athenian democracy, one might question how often speakers thought about the preferences of non-assembly members, slaves for example, which complicates the story a bit.)

Getting back to modern times, a more general level of analysis will often produce more ethically reasonable conclusions. To understand why, consider these scenarios in increasing level of generality:

Advocacy of the immediate audience. A debater speaks to an audience of college students. Her wish is to persuade them that import tariffs should be imposed. In her communication with the audience, she stresses that import tariffs will benefit the students in the room. She says that they will have more spending money and a better prospect for employment if a tariff is passed. The debater does not mention any benefits or harms that may occur for any other group of people. This is a very specific level of analysis, and by no stretch of the imagination does it address anything that we could consider to address issues of ethics or morals. The only interest of the speaker is to persuade the audience that the proposed policy will benefit the audience themselves. It is, indeed, possible for such a speaker to advocate unethical behavior. Such a speech might, one fears, be quite persuasive.

In the Lincoln-Douglas debate at Freeport, Stephen Douglas sank to this level of argument during his conclusion. He made some racist remarks about Republicans and those who advised the Republicans. He then commented, in an acerbic manner, that “those of you who believe that the negro is your equal and ought to be on an equality with you socially, politically, and legally, have a right

to entertain these opinions, and, of course, will vote for Mr. Lincoln” (Douglas 424). This argument showed no concern with the welfare of anyone except those voters who would be prone to vote for Douglas. Its immorality, and unacceptability, lay in Douglas’ apathy towards the rights of those who were living their lives in bondage.

Advocacy of a larger audience. A debater speaks to an audience of college students. This debater, however, tries to persuade them that his proposed import tariffs will benefit not only the immediate audience, but also most college students. The immediate audience becomes a stand-in for a larger group. In this modest step up in generality, the rhetor asks the audience to consider the needs or preferences of other persons, but only to the extent that the immediate audience is part of a larger group, and will thus have a share in the benefits that accrue to the larger group.

Advocacy of the community. Speaking to an audience of college students, a debater maintains that import tariffs will produce an overall net benefit to the entire nation. She does not address the issue of whether the audience members in particular will benefit from the tariffs or not. Thus, she asks the audience to reify their level of judgment to a larger degree than in the first two scenarios. She asks the audience to consider the net advantage not so much for themselves, but, in general, for their fellow-citizens. This might roughly compare to Isocrates’ level of discourse.

Student Alex Lennon, debating for Harvard University at an intercollegiate contest, advocated a plan to stabilize the planning for civilian nuclear reactors. One of his arguments was that this plan would reduce the danger of nuclear proliferation and nuclear war, which, if true, would obviously benefit all humanity. However, the specifics of his argument pointed up a benefit to the greater influence that America would, he claimed, have over Japan’s nuclear power program. Thus, this particular argument appeared to focus on the benefit that his proposal would bring to his own nation (“1990 National Debate,” 148).

The Kennedy-Nixon debates offer a number of examples of such arguments. For instance, in their third debate, Vice-President Richard Nixon suggested that “the first thing we have to do is to continue to keep confidence abroad in the American dollar.” Continuing, he advocated a balanced budget “because at the moment that we have loss of confidence in our own fiscal policies at home, it results in gold flowing out” (“Third Debate” 406). This argument arose from a concept of good citizenship; he did not ask for the benefit of any particular United States group, but for the benefit of the entire nation.

Advocacy of the Greater Good. A debater advocates the argument that import tariffs adopted by our country will yield a net advantage of good versus harm, not just for our own country, but also for all persons. Thinking in utilitarian terms, this does not imply that every person in every country will gain a benefit from the import tariffs, but rather that the proposed policy, taking everything and everyone into account, will have net good results.

An interesting argument of this type occurred in a 1991 Lincoln-Douglas college debate championship. Kevin Minch, debating for Wayne State University, spoke in favor of a closed Congressional hearing session for nominees for United States Supreme Court Justices. After reviewing the problems with the current process and stating the advantage of the one he proposed, Minch concluded that “everyone will benefit from my proposal and . . . the problem will be significantly reduced under my plan” (Minch 91). Minch’s analysis may or may not have been correct, a matter to be decided by the debate judges (who awarded him the victory) but he implied a universal ethical criterion for his proposal. He did not address the benefits of his proposal to any one group of persons. A utilitarian would approve of the criterion that Minch implied.

The first and second scenarios look much like a conventional stock issues analysis of a policy question. The third scenario, on the other hand, seems more utilitarian. The fourth is very utilitarian, in that it considers the greatest good for all persons, not just for the immediate audience.

Each of these scenarios has ethical implications. Suppose that a proposed policy would indeed benefit one’s own group, but at the cost of harming someone outside the group. This might be a very great harm. For example, a debater argues that college students should become interested in politics and press for war against another country. This war is to be fought not for national defense, but to colonize the other nation. The net result might be quite beneficial for the audience’s own country. The country to be attacked is weak, let us say, and has few allies. The conquest would gain a great economic benefit for the conqueror at minimal cost.

Given the suffering that results from war and conquest, this proposed action would probably produce a net harm, considering everything. Therefore, a utilitarian could not approve. However, if most of the harms are likely to accrue to the conquered nation, not to the conqueror, a stock issues analysis—something akin to any of the first three scenarios above—might well lead one to approve of such an action.

Thus, the big difference between a conventional stock issues analysis of a controversial question and a utilitarian analysis of those questions is that the utilitarian analysis counts everyone the same. A stock issues analysis is likely to consider the benefit of the policy for the immediate audience, at worst, or the civic benefits of the policy, at best. A utilitarian analysis is concerned with the same basic issue, which is whether the proposed policy would produce more good than harm, but considers the benefits and harms to everyone, not just a group identified in some way with the speaker’s target audience. Utilitarianism might not approve of the most persuasive argument, but to follow utilitarian principles might uplift the moral quality of argument.

As Hare points out, “the principle often accepted by utilitarians, ‘Everybody to count for one, nobody for more than one’ can . . . be justified by the appeal to the demand for universalizability” (*Freedom* 118). The idea, according to Hare’s analysis, is that a utilitarian considers the “substantial inclinations and interests that people actually have,” plus a requirement that people be willing to univer-

salize their moral judgments (Hare, *Freedom* 118). Hare further requires that a moral actor must be able to consider not just one's own inclinations, but rather also to imagine being in another person's shoes and to envision what that person's inclinations and desires might be (*Freedom* 113; see also Hare, *Moral* 107 ff.). Thus, while theories of stock issues imply generality, utilitarianism implies even great generality.

From a utilitarian standpoint, the good and harm that occur to every individual count the same as that to every other individual. Thus, the benefits to one's immediate audience are no more important than those to strangers, foreigners, or members of any out-group.

Two Approaches to Utilitarianism

Hare argues that we routinely engage in moral thinking on two different levels. First, we operate by various rules and principles that we have learned from our upbringing. If one has been well nurtured, Hare suggests, such rules include a dictum to tell the truth, a rule not to murder other people, a requirement to pay one's debts, and so forth. These rules may be as general or specific as necessary, but regardless of how general they are, they must be universal. That is, one must be willing to see the same rules applied in any similar case, and in particular, one must be willing to see them applied *to* yourself, not just *by* yourself. In this respect, Hare consciously echoes Kant's categorical imperative ("Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law," Kant 80). Hare points out that if one is well brought up, one will follow rules that, if followed consistently, will produce a net balance of greater good for society as a whole. Thus, these rules have a utilitarian impact.

However, two rules will often come into conflict with one another. The rule to tell the truth and the rule to protect innocent lives may come into conflict if a pederast knocks at the door and asks to see your children. In such cases, one engages in moral thinking at the second level. According to Hare, in these cases one can no longer rely on the rules. One weighs the likely good and bad consequences of the acts before deciding which is more moral to do (Hare, *Moral* 25 ff.). In these cases, one chooses among between the acts specified by the conflicting rules, and not from the universe of all possible actions. This procedure tends to produce judgments more in line with conventional moral thinking than many older versions of act-utilitarianism (Scanlon 129).

This model suggests several ways in which utilitarian theory can better inform argumentative analysis. First, it is important to consider the needs of all persons equally. Conventional rhetorical analysis often ignores the distinction between producing a policy that is to the advantage of the audience, or to some community of which the audience is a part, as opposed to the good of humankind as a whole, or to the good of all living things, or to some other large group. Utilitarian theory thus insists on a larger concept of the public and, thus, implies an enlarged conception of the audience.

Second, Hare's version of utilitarianism clearly states that any moral rules must apply universally. A speaker must be willing to apply the rule reflexively, back to the speaker. This universality must also consider that other persons may

have desires that are different from those of the speaker, such that persons who are acted upon are entitled to freedom in choosing what good things they desire. This choice must still be rational, so that Hare would not approve of a drug user choosing to become addicted to heroin. Rather, Hare would endorse the addict's freedom to choose to pursue goods. Applying Hare's insights to argumentation and debate, debaters might place more importance on conventional ethical standards.

Utilitarianism's Contribution to Argumentation Theory

Stock issues analysis, bears a clear relationship to utilitarian principles. Applying utilitarian analysis to the stock issues can aid in the formulation of better decision-making criteria for debaters. Concepts from Hare's theory illustrate this. Other utilitarian theories, as well as non-utilitarian ethical theories, may be equally, or better, suited.

If one seeks an ethical principle to assist debate analysis, one can choose from any number of theories. Presumably, any ethical theory that suggests standards for human conduct, especially in the realm of social behavior, might provide the germinal material for an analytical system useful to debaters. This essay applies utilitarian theory for pragmatic reasons: utilitarianism is a well-respected ethical theory, and its principles resemble the stock issues. Thus, to ground the analysis of propositions of policy in stock issues allows for a more conservative theoretical adjustment than would, for instance, a system of argumentative analysis based on Rawls' principles of justice (see his two principles of justice, Rawls, *Theory* 60-65). Further research could examine the import that various ethical theories have for argumentative analysis.

This is not an essay of rhetorical criticism. However, one suspects that a utilitarian view would lead one to disapprove of many of the arguments presented in political campaign debating. However, a utilitarian conception of the stock issues may accord with many of the common practices of present-day high school and college academic debate more closely than do the conventional stock issues. Awareness of the relationship between stock issues and theories of ethics can significantly clarify the quality of argumentative analysis. More generally, given rhetorical theorists' centuries-long efforts to overcome the calumny that rhetoric too easily engender sophistry, an ethical grounding for argumentation should beget guidance and encouragement.

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Rejecting the Square Peg in a Round Hole Expanding Arguments in Oral Interpretation Introductions

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Abstract

This paper aims to advance the level of argument made in the introductions of competitive forensic oral interpretation of literature events. It is argued that the status quo of arguments in oral interp introductions is overall sub-par, and perhaps limited. Connections are made between the goals of the oral interpretation introduction and current work in the scholarship of historicity. Akin to conclusions performance scholars have made, it is not the truth or falsity of literature or history which is of primary concern, but rather the (potential) generative nature of literature. Just as Pollock calls performance scholars to make history go rather than go away, I argue that as a parallel, we can make oral interpretation go rather than go away through the use of an expanded understanding of the use of an argument in the oral interpretation introduction. In lieu of an Aristotelian-only reading of argumentation in oral interpretation, we can take cues from both our performance studies and performance-based debate colleagues in order to inflate the possibilities of both meaningful and generative arguments in oral interpretation introductions. Implications for the competitive, educational, and game aspects of forensics are also offered.

Key Words: Oral Interpretation, Performance, Argumentation, Forensics, Historicity

Introduction

“Pretend you don’t see Wanda-Sue” (Bailey & Temple, 1996, p. 1). So began my NCCFI championship duo I preformed with my duo partner, Shaunté R. Caraballo, during the 2002-2003 forensic season. We were ecstatic with our season-long and national results, and I thought I knew a major reason it was so successful: it contained what I considered (perhaps because I came up with it) a brilliant argument in the intro:

Shaunté: According to multicultural relationship theorist, Dr. Francis Wardle, Critical Race Theory dictates that relationships between people and groups of people are always power relationships.

Crystal Lane: Whites have power, minorities don't. In the following, the majority struggles throughout her life between the love of her half sister and that which society has deemed appropriate.

Shaunté: In turn, the minority is left virtually powerless.

Both: *Southern Girls*

Shaunté: by Sheri Bailey

Crystal Lane: and Dura Temple.

Clearly, from my early days of learning about forensics, I was convinced that the norm of an argument in the introduction of interpretation events was essential. Though along the way, I have learned not everyone agrees with the necessity of an argument, it is apparent that some clear statement of significance in interpretation introductions, though not enough to win on their own, will never competitively hurt.

So, being the comprehensive Southern California forensic competitor that I was; I was committed to adapting for a multitude of critics in every forensic genre. For interpretation events, this was my strategy: win over the individual event coaches with my literature, cutting, and performance, and win over the debate coaches with my argumentative introductions. Though I was no rock star competitor, one aspect of my interpretation ballots was consistent: my introductions rarely got critiqued for not having an argument. Perhaps I was not nearly as comprehensive as I thought. Because arguments over whether or not interpretation of literature events require argumentation in their introductions has been largely binary and somewhat unproductive, it seems time to go back to the roots of this issue: the definition of what constitutes an argument. Traditionally, when academics, especially forensicators, talk about “arguments,” we are referring to Toulmin model-oriented, syllogistic, logical argumentation like in traditional debate (and argumentation texts). However, as far back as Wallace’s (1963) good reasons and Fisher’s (1989a; 1989b) narrative paradigm, communication studies has been quite aware that the definition of argumentation has in fact expanded since the time of Plato and Aristotle.

This paper will not provide a stringent definition of what ought constitute an argument, because its primary purpose is to grant that arguments in oral interpretation events are an excellent element, but currently overly stringent in their definition. Hence, the move described in this paper for some may sound like a “lens” or a significance statement rather than an argument. These broader interpretations of arguments are precisely what this paper aims to move toward, and the aforementioned concepts are in no way logically or conceptually inconsistent with argumentation. Because forensic oral interpretation venues differ from performance art venues, in that there is logistically no possibility for discussion after performances, the interpreter has a responsibility to his or her audience to substitute that dialogue with a dialogic performance, one essential element of which is, a dynamic, performatively affirmed, and meaningful argument.

Most recently, it has become obvious that the subfield in communication with the fastest-evolving and most contextually specific definition of argumentation is that of performance studies. Instead of just applying simple, formulaic structures to different sets of content, performance studies scholars look to the embodiment of and dialogue with the particular in order to perform, observe, and discover arguments. I argue that the nature of oral interpretation begs that we do the same. Hence, I aim to encourage the advancement of the level of argument made in the introductions of competitive forensic oral interpretation of literature events. First, we will delve into the status quo of arguments in oral

interpretation introductions. Next, we will connect the goal of the oral interpretation introduction and current work in the scholarship of historicity. Finally, implications for the competitive, educational, and game aspects of forensics are also offered.

Status Quo

Oral interpretation of literature events are currently a staple of any comprehensive forensic program or tournament. As a staple genre of events, oral interpretation has, of course, undergone the gamut of interrogation in forensic literature, including whether these events should even be a part of forensic competition (Fouts, 1964; Williams, 1964), how the events are judged (Hershey, 1987; Lewis, Williams, Keaveney, & Leigh, 1984; Mills, 1991; Trimble, 1994; Verlinden, 2002), how oral interpretation should be preformed (Aspdal, 1997; Sellnow & Sellnow, 1986; Whillock, 1984), and whether or not original or unpublished pieces of literature ought to be allowed in competition (Billings & Talbert, 2003; Endres, 1988; Lewis, 1988; Lindemann, 2002; Green, 1988). While most forensic events have been studied and studied again, oral interpretation, possibly because of its numerous and stringent norms (Cronn-Mills & Golden, 1997), remains a consistent site of contention for forensic scholars and practitioners alike. One argument remains consistent throughout literature regarding oral interp: though this genre of event has a rich history of traditional elocution behind it (Edwards, 1999), oral interpretation is dynamic and evolutionary (Rossi & Goodnow, 2006). Currently, the performance aspect of oral interpretation events seems to be the focus over the literary nature of these events. As revealed by Rossi and Goodnow (2006), "Competitive speakers are being taught that presentation is more valuable than message. Lack of regard for the text in competitive oral interpretation translates to a lack of concern for what is being communicated and/or the process of communication" (p. 54). While this shift in apparent emphasis in training oral interpretation is clearly not caused solely by the argument/no argument debate regarding introductions, the types of arguments encouraged and the level of importance associated with the argument is at least partially to blame. As further described by Rossi and Goodnow (2006):

Additionally, the de-emphasis on quality introductions and transitions in many oral interpretation events has nearly eliminated the need for the student to be a good speaker with his or her own well-organized and well-written thoughts. They need only "perform" and need not worry about crucial considerations such as clarity of personal thought and expression. The assumption is that the student's "voice" is heard through the interplay of text. How a student arranges the selections that she or he has chosen is assumed to reveal the message they want to convey. While there is an artistic validity to this rationale, such an approach still does not test the student's own cogency of thought and expression. Oral interpretation as originally developed and connected to competitive forensics was considered another unique manifestation of the public speaking process, not simply as a venue for performance. A greater emphasis on the student's own communicative

abilities and acts deserves consideration; his or her thought and words need to be an expected and accepted part of the communication event. (p. 55)

Rossi and Goodnow's sentiment is one that is rather traditional in many ways, but important. In the end, all of our events are public speaking and argumentation events, from their roots. Unfortunately, while trying to be progressive, some of us have gotten so far from our roots that we've lost sight of the original purpose of our activity. The de-emphasis on quality introductions is further supported by the fact that Kelly's (2005) otherwise thoughtful and helpful guide to coaching interpretation events excludes a discussion of the existence of and introduction in oral interpretation events at all. Addressing norms in forensics generally, Gaer (2002) argued that "When we stifle creativity in the name of competitive success, we do create an activity where students become presentational robots and let freedom of creation and expression go by the way-side" (p. 56). Scholars tend to agree that the forensics round can and should be used as a laboratory (Aden, 1991; Dreibelbis & Gullifor, 1992; Friedley, 1992; Harris, Kropp, & Rosenthall, 1986; Jensen, 1997; Swanson, 1992a; Swanson, 1992b; Zueschner, 1992). The impact of the aforementioned two statements is this: we are in the midst of the perfect time to improve our pedagogy and students' creativity when it comes to oral interpretation of literature. Because the foremost issue of interest to argumentation, and the only issue which all agree should be authored by the student is, in fact, the introduction, this is where I focus my efforts in this paper.

Connecting Oral Interpretation Arguments and Historicity

Akin to conclusions performance scholars have made, it is not the truth or falsity of literature or history which is of primary concern, but rather the (potential) generative nature of literature. Just as Pollock calls performance scholars to make history go rather than go away, I argue that as a parallel, we can make oral interpretation go rather than go away through the use of an expanded understanding of the use of an argument in the oral interpretation introduction. In lieu of an Aristotelian-only reading of argumentation in oral interpretation, we can take cues from both our performance studies and performance-based debate colleagues in order to inflate the possibilities of both meaningful and generative arguments in oral interpretation introductions. In the introduction to *Exceptional Spaces: Essays in Performance and History*, for which she is the editor, Pollock explained:

It [the argument in the book] is about the kinds of history made in performance and about history itself as a spectacular, performative rite. It constellates various approaches to the nexus of performance and history in an effort to understand how performances make history *go* and what happens when history seems to *go away*—when it seems to either fade into its representations or fall into the fragments of time. (p. 1)

I conjecture that the same performative stance can be applied directly to forensic oral interpretation of literature. The difference is that not all oral interpretation of literature pieces are pieces of history; they are not all true accounts of events. However, as performance studies scholars who specialize in historicity and memory will quickly remind us, not all “history” is a “true account of events,” either. Hence, in an effort to accomplish two goals: 1) encourage meaningful introductions in oral interpretation performances, and 2) to make the arguments we encourage in said events current, we need to look to the work that our performance studies colleagues are already doing. To at least lay the ground work for these goals, in this analysis, I will first establish why the introduction is of value in oral interpretation events and second show how these introductions can and should connect to current work in performance studies literature, which will lay the foundation to draw implications from this line of argument.

Introductions in Oral Interpretation Need Arguments

The disagreement which transpires between coaches and sometimes competitors over whether or not interpretation introductions ought to contain arguments is interesting, because it, in and of itself, is an argument. Though the controversy abounds, embedded within interpersonal communicative transactions at tournaments, conferences, and the like, most literature specifically addressing this issue establishes that if not required, an argument in an interpretation of literature introduction is at least good (e. g. Geiger, 1952; Geiger, 1954; Geisler, 1985; Koeppl & Morman, 1991; Macksoud, 1968; McBath, 1975; Parrish, 1936; Parson, 1984; Sharpham, Matter, & Brockreide, 1971; Swarts, 1988; Valentine & Valentine, 1981; Velleux, 1969; Verlindon, 1987). While there is no written rule that explicitly requires arguments in interpretation introductions, much of the research on norms in forensics indicate that the forensic community’s unwritten expectations usually trump the written rules anyhow (e. g. Cronn-Mills & Golden, 1997; Swift, 2006; VerLinden, 1997).

As many competitors have experienced, there is usually more competitive risk to omitting than presenting an argument in an interpretation introduction. Therefore, most competitive interpretation speeches do contain at least an attempt at an argument. Argumentation skill is a major benefit of forensic participation, hence, this practice does not seem inherently dangerous. However, repetition of arbitrary or underdeveloped arguments may be a problem. After all, the forensic round is a place for experimentation and education. “Basically, to achieve the argumentative perspective in the oral interpretation events, we must begin to look at oral interpretation as a rhetorical transaction—a sender delivering a message to a receiver with the purpose of having some effect” (Koeppl & Morman, 1991, p. 143). By striving to train our students to make the best arguments possible in their interpretation introductions, we can expand the educational opportunities they have. A way in which I think we can expand and expound the quality of argumentation in oral interpretation introductions is by paralleling our performance studies colleagues.

Oral Interpretation and Historicity

Oral interpretation events utilize pieces of literature which are (usually) written by an author other than the student. These pieces of literature are sometimes factual, sometimes fictional, and most often (as characteristic of literature generally) somewhere in between. It is this factional/fictual nature which provides the most obvious connection between oral interpretation and historicity. Scholars of historicity operate from a basic assumption that history is neither complete true nor completely false. Further, the goal of historicity is to provide the most complete historical experience possible by involving a multitude of voices and modes in these particular historical accounts, which is embedded within the subfield of performance studies in communication. "Performance is often referred to as a 'contested concept' because as a concept, method, event, and event, it is variously envisioned and employed" (Madison & Hamera, 2006, p. xi). It is the contestation, I believe, that actually provides oral interpretation speakers an opportunity to make more meaningful arguments. By arguing with and against the particular literature which they are interpreting, the speaker's performance goes from linear to dialogic to multi-logic. "In every instance, the epic theatre is meant for the actors as much as for the spectators" (Benjamin, 1969, p. 152). Conceptualizing oral interpretation along the Benjaminian-epic theatre lines enables the argumentation and performance which the oral interpretation speaker is engaged in to rupture meaning with the text, themselves, and the audience.

The way in which we can attempt this change is to view the argumentation in the introduction of oral interpretation pieces as both important and potentially generative. Connerton (1989) argued that societies consent to rituals by continuing to consent to performing in them. The more that we consent to the performance of meaningless or arbitrary introductions in oral interpretation performances, the further away we get from the potential of fresh perspectives in how to write and perform these arguments. "The artistic use of oral performance is also part of a slightly different genealogy, one that explicitly deploys theater in the service of community formation and community interrogation" (Jackson, 2005, p. 53). It is through the simultaneous employment of the literature, linguistic argumentation, and performative affirmation that we can create a catalyst for our community to interrogate the literature which our students choose to perform. I will not outline a formula for writing these kinds of arguments, because that would negate the entire premise which performance generally, and historicity specifically asks us to do. Essentially, this type of argumentation is a type which begs the performer to argue from and toward particulars within the literature. This does not ask the performer to lay out the plot in the introduction. This does not ask the performer to find a loosely linked quotation to present in the introduction. This does not ask the performer to make a claim that begins with something like, "We've all experienced . . ." The first of the "don'ts" simply does not advance anything; the second does not come from particulars in the text; and the third is virtually meaningless.

What this re-conceptualization does ask the performer to do is to perform and experience the particular piece of literature that they have chosen to perform in order to discover what the meaning, significance, or perhaps beauty of that piece is. “The body is the inscribed surface of events (traced by language and dissolved by ideas), the locus of a dissociated Self (adopting the illusion of a substantial unity), and a volume in perpetual disintegration” (Foucault, 1977, p. 148). Through performing and re-performing the literature, the oral interpretation speaker’s body becomes inscribed and re-inscribed with the text, and therefore, the speaker can articulate through their words and body the holistic experience of the literature. What this means is that the interpreter should be constantly and consistently re-visiting the introduction in order to insure that it is expressing the experience of performing and viewing the performance of the literature, so that the argumentation keeps up with the growth of the performance of the literature.

Implications

I do not anticipate that this position piece will immediately (or necessarily ever) revolutionize the way in which we coach and perform oral interpretation of literature events in forensic competition. In fact, I would not even advocate that this is the best approach for ever student, every coach, and every piece. Actually, that is part of the point of this particular perspective. The major issue which ought to change is the one-size-fits-all approach to arguments in oral interpretation introductions in particular, and to forensics generally. I certainly hope that the line of argumentation presented in this paper opens up discussion on this issue in the future. Based on the re-conceptualization discussed in this paper, there are three areas of implications, which center on the three primary perspectives on forensics (Bartenan, 1994; Swift, 2008). These perspectives are forensics as competition, forensics as rhetorical training, and forensics as game.

Forensics as Competition

The first primary perspective that coaches and students can take on for the purpose of forensics is that of forensics as competition. The competition perspective advocates competitive success as the most important outcome of forensic participation. By expanding the possibilities of types of arguments in introductions of oral interpretation events, we could be helping to level the playing field (albeit in a minute fashion) in these events. It is the restrictions that narrowly focused norms place upon students which continually hinder their creativity in forensic competition. Obviously, in order for this type of change in oral interpretation introduction argumentation to have an impact on the competitive aspect of forensics, coaches and judges would need to be open to listening to these new types of arguments and willing to award them in competition.

Forensics as Rhetorical Training

The second perspective that coaches and students can take on for the purpose of forensics is that of forensics as rhetorical training. This perspective puts

training for the real world as its foremost goal, and is as old as our discipline. Clearly, training students in different types of argumentation upholds the notion that forensics is concerned with education. By expanding our definition of an argument in oral interpretation introductions, we can contribute to the fulfillment of the larger rhetorical tradition which forensics speaks to. Along this vein, Bartanen and Frank (1999) argued:

In the rhetorical tradition, students are expected to face diverse audiences, knowing as well that different audiences and individual audience members require different kinds of proof. Because audiences and audience members hold different values and use a variety of modes of inquiry, students were taught the art of adaptation. Students were expected to study sociological pluralism and the various logics at work in the world. p. 43.

This performative argumentation push will speak to a different logic than our more traditional logics and arguments have spoken to in oral interpretation introductions have in the past.

Forensics as Game

The third perspective that coaches and students can take on for the purpose of forensics is that of forensics as game. This perspective advocates learning to operate within the forensic setting with the highest skill level possible for the sake of playing the game. Finally, because forensics is in many aspects a game, a refreshed view of the introduction in oral interpretation events provides another piece to play and to play with. "There are two kinds of games, finite and infinite games. A finite game is played for the purpose of winning, and infinite game for the purpose of continuing the play" (Carse, 1986, p. 3). Time, space, and its rules confines the finite game, while the infinite game is a meta-game. In the finite game, there is an ends of winners and losers. In the infinite game, there can be play not only within rules but also play with rules themselves. By discussing the manner in which we do things in forensics, we are engaging in rhetorical conversion, so that the game of forensics can continue. An example of how this has played out previously on the specific subject of oral interpretation comes from Rossi and Goodnow (2006) when suggesting that oral interpretation is not interpretation but performance:

A third solution is probably the easiest and most honest; forensics organizations can recognize the performance style currently practiced and change the name of events to reflect this style. We would propose renaming events to the oral *performance* of literature. The cat seems to be out of the bag in terms of where the "interpretation" events are headed. In addition, as fewer and fewer coaches have training in traditional oral interpretation, the hopes of returning the forensics activity to its more traditional roots seems remote. Consequently, as coaches and organizers of forensics events we can choose to be honest about what our students are doing. Instead of misdirecting stu-

dents into thinking they have mastered oral interpretation, we can rightly identify their mastery of oral performance. While clearly this solution does nothing to reinvigorate the study of oral interpretation, renaming events may enable oral interpretation to retain its identity as a discrete art form. (p. 57)

Through a continued discussion of the state of oral interpretation, we can continue to improve our practices and pedagogy, as well as the state of the game.

Conclusion

Through an application of performance style argumentation to introductions in interpretation of literature events, we have expanded the possibility of arguments for interpretation introductions. I do not want to be mistaken here. Traditional arguments in oral interpretation events are in no way wrong. However, I do think that without other options, these introductions tend to become stale and sometimes meaningless. This issue is obviously rather minute in the larger realm of forensics generally. It does, however, speak toward what is at stake in the larger picture. As Swift (2008) concluded:

The part of rhetoric that we, as members of the forensic community are primarily concerned with is the doing of rhetoric. Of course, that which we ask of are students on a daily basis is an arguably insurmountable task and analogous to the task we place on our public speaking classes. We ask forensic students, like public speaking students to master the doing before or concurrent with the learning of theories and logics which inform our doing. Not only do we want, and sometimes demand student mastery of the doing, but that our students doing be (at least perceived as) better than the doing of students from other colleges and universities. In training our students, we are left with an exhausting tension which must be constantly and earnestly negotiated. We, the directors of our forensic teams, are exactly that: directors. It is paramount that just as directors of plays embed theoretical, performative, and logistical reasons within their explanations of directions to actors, we embed our thoughts behind why we tell students to do the things we tell them to do. (p. 161)

In re-conceptualizing the way in which we view the introduction of oral interpretation events, we can revitalize and refresh a small part of a much larger picture. As my assistant coach, Chas Womelsdorf, taught me this year, “Crystal Lane, it is my job to teach the students to read” in oral interpretation events. When taught to read and truly interpret texts without an entirely set, stringent formula for introduction-writing, creativity can truly flourish. One way this kind of true interpretation and creativity can occur is through encouraging our students to make performative, particular, and embodied arguments. Shaunté and I, I believe, performatively affirmed the argument in our introduction through Shaunté’s literature selection, our cutting, blocking, and performance. However, that performative affirmation (at least on my part) was arguably partially seren-

dipitous. By encouraging our students to base argumentation in interpretation introductions on particulars from their literature selections, we may have an abundance of more meaningful arguments and performances.

Endnotes

1. Thank you to the discussion from all of the attendees of the 2008 American Readers' Theater Association Conference who inspired the addition of this paragraph.

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Creating Sites for Reasonable Discourse Stasis in Public Deliberation

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Abstract

This paper¹ presents an analysis of stasis as a means for creating common ground between conflicting parties and a guide to judgment in public deliberation. Craig's (1989) approach to communication as a "practical discipline" provides the theoretical justification for research that examines the practical communication problems society faces. This paper examines public discourse in the form of arguments before local deliberative bodies, where people are attempting to influence the judgment of the board and the public. Using the methods of a rhetorically informed discourse analysis (see Tracy, 2001 & 2002), this paper examines the formulation, presentation, and reaction to arguments in naturally occurring public deliberation. The analysis focuses on the ways stasis provides a means of understanding, analyzing, and critiquing argument. A fundamental problem in public argument is a lack of common ground for proceeding with deliberation when opposing sides take divergent views of an issue. Stasis as a principle for public deliberation provides a way of conceiving common ground and a guide for effective public deliberation.

Introduction

Public deliberation, at any level of government, can be very divisive. Deliberative bodies, from national legislatures to local school boards, are often bombarded by groups pushing for their particular agendas. While this interest driven approach to public arguments runs contrary to a Habermasian notion of ideal speech (see Habermas, 1989), Mouffe (1999) and other theorists of public argument and rhetoric (see Hauser, 1999) argue that such interest is inherent to deliberation and that power differences are ubiquitous to society. When people use such interest based approaches to public argument, however, they tend to present different perspectives as incommensurable, leading to the axiomatic conclusion that "little hearing goes on at public hearings" (McComas, 2001, 38). Kemmis (1990) has referred to this problem as a "stalemate" that keeps citizens from reaching agreement and one of the practices that keeps citizens apart and unable to orient to a common good.

In public argument and deliberation, it is important to discover ways of overcoming such apparently incommensurable differences in order to discover, or invent, a common good capable of sustaining agreement and providing a basis for action. The argumentative concept stasis can be used as a guiding principle for public deliberation that provides for such a basis. Rather than attending to the common ground stasis can provide, the many practices in public argument work against establishing a clear stasis, which increases division between competing interests.

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As one of the most common practices of democracy, public meetings provide a common locus for naturally occurring public argument (see Tracy & Dimmock, 2004). To explicate the relevance of stasis as an analytic tool and its relevance as a potential guiding principle, this essay examines two case studies of public deliberation. Both illustrate a problematic deliberative situation best explained by a lack of attention to stasis. This analysis falls into a line of research examining naturally occurring argumentative discourse using discourse analytic methods (see Tracy, 2002; Tracy and Ashcraft, 2001; Tracy and Standerfer, 2003). Prior to analysis, it is important to examine the essential aspects of stasis theory, which provides a framework for the analysis, a practical ideal in deliberation, and a method of judgment for public argument.

Stasis and Public Argument

Stasis theory is nearly as old as rhetoric itself. The standard forensic stases have been, essentially, codified since Hermagoras (Deiter, 1950; Goodwin, 1989); the concept was referenced by both Plato and Aristotle (Braet, 1987; Dill, 1988), and is also fundamental to Aristotle's conceptions in the physical sciences (Backes, 1960; Deiter, 1950). More importantly though, the concept of stasis represents a fundamental means of understanding the nature of argument, generating effective discourse, understanding conflict, and coming to judgment. Past research on stasis demonstrates its significance as a fundamental principle of argument. Contemporary research on naturally occurring argument can add to our understanding of stasis theory and can connect argument theory to argument practice.

As Deiter's (1950) exhaustive analysis of the etymology of stasis explains, stasis is that point where motion stops. The prefix "sta" literally means "stand" and is used in reference to physical objects like water, rocks, and people. In an abstracted sense though, standing also refers to the stance taken by interlocutors in an argument (Dill, 1988). Deiter's analysis also explains how stasis is both the stopping point and the starting point of argument. Similar to the old axiom that you can only travel *half way* into the forest (otherwise you start traveling *out* of the forest), stasis refers to that point where "in" and "out" meet. In this sense, stasis is simultaneously the start, the end, and the turning point of movement. Argumentatively speaking then, stasis can (and has been) applied to all of these aspects of argument. It is the point of conflict at which two speakers reach an impasse. It is the focal point of inventive strategies focused on generating arguments to persuade an audience to move from the stasis. Finally, it can also refer to the turning point of a debate, the point or issue at the heart of a disagreement.

In this sense, stasis refers to a context extrinsic structure which rational discourse obeys just as ball bearings obey the laws of physics. Stasis in argumentation though, is more than the application of physical metaphors to discourse. As Kline (1979) has explained, this point of contact between otherwise incommensurate positions is also upheld in linguistic theory. Her argument draws on Habermas's position relative to systematically distorted communication (1970b) and communicative competence (1970a) which, in a basic sense, argues that in

order for there to be communication there needs to be some point of fundamental agreement. Thus, if there is conflict over a point, there must also be a point of agreement, such as a basic agreement on the meanings of the language used, upon which the disagreement may be founded. This analysis positions stasis not as extrinsic to language use, but intrinsic to it as well. Kline's work has further demonstrated that the stases, as potential points of conflict in the pragmatic use of language, correspond to the classic forensic stases.

Research on the structure of argumentative interaction has also demonstrated that stasis is fundamental to language and entails the aspects of meeting point, conflicting point, and turning point. Jacobs and Jackson's (1981) work on conversational argument provides some important insight into the applicability of stasis to the structural features of disagreement. From their discourse analytic perspective, "arguments are collaborative productions organized by conventions of language use in which two cooperative speakers jointly produce the conventional structure" (Jacobs & Jackson, 1980, 251). Arguments develop in accordance with the basic conversational structure of the adjacency pair. An adjacency pair is simply a conversational sequence, like question and answer or greeting and response, that forms the basic unit of interaction. The introduction of a first pair part (like "how are you?") makes the second pair part ("fine.") conditionally relevant. In argument stasis emerges where there is a point of disagreement between a first and second part of the adjacency pair. A first pair part of, say a proposition, would make a second pair part of agreement or disagreement conditionally relevant. If no response is made or a disagreement is made, the stasis is created and discourse should orient to the point of conflict if it is to proceed.

It is the common orientation to the structure of interaction that discourse analytic research adds to the Habermasian principle of communicative competence and the logical basis of stasis theory. Unless parties are orienting to the same structure, they cannot communicate. For instance, in the old Hitchcock classic *North by Northwest*, the hero managed to get thrown out of an auction (escaping the villains) because he kept responding to the auctioneer with structurally inappropriate bids (he decreased the bid rather than increasing it). He was then taken into custody on drunk and disorderly charges. It was the "disorderliness" of his speech that was both problematic and disruptive. The disorder, or conflict between the first part and second part of the adjacency pair, creates a point of stasis that must be remedied for discourse to continue.

A second essential concept in the analysis of adjacency pairs is the notion of preference. In conversation analysis, preference does not refer to a psychological desire for agreement (although socially, there is often this feature at work in conversation), but to a structural design that "prefers" one response over another (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998). For instance, there is a structural difference between the questions "where are you spending the holiday?" and "why don't you spend the holiday with us?" In each case the question serves as a first pair part that structurally requires a second pair part, an answer. However, the answers to these questions require different kinds of work to conform to social expectations. To the first one might simply state, "we're going to Disney Land." The

second case structurally prefers an affirmative answer. In an interaction where the “dispreferred” response must be given, the respondent will tend to mark the statement with hesitation, delay, and an account. The first question does not imply a preference for an answer (although situational demands may imply a preferred choice), and thus does not require an account for the choice. The second structure requires an account for a dispreferred response. This need for an account opens an “expansion slot” (see Antaki, 1994) where an account for the dispreferred response may be offered. Essentially, when there is a stasis point, conversational structure orients to the need to speak to the stasis prior to continuing the conversation. These dispreferred responses are structurally marked by hesitation or other disruption to the flow of the conversation, as well as the account responding to the point of conflict.

Accounts have a variety of features that relate to the ways they are called for and the structural and functional aspects of accounts (see Antaki, 1994). However, for present purposes, it is simply that these accounts are made relevant by the emergence of a stasis that provides an important link between the logical theory and the conversational practices of stasis. If we understand stasis, generally, as a point of disruption in the flow of what would otherwise be an agreement, we can see that Jacobs and Jackson’s work lends support to the same conception of stasis offered by Dieter, and thus by Hermagoras and Aristotle. Stasis arises as a point where a first pair part and a second pair part do not seamlessly fit together. The disagreement creates a structural place (expansion slot) where an explanation or account relevant.² Even in Plato’s reconstructed dialogues, this feature of discourse is apparent. As Socrates practices the dialectical method, displayed below from Plato’s *Republic*, he creates a stasis, which disrupts the flow of the conversation, shifting to the new issue that must be addressed prior to continuing the discussion:

Thrasymachus and Socrates

S: ...Are the rulers in all cities infallible or are they liable to error?

2 * T: No doubt they are liable to error.

3 S: When they undertake to make laws, therefore, they make some
4 correctly, others incorrectly?

5 T: I suppose so.

6 S: And a law is correct if it prescribes what is to the ruler’s own
7 advantage and incorrect if it prescribes what is to their disadvantage?...

8 T: It is. ...

9 S: Then, according to your account, it is just to do not only what is to the
10 advantage of the stronger, but also the opposite, what is not to their
11 advantage.

12 * T: What are you saying?

13 * S: The same as you. But let’s examine it more fully...

(Plato, 380 BC/1992, 339c-339d)

There are, of course, differences between a dialectical examination and typical conversation, and Plato does not show hesitations, repairs and the like, but

there is a structure to the emergence of stasis that is important to this conceptual frame. Thrasymachus' responses (line 2) were direct and did not treat the questions as problematic (something Socrates used later as support for his indictment of the position). As Socrates questioned his witness, Thrasymachus continued in providing short responses, up to the point (line 12) where he found fault with the previous turn. Therefore, this is the stasis in the line of argument. Socrates must be called upon to justify the claim. Argument can only continue if and when this point of stasis has been overcome.

Clearly stasis is a point of disagreement that stops the progression of a line of reasoning, or positions an account or claim in need of justification. This is the point from which argumentation develops as a response to the clash of positions. In some debates, deliberations, and conversations this stasis is clearly identified and pursued, but this is more frequently not the case. No doubt the reader has experienced debates and conversational arguments where "the issue" is never quite clear. Beyond this anecdotal evidence, there is also a growing body of research on deliberation that points to stasis as a fundamental problematic.

In research on deliberation and public meetings (see Tracy & Dimock, 2004) one of the fundamental problems is with the reasonableness of the deliberative decision-making process. Researchers vary considerably, from boisterous disagreement (Ivie, 2002) to open-minded dialogue (Pearce and Pearce, 2000), in their recommendations for addressing conflicting views appropriately. Each and every practice is open to failure as "undemocratic discourse" (Gastil, 1992) where people stop reasoning and arguing together to come to better decisions (see Button & Mattson, 1999; Ivie, 2002; Price, 2000).

Tracy and colleague's work on public meetings and deliberative practices (see Tracy, 1999; Tracy & Ashcraft, 2001; Tracy & Standerfer, 2003) point to a number of different strategies people use to negotiate tensions and argue with one another. Many of the argument practices they have identified manage the tension between unity and division in arguments. These practices often position getting along as more fundamental to deliberation than the reasonableness of the decision-making. For instance, in the course of choosing a new superintendent (in the context of a polarly divided school board), Tracy and Standerfer (2003) examined the ways the search process was positioned as unquestionable, rather than having contentious implications. Tracy (1999) examined how platitudes may be used to invoke moral principles and make nonspecific moral reprimands in ways that make an argument difficult to question. Kitlinger's (2000) research on idiomatic expressions found that they also function in ways that impede disagreement and argument. Framing arguments as concerning wording, rather than conflicting values (Tracy & Ashcraft, 2001), is yet another practice that limits disagreement in order to gain assent.

Essentially, this line of research indexes patterns of conflict avoidance or circumnavigation that, while providing unity, frequently undermine the deliberative process. In each case the interaction patterns suggest that the discourse is structured so as to avoid establishing or acknowledging some issue as a point of contention. The problem for deliberation more generally is that these practices

may undermine the legitimacy of deliberative bodies' decisions. By orienting to stases, both as an analytic tool and a practical principle, deliberative bodies could secure more reasoned judgment because they would be more likely to discover and examine the main points of conflict an issue may raise, and avoid those contentions that are not fundamental to a dispute. In this sense, stasis theory can provide a situated standard for reasoned decision making.

Braet's (1987) research on stasis points to its potential applicability as just such a practical standard. He argues that the theory of stasis functions as standard for reasoned, unbiased judgment. For instance, he provides the following excerpt from the Code of Criminal Procedure in the Netherlands:

The material or main questions of article 350:

1. Is the fact proven?
2. Is the fact punishable? (i.e. is the proven fact covered by a provision of criminal law?)
3. Is the offender punishable? (i.e. are there exonerating circumstances?)
4. What sanction should be imposed?

(Braet, 1987, 87)

This guide to the judge is a guide to reasoned judgment in the context of the criminal law courts. As opposed to the comprehensive and complex sort of guidance offered by the elaborate *Robert's Rules of Order*, this set of questions focuses on judgment rather than procedure. The two are no doubt interrelated, but the implication of Braet's argument is that stases provide situated, practical standards to guide judgment.

Summary

The basic forensic stases have long been understood as an exhaustive set of questions, applicable to any case. While Braet's (1987) research appears to adopt a relatively similar, context extrinsic set of stases as a guide, the research from Kline (1979) and Jacobs and Jackson (1983) allow us to conceive of stasis as a feature of interaction with broad scope. It is the starting, stopping, and turning point of a conversation or disagreement. When a stopping point occurs, which is as inevitable as the agreement that must precede it, interaction pauses and must navigate the new terrain of the disagreement. Stasis theory tells us that if reasoned judgment, a new agreement, is to follow the disagreement, the stasis needs to be addressed. Unfortunately, as research indicates and practitioners of public discourse have experienced, little effort is put into addressing and removing barriers to disagreement.

In order to illustrate the significance of stasis as both a key component of argument analysis and guide to judgment, the two following case studies explore problematic treatments of stasis. Analytically, examining how arguments relate to the stasis allows insight into the role of arguments in guiding the deliberative process. In each case, the way arguments construct or avoid stases impedes the development of reasoned judgment.

Case Studies in Problematic Deliberation

The purpose of relaying these two case studies is threefold. First, they lend credence the above theoretical analysis by portraying the practice of argumentation in naturally occurring discourse. Secondly, they demonstrate stasis theory's viability as a means of analysis, which can account for the destructive tendencies of arguments that are not oriented to stases. Third and finally these case studies demonstrate that the practice of deliberation is sorely in need of a practical standard for reasoned judgment. These case studies utilize discourse analysis as a method of examining naturally occurring public argument.

Discourse Analysis and Argumentation

Discourse analysis refers to a broad range of methods for textual analysis ranging from conversation analysis, which is marked by close attention to turn-taking structure (see Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998; Schegloff, 1999), to critical discourse analysis, which focuses on the construction and use of power in and through discourse (see Gee, 1999). This analysis of public argument is concerned with examining the practices of deliberation in order to discover practical problems and offer solutions that fit the situated ideals of the participants. This purpose is best facilitated by Tracy's (1995) Action-Implicative Discourse Analysis which entails a close examination of naturally occurring discourse in context, uses conceptual tools that explicate the structures and practices of interaction, and orients toward explaining problematic practices and offering constructive criticism to better achieve situated ideals.

Both of the following case studies are based on an examination of the video records of the deliberative proceedings (in both cases the public meetings are routinely recorded and broadcast on a public access channel), background research recovering the "public conversation" surrounding the issues (including press releases and news reports), and transcription of relevant speeches and interactions for close textual analysis.

Case I: The Invisible Stasis

On January 6th 2003 the Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) was sued in federal court for religious discrimination by the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) over the exclusion of a "Bible Club" as a student organization. As the event unfolded, a fragmented public conversation developed between the dispersed constituencies. By redefining the issue to be considered, the school board was able to avoid addressing the stasis and, consequently, remove it from the public conversation.

In Sept. 2002, Ashley Thiele (a student in the district) petitioned her school to form a Bible club. Under the "closed forum" policy of the school district, all clubs and student organizations needed to be curriculum related. On those grounds the petition was denied by the principle. Thiele then petitioned the district superintendent, who also denied the petition in November. In December, the petition was sent on to the school board who told the ACLJ lawyers recently acquired by Thiele and another student, they would review the decision in January. On January 6th, the ACLJ filed a federal lawsuit for religious discrimination

naming the BVSD, “the board of education, its president and members, the superintendent of schools and the principal of the school” as defendants. On January 28th, the BVSD reviewed the petition publicly, but postponed discussion of the issue in order to review the student organizations policy first. On February 11th, the board changed its student organizations policy to allow a “limited open forum” and remanded the petition to form a Bible club back to the superintendent to be reviewed under the new policy. The club was accepted under the new policy and on March 19th the ACLJ announced that they had reached a settlement with the district.

The general structure of the board meetings is to begin with public participation, at which time members of the public can raise any concern or speak to items on the agenda, followed by any board members’ responses, reports from various committees, study items, and then action items. In the January meeting, the Board president asked for and received a motion to suspend the rules of operations for the evening to hear study items prior to action items at the beginning of the meeting. There was no discussion on the motion and no justification offered for the change. The effect of the motion was to temporally locate the discussion of changing the student organizations closed forum policy to a limited open forum immediately prior to the discussion of the lawsuit and the Bible club’s appeal.

When the Bible club appeal came before the board, the lawsuit was explained, and the board immediately moved to postpone discussion until the next meeting when it would be able to vote on the proposed student organization changes. By changing the student organization policy, the Board did not have to make a decision on the Bible club. Addressing the matter of the Bible club’s appeal and the lawsuit would have involved having to account for why the Bible club was denied when there is a class in Old Testament Literature, and when other clubs such as Amnesty International and Gay/Straight Alliance (which have no corresponding courses) were being allowed to meet under the closed forum policy.

The combination of these two issues worked in concert to undermine deliberation at three potential stases. First, the Board did not justify the change in the student organization policy. Although a community member who had been on the school board that unanimously established the closed forum policy explained what concerns had motivated their decision, no one on the board responded to her arguments. Instead, each speaker took time to mention how they had been considering changing the policy, but not to indict the current policy. For instance, when the superintendent introduced the new policy he stated:

BVSD - 012803 3:15:00³

Garcia: Yes. We have been um considering um um (.) looking at a scenario with a lipid-limited open (.) forum. As a different scenario from what we’ve had in the past. Um, an’ we have a proposal for a, policy along those lines.

Similarly, the responses from board members presented the current concern as stemming from a continual concern with the issue, without reference to the lawsuit.

BVSD - 012803 3:18:22

Garnett: I um, I like the proposed uh policy Ms. Mohr. I think it's um seems like fair, and a: uh reasonable way to approach using the school. um Making the school facilities available. I've had some (1.5) uh questions about the closed forum (.) policy for some time, but I this is an appropriate approach so, .h depending on how...

BVSD - 012803 3:19:00

Phillips: Um, For a long time I've been interested in a limited open forum uh, and the reason is that it really meets the needs of students. ...

While these responses state an ongoing concern, the topic of student organizations had only been raised twice in the past year (April and September). In both cases, the discourse was limited to a statement by one board member, with no responses from anyone else on the board. There was never any other discussion of the matter. The important point is not whether the board members had actually had any concerns, but that there had been no public discourse on these concerns. This is a matter of presenting reasoned deliberation in the public forum (where decisions are supposed to be discussed and made). Their approach in this case makes the stasis invisible in the sense that it was chalked up to vague "concerns" or unstated students' needs whose significance was simply that they have been held a long time.

The second way deliberation was undermined was the lack of an inquiry into the validity of the lawsuit itself. The civil suit accused a district that prides itself on its "openness" of discrimination against religion. While the change in policy would have the effect of opening up club access and, as indicated in the minutes of the following meeting, there would be a review of all student organizations according to the new policy, the question of whether or not the district was engaging in discriminatory practices was dropped completely.⁴ This is fairly significant for a district, which like others across the country, was in tight budget constraints and ended up with a bill for \$12,000 from the ACLJ by settling out of court.

The third way deliberation was undermined was by the lack of review of the petition to have the Bible club under the original policy. The petition was to establish the club as a student sponsored organization, an organization that is either part of the academic program (e.g. Band) or related to the curriculum (e.g. Spanish club). Without discussion of the issue, the board simply denied the petition and stated that it would be accepted under the new policy as a student initiated club, the category created by the policy change which was not the status the students had petitioned for, and did not carry official recognition (sponsorship). This decision, notably, was not discussed or voted on. The review of all

the clubs (and assumed changes in their status) was positioned as a result of the policy change, since the question of discriminatory or even unsystematic policy enforcement had disappeared from the deliberations. As the discussion around the motion indicates, when the President of the School Board (de la Cruz) raised the issue at the next meeting, the board members quickly moved the issue back into the hands of the superintendent.

BVSD - 021103 1:00:45

de la Cruz: The next item on our agenda is the appeal, of the application to start a student club. And (we need) a [motion].

Okolowicz: [(motion)]

de la Cruz: Janusz.

Okolowicz: I have a motion that in light of our recent discussion, we just finished, I make a motion to remand the student application for reconsideration. Recognizing that the application would be granted as a student initiated club under our revised policy and therefore there is no need for this board to take further action.

de la Cruz: Second?

(.)

de la Cruz: Any further discussion? (.) (Julie)

Phillips: I just want to clarify um, that I think we're remanding it to the superintendent. Janusz wasn't clear but, um,

de la Cruz: Right. (.) Um, based on our approval of the policy, this would () fall under a student, driven, club, at the school rather than a curriculum driven an' (.) So the motion is to remand it back to doctor Garcia for his (.) action. [()]

Okolowicz: [Since since the administration will have joyful task to review all the clubs now. This is proper for administration to deal with all this. We just updated the policy. [(.) (That) is (needed)].

de la Cruz: [That's right. Any other comments? (2) ()]

Phillips: Well I just wanted to expand a little bit on what Janusz said, that every club in our district will be under review as to what category that it falls into. And that not all clubs (.) uh, will come out as curriculum related and they will end up as student initiated clubs an' so, hh some clubs will find some major changes and some won't depending on how directly and closely they're tied to the curriculum.

Both Okolowicz and de la Cruz (see lines indicated *) state that the application will be approved and how it will be classified, even though there was no deliberation on the question or justification offered for their positions. Instead the application was placed under review for the same reason that all student organizations were being reviewed. Phillips suggested (see lines indicated *) that many of the already approved clubs would see their status change, but no reasoning was offered on this point or explanation given for why their current status was suspect.

In each of these instances, the stasis was made invisible by the way the board approached the issue. As a result many questions went unanswered, policies were approved without adequate analysis, and underlying problems were left to lay. Deliberation suffered overall because the board was circumnavigating the conflicts that give rise to argumentation and reasoned deliberation.

Case II: The Fragmented Stasis

While the stasis in the school board's deliberations disappeared from consideration, the second case study examines the way stases can multiply to such an extent that they become impossible to address. In the fall of 2002 as the U.S. put greater political pressure on Iraq to comply with weapons inspections and the administration's discourse treated war as a more and more likely possibility, a number of citizens protested the war. One of the more structured protest movements occurred through the deliberations of city council meetings. Members of peace activist groups and the general citizenry urged city councils across the country to pass resolutions against the "war;" Boulder, CO was among them. Although the Boulder city council eventually passed a resolution opposing war with Iraq on January 21, 2003, a first attempt to have the city take an official stance against the war failed October 1st of 2002.

This case study examines the antiwar deliberations of the October meeting. There was no resolution passed, and in fact no clear resolution offered, but the concern here is not to evaluate this decision, nor to consider the efficacy of such symbolic resolutions. Rather, the concern is with the problematic aspects of the deliberations. In this case, instead of there being a strategic circumnavigation of the stasis, there was a proliferation of stases, issues, and propositions being contended to such an extent that no stasis could be adequately addressed.

In the City Council, like the school board, the meetings begin with public participation where the general public can speak to any issue other than those on the agenda (there are separate times set aside to speak to agenda items) for up to three minutes per person. In the October meeting a large group of people spoke out against the possibility of war in Iraq. In response, some members of the City Council considered taking some sort of formal action. The speeches from the public and the speeches of the council are structurally and sequentially distinct, so the stasis fragmentation of each is examined separately.

The Public's Presentation of the Issues

Fourteen members of the public spoke regarding the potential war (only two opposed to council action). Most expressed an affiliation with the Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Coalition. One of the most telling features of their discourse is the proliferation of topics along a wide variety of different issues. Although there were twelve speakers opposing the war, there were eighteen different argument topics on six essentially different issues and two distinct propositions (See tables 1 & 2). Notably, very few actually stated a proposition and fewer oriented their talk in support of a specific one. The two speakers opposing council action had distinctly fewer issues, partly due to lower numbers, but also due to more focused arguments (See table 3).

Table 1: The Anti-war Topoi

PROPOSITION: The potential war is bad.

| | | | |
|--------|---|--|---|
| ISSUES | War is detrimental. | War is not justified. | The administration is war-mongering. |
| TOPICS | War hurts the innocent.* Sets a bad precedent contradicts national identity economic impacts far reaching impacts | Preemptive Strikes* International Law Inspections Resumed* World government | Bush wants war.* Bush has a hidden agenda. |

* indicates that the topic was raised 3-5 times.

Table 2: The Pro-action Topoi

PROPOSITION: The City Council needs to take action on this issue.

| | | | |
|--------|---|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ISSUES | Action is appropriate. | Action is needed. | Take a specific action. |
| TOPICS | All implicated Vote your conscience Council's leadership* Economic impacts | Congress to act soon* | Write a letter Pass a resolution* |

* indicates that the topic was raised 3-5 times.

Table 3: Opposition Topoi

PROPOSITION: The city council should not support an action opposing war.

| | | |
|--------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| ISSUES | Action is inappropriate. | Saddam Hussein is dangerous. |
| TOPICS | Inappropriate Jurisdiction | Comparison to Hitler |
| | Abuse of power | |
| | More important matters | |

The tables above display a reconstructed version of the arguments offered on each side of the debate. The main “propositions” of those asking the council to take a stand were essentially arguments against the potential war and for the Boulder City Council specifically to take action. The second row in each table represents a reconstructed version of the main issues supported by the argument topics that follow under each one. As the tables indicate, the majority of topics fall in the category of arguments against war. The topic raised most frequently was that Bush wants war and will push for war no matter what. Along with a general dearth of arguments justifying a specific council action, those justifying the appropriateness of the action tended to be vague appeals to conscience and the Council Members’ roles as responsive representatives of the city.

The problem, from a stasis point of view, is the lack of systematic justification across speeches as well as within speeches. The predominant amount of time and the most compelling arguments in the speeches were given to argue against going to war. The framing of the issue in those terms makes it difficult for the City Council to take a particular line of action. Many speakers requested that the board pass a resolution as soon as possible to influence Congressional representatives who were considering resolutions that would grant Bush the authority to take military action, but this was, essentially, the full extent of argument on the subject. The overall position oriented mainly to the idea that war is bad, so the Council should oppose it. The justifications for passing a resolution were not oriented to the policy stases for the city council specifically. Consequently there is no clear connection between the arguments against war and the proposed “solution” of taking a stance against the war.

The opposition’s arguments, on the other hand, while few in number stand out as more focused attacks. Between the two speakers, one spent approximately half his time arguing that the Council should not devote time to this issue and the other half arguing that Hussein was similar to Hitler. The other speaker devoted all of his time to the question of Council involvement. The main stasis addressed by these speakers was thus not whether or not military action was warranted, but whether or not the City Council should be involved in the issue. Those in favor of a resolution offered very little refutation of the point.

The Council’s Response

The City Council Members’ responses to this call for action were similarly fragmented topically, but their deliberations also lacked a basic motion or proposition each member could support or refute. Importantly, the first Council speaker was very clear as to what he was seeking to do and the motion made, but the orientation of the other council members, particularly those opposed to the war, fragmented the stasis to such a degree that the secretary asked if there

was still a motion on the floor. When the Council voted, the members were still not in agreement over what was being voted for and another motion had to be proposed and voted on because the first had become so muddled. This confusion is primarily due to a lack of attention the fundamental stasis of the debate. To illustrate this point, I will outline the course of the argument, pointing to the ways the debate was taken off track.

Council Member Havlick spoke first and requested that the city legal staff write a letter in opposition to the use of military force in Iraq due to the conflict such action would have with two of the city's core values: the sanctity of life and stewardship of the environment. According to the Council's bylaws, if three Council members agree to a request, then city resources may be used. All of this was stated clearly and repeated in the form of a formal motion.

The second turn was taken by Council Member Poinsett who made a lengthy argument against the use of military force and the supposed benefits of such force. Her speech ended with a recommendation to send a letter to relevant national leaders. This, though is where the stasis started to become muddled. Her comments did not directly relate to the motion on the floor, but raised new arguments (different than those raised by the public) against war and military force. Given Jacobs and Jackson's (1981) analysis of argument structure and Antaki's (1994) analysis of "expansion slots" for explanations, Poinsett's turn violated basic argument structure because it neither responded to nor elaborated on the previous turn.

Her comments were followed by Mayor Toor's recommendation that individuals write their own letters. This turn, while related to the original motion, was not formulated in the form of a motion or an amendment to the existing motion. Argumentatively speaking, it was a reason to reject the current motion, but due to the ambiguity of Poinsett's recommendation to also write a letter, it sequentially supported or clarified a position that was irrelevant to the current motion.

His comments were followed by a set of arguments for and against the war by two different board members. As such, neither position directly related to the motion on the floor, further fragmenting the stasis. These speeches were followed by two speeches expressing different concerns regarding the Council's involvement in national/international issues, and two more turns for and against war. At this point the secretary asked whether or not there was still a motion on the floor.

Her question was asked as a request for clarification rather than a prompt to reorient the discussion. The motion was reiterated, without reference to the "rule of three," which allows council staff to be dedicated to a project that if three members agree it is important. When the motion was voted down (6 to 3) there was disagreement as to whether or not that allowed staff to be utilized to write a letter opposing the war. A new motion was made (the same as the original) and a new vote was immediately taken. The motion failed with only two votes in favor.

Once again, the fundamental flaw in the deliberations was a fragmentation of stasis, marked by expansion of issues and inattention to other speakers and

the propositions and issues they addressed. This led to multiple propositions being argued at once and thus, multiple interpretations of the motion that was under consideration. With so many issues clouding the discussion, it became impossible to reasonably consider and address particular objections to the motion. The council's decision not to oppose the war officially was reached primarily out of confusion and error, rather than out of reasoned judgment concerning the council and its role regarding national policy.

Conclusions and Directions for Future Research

Whether in private relationships, the public sphere, or technical discourse, argument and disagreement are commonplace. Less common is a systematic means of addressing and resolving disputes. Conflict is difficult at the best of times, but practices that exacerbate conflict by fragmenting and multiplying points of contention can make conflict much more difficult to resolve. Similarly, avoiding the basis of conflict and hiding it from view, can let conflicts and problems fester, continuing and exacerbating problems and flaws in policies and practices. Given its significance as a key component of reasoned argument, it is problematic that a search of current communication literature will not yield many references to stasis, any developments in stasis theory, and little applications of its fundamental elements. What research there is, in a variety of approaches to argument, suggests that stasis is an essential feature of logical, effective argument, issue focused discourse (argumentum ad rem), and reasoned judgment. It also, as Braet (1987) explains, can provide a useful, topically appropriate standard for assessing the reasonability of deliberations and arguments.

This analysis demonstrates the links between stasis as the classical extrinsic standard for logical argument and contemporary approaches to naturally occurring argument. As Kline's (1979) research demonstrates, inattention to stasis can distort communication while attention to stasis allows speakers to appropriately use expansion slots in a next sequential turn to address stases. This attention to stasis can improve communication by reducing the distortion and confusion that results by not addressing stasis. Research and analysis on stasis should continue to examine the way stases develop and are addressed in naturally occurring discourse in different argument spheres (see Goodnight, 1982).

In the case studies analyzing naturally occurring deliberation it is apparent that 1) attention to stasis is lacking in public discourse and that more attention may improve such discourse; and 2) as an analytic concept stasis can improve argument analysis by explaining practical problems and providing situated ideals. The case studies presented here display the potential benefits of analyzing stasis in public disputes, however further research should examine how arguers can more effectively address stasis in order to reach reasoned judgment. Research should also examine the potential problems of addressing stasis and exposing fundamental disagreements that could undermine groups' ability to achieve goals.

For the purposes of this paper, it is clear that stasis is a concept that deserves stronger attention, particularly if the problems of invisible and frag-

mented stases ring true to the problems faced in public, private, and technical argument. I know that they are strikingly familiar for many of the committees I have sat on and public arguments I have observed. Engaging these problems and utilizing stasis theory can improve our understanding and practice of argumentation.

Endnotes

- ¹ Original work on this topic was discussed in an NCA panel presentation considering approaches to teaching debate that would lead to better communication practices ("Dialectical Debate: Reaching beyond traditional Debate Paradigms" in the Argumentation and Forensics Division at the 2003 iNCA Convention) and an early draft of the paper was presented at the NCA 2006 Convention (Argumentation and Forensics Division).
- ² An important twist that conversational argument takes (and this is not covered in Jacobs and Jackson's (1980) examinations) is a reversal of the burden of proof. The person in the first turn position is not generally called upon to justify a proposal (e.g. You should spend the holiday with me for the following reasons...). Instead, the one disagreeing is required to account for the dispreferred response.
- ³ Regarding the transcripts, all vocalizations are transcribed as recorded in the videotaped recording. Notations for pauses, syllable stretching, and other vocal characteristics are transcribed using the Jeffersonian system (see Hutchby and Woffitt, 1998). Colons indicate stretched sounds; numbers in parentheses indicate timed pauses; words in parentheses indicate the transcriptionist's doubt of the wording.
- ⁴ Incidentally, the charge of discrimination dropped out of the public discourse in the media as well. Prior to this meeting the primary issue was the question of religious discrimination and the place of religion in public institutions, following the meeting the papers reframed the discussion in the "policy problem" terms the Board used.

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The Terrible Secret of Extemporaneous Speaking

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I'm not proud of it, but I have cheated in extemporaneous speaking. It was in the second round at the State Tournament my freshman year. We didn't have any files on the questions so I answered one about our state's recent casino legislation. There had been a large debate in my hometown over this issue so I knew something about the arguments. I made up all of my citations. I falsely cited regional papers, and even asked a teammate for the name of his local paper. I knew that if I didn't cite any sources, I would immediately get tanked in the round, even if I were making the right arguments. Instead, I got the 2. What I did was wrong and I regret my decision, but the fabrication of evidence has become commonplace in the world of extemporaneous speaking. In 2003, Daniel Cronn-Mills and Larry Schnoor published a controversial article in the *National Forensics Journal*. Their analysis showed that the 1998 AFA final round of informative contained massive amounts of source deception and plagiarism. Their study highlighted and exposed unethical choices in platform speeches, and in 2005, Ric Shafer took this one step further, examining ethics in extemporaneous speaking with an article in *The Speaker and Gavel*. Even for those outside of our traditional community, honesty must play a crucial role in competitive forensics. Ultimately, we need to hold students to a high moral standard, a standard that exists in every other academic venue. Consequently, this speech is not about suffering or body counts, but forensics criticism is vital to maintaining the integrity and evolution of an activity we love.

To begin, we will uncover the problems associated with unethical behavior in extemp. Second, we must determine the underlying causes, before finally, offer solutions to improve the ethical and educational standards of extemp. The problem is two fold – the excessive citation of unverified sources and general community apathy towards this issue.

While there is little academic data to support it, a teammate of mine received a ballot in a final round that claimed 13 sources were not enough, and this situation is not unique to my team. When the number of citations becomes the reason for the rank received, competitors know that to increase their chances of doing well, they should refer to more sources. Unfortunately, once there is a perception that someone is getting an unfair advantage, the temptation to follow is too strong.

Unverified sources are used by some extempers at every level. The previously cited article by Ric Shafer refers to Robert Markstrom's 1994 thesis which explained that only 44% of the sources used in the 1993 AFA final round of extemp actually pertained to the topic of the speech. This did not evaluate whether or not the sources were cited accurately, so the problem could be even worse. We'll never know if these students didn't have enough articles during

prep time, were unable to memorize that many sources in 30 minutes or just wanted a competitive edge. Whatever the reasons, sources, information and ideas are being misrepresented by competitors.

Berry, Thornton and Baker state in a 2006 conference paper entitled “Demographics of Digital Cheating” that “to ignore cheating is to have a culture of dishonesty continue to grow and destroy our academic institutions.” A 1982 study by Thomas and Hart found that “85 percent of competitors and nearly 80 percent of judges believe fabricating evidence constitutes the worst ethical violation in the activity.” Because forensics uniquely prepares competitors for life after college, we have an obligation to protect our activity from scrutiny.

Cronn-Mills and Schnoor wrote that “Forensic scholars believe ethics is a serious issue for the activity and the discipline.” There are two reasons for the prevalence of dishonesty in extemporaneous speaking: judges demand competitors to be off the note card and they demand more and more sources. This does not remove blame from students like me who have made unethical choices, but it does shed some light on the situation competitors are in.

Students who use and rely on a note card are typically ranked lower than those who do not. This puts significant pressure on competitors to get off the note card, and be able to use their 30 minutes of prep in an attempt to organize their speech and memorize the sources they used. It is extremely difficult for many students to remember 10 or more sources and attribute them all in the correct locations. Therefore, students are going to make mistakes both intentionally and unintentionally when not using a note card.

Another prevalent judging paradigm is counting sources. Cronn-Mills and Schnoor explain, “Judges have become preoccupied with the quantity, rather than the quality [of] sources.” Daniel Cronn-Mills and Stephen Croucher explain in a 2001 issue of *Speaker Points* that “out of 142 ballots involved in their study of extemporaneous speaking, 60 judges had flowed the sources and 39 commented that the competitor needed more sources.” Cronn-Mills and Schnoor concluded in their paper “students under the intense pressure to please such judges may wander toward unethical behavior.” In combination, these practices by judges have entrenched the fabrication of sources in extemp.

Because of the difficulty in verifying violations, we must address these causes to eliminate the temptations. Fortunately, there are some solutions: judges and competitors need to alter their paradigms and the community should experiment with some wholesale changes to the event.

First, judges should evaluate the analysis and arguments made during a competitor’s speech and not the number of sources. In 1994, Audra Colvert, presented a paper on the use of sources in extemp. She argues that “participants and judges must return to focusing on the arguments and not the number and uniqueness of the sources. Emphasizing novelty in documentation at the risk of good argumentation, analysis, and communication skills would be detrimental to the philosophical purposes of the activity.” Additionally, Colvert finds that too many sources can actually take away from the speech’s persuasive potential. Yet, since Colvert’s 1994 paper, the problem has only gotten worse. The intro-

duction of Lexis Nexis and Internet sources has caused judges to raise their source bar, expecting more and more from competitors.

Cronn-Mills and Schnoor explain, “The ‘counting sources’ paradigm is not supported by the discipline.” Furthermore, they looked at “a number of public speaking textbooks and did not find a single reference indicating quantity of evidence to [be a key aspect of a good speech] ... yet all the public speaking textbooks discussed the importance of [the] quality of the evidence/source.” The expectations of coaches and judges must change. Until they do, these violations will continue.

I also urge students to take a stand. When delivering a memorized speech, only include a few, high quality sources. You should also use a note card when you are unable to memorize your sources to ensure you cite them correctly. Judges can still evaluate whether or not the use of a note card is distracting, but should reward students who use a note card well. If we encourage students to use note cards when they cannot memorize their entire speech, it would eliminate many of the temptations that lead to the misrepresentation of sources.

To truly solve, we must reevaluate the event and consider macro solutions. For instance, Bryan McCann, in an article presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Communication Association in 2002, explained that one way to alter the event is to give students topics instead of questions. If competitors were presented with prompts, such as “names of countries and leaders ... [extempers] would be given a relative degree of free reign in constructing a topic that is indicative of their own opinions” and be of a more personal and persuasive nature.

While McCann’s solution might not be perfect, forensic scholars must research and publish articles about the fabrication of sources in extemporaneous speaking. In a personal correspondence with Ric Shafer on April 3 2008, he states that he does not “believe that coaches and representatives from the national organizations have done enough to promote and/or verify that students in the event are ethical.” There is an alarming lack of research on this subject and the community must examine whether harsh penalties or random source checks would provide a deterrent. Discourse of this issue in forensic journals and at conferences like NCA is a step in the right direction. However, we must continue to use word-of-mouth in the community to advocate change.

Though my time here is almost up, the time for dialogue about the misrepresentation of evidence in extemp is just beginning. I hope you will continue this conversation within your own team - we need to challenge each other to be accountable. Extemp is a valuable event that teaches unique skills through the combination of limited preparation, research and analysis. Unfortunately, our community has become misguided by the concept that the quantity of sources and the lack of a note card are critical to success. The results have been discouraging and limit the educational value of extemporaneous speaking. Today, we have examined the problems, causes and solutions to the fabrication of sources in extemp. Hopefully, with this ‘terrible secret’ finally exposed, we can change course and steer students towards more ethical and educational conduct.

Note: This speech was presented at the 2008 Interstate Oratorical Association contest and published in the 2008 edition of *Winning Orations*. The speech is republished in *Speaker & Gavel* with the permission of the executive secretary of the IOA.

A Functional Analysis of French and South Korean Political Leaders' Debates

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Abstract

This study reports two replications of research employing the Functional Theory of Political Campaign Discourse, analyzing political leaders' debates from one European and one Asian country. French political debates from 1988 and 1995 and South Korean debates from 1997 and 2002 were content analyzed using the Functional Theory of Political Campaign Discourse. Acclaims were the most common function, followed by attacks and then defenses, in both French and South Korean debates. Policy was discussed more often than character in French and South Korean debates. In France, but not in South Korea, incumbent party candidates acclaimed significantly more and attacked less than challengers. Similarly, in France, but not South Korea, incumbents used past deeds significantly more often to acclaim—and less to attack—than challengers. Finally, general goals and ideals were used more as the basis for acclaims than attacks in French and South Korean debates. Implications of these results are discussed.

Introduction

Most research on political debates has focused on American presidential debates (books on presidential debates include Benoit et al., 2002; Benoit & Wells, 1996; Bishop, Meadow, & Jackson-Beeck, 1980; Bitzer & Rueter, 1980; Carlin & McKinney, 1994; Dailey, Hinck, & Hinck, 2008; Friedenberg, 1994, 1997; Hellweg, Pfau, & Brydon, 1992; Hinck, 1993; Jamieson & Birdsell, 1988; Kraus, 1962, 1979, 2000; Lanoue & Schrott, 1991; Martel, 1983; Schroeder, 2000; or Swerdlow, 1987). However, debates among candidates for countries' leaders (e.g., presidents, chancellors, prime minister) have occurred around the world in such countries as Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, Israel, New Zealand, Scotland, South Korea, Sweden, Poland, Taiwan, and the Ukraine. In fact, Asard and Gronbeck (2000) observe that Swedish leaders' debates have taken place since 1948 (the year of the first American presidential primary debate; Benoit et al., 2002). Ward and Walsh (2000) noted that a political debate was televised in Australia in 1958, two years before the U.S. Nixon-Kennedy debates (although this Australian debate did not feature the leaders of the two major parties).

Televised political debates have several important advantages as a medium for campaign communication. Coleman (2000) offers several reasons underlying the importance of these events:

Firstly, televised debates are the best way of reaching a large audience of voters. Most voters obtain their political information from television more than any other source. . . . Secondly, there is an impressive body of data to indicate that televised debates have an educational impact. . . . Thirdly, televised debates help to equalize access to the mass media. . . . Fourthly, televised debates allow the public to come as close as they can to auditioning the candidates for national leadership. . . . Another advantage to the democratic process of television debates is that they force rivals to know each other's positions. (pp. 9-11)

Nor are these the only reasons for the merit of political debates. Televised debates feature the leading candidates discussing many of the same topics simultaneously, which helps voters choose between those contenders. Most debates are 60 to 120 minutes in length, providing voters an extended opportunity to learn about the candidates. The fact that candidates can encounter an unanticipated question or remark from an opponent could mean that debates may provide a more candid view of the candidates than possible with other media. The direct confrontation afforded by a debate provides candidates with an opportunity to correct misstatements, intentional or unintentional, from opponents. Such clash could benefit voters. Another advantage of presidential debates is the huge audience: Tens of millions of voters tune in to American presidential debates. In Germany, 84% of voters watched one of the three debates in 1972 and nearly half watched all three (Baker & Norpoth, 1981); two-thirds of the public saw at least one of the two 2002 chancellor debates and 41% watched both encounters (Faas & Maier, 2004). Finally, research establishes that American presidential debates have important effects on voters, creating issue knowledge, influencing perceptions of the candidates' character, and at times altering vote choice (Benoit, Hansen, & Verser, 2003). Research confirms effects of debates on issues (Jorgensen, Kock, & Rorbech, 1998) and between candidates (Baker & Norpoth, 1981; Blais & Boyer, 1996; Faas & Maier, 2004; Lanoue, 1991; Schrott, 1990; Schrott & Lanoue, 1992) in other countries. For these reasons, political debates around the world certainly merit scholarly attention.

Literature Review

Several studies have investigated the nature of non-U.S. political advertising (Chang, 2000; Kaid, 1999; Kaid & Holtz-Bacha, 1995; Lee & Benoit, 2004; Tak, Kaid, & Lee, 1997; Wen, Benoit, & Wu, 2004). Unfortunately, content analysis of non-U.S. political debates is relatively rare, despite the fact that debates have occurred in many other countries as indicated earlier. Baker and Norpoth (1981) analyzed the 1972 West German parliamentary debates (featuring the leaders of the four parties of the Bundestag). They report that the "central focus" of the debates was primarily "issues and, secondarily, ethics [character]" (p. 237). They also reported that the debates were a "struggle between the government spokesmen (SPD and FDP) defending the record of their government and the opposition (CDU and CSU) spokesman attacking the record" (p. 336).

Gilbert (1982) discussed presidential debates in the US (1960, 1976, 1980) and France (1981), considering context, highlights of the debates, and public opinion poll data. Some research on non-U.S. debates, as noted earlier, investigates audience effects (Jorgensen, Kock, & Rorbech, 1998; Schrott & Lanoue, 1992). Much research (e.g., many of the chapters in Coleman, 2000; Asard & Gronbeck, 2000) is designed as historical or conceptual treatments rather than analyses of the content of these encounters. Galasinski (1998) identified strategies employed to break the rules of Polish debates in 1995 (e.g., candidates were expected to respond only to questions, not to address one another directly). Matsaganis and Weingarten (2001) compared the 2000 Greek prime minister debate with the first 2000 American presidential debate, discussing issues, strategy, and style.

Recently Functional Theory has been extended to political leaders' debates in other countries: Israeli debates (Benoit & Sheaffer, 2006), Ukrainian debates (Benoit & Klyukovski, 2006), and Taiwanese debates (Benoit, Wen, & Yu, 2007). Acclaims outnumbered attacks, which in turn were more common than defenses in Israel. One of the two candidates in the Ukraine and Taiwanese debates also acclaimed more than they attacked (challengers sometimes attacked more than they acclaimed; as we shall see, challengers tend to attack more than incumbents). In all three countries, policy comments were more common in debates than utterances about character and the incumbent acclaimed more and attacked less than the challenger. It is clear that some characteristics of the content of political leaders' debates have been found in several countries. It is important to understand that replication is an essential component of the research process because it offers higher levels of confidence in the findings obtained from scholarship (Rosenthal, 1991). Lamal (1991) noted that replication is "necessary because our knowledge is corrigible" (p. 31). In a similar vein, Boster (2002) observed that communication "scholars pay relatively little attention to replication" (p. 477). Replication is even more important in cross-cultural studies. Lustig and Anderson (1991) argued that "The fact that many social research results fail to generalize across international cultural boundaries has become a widely accepted principle (for example, see the essays in Samovar & Porter, 1988) (p. 298). Thus, this study extends existing research on Functional Theory by content analyzing French and South Korean debates. Given research on debates in Israel, Taiwan, the Ukraine and the United States (Benoit et al., 2003, 2005, 2007; Benoit, Blaney, & Pier, 1998; Benoit & Brazeal, 2002; Benoit & Harthcock, 1999; Wells, 1999) using Functional Theory, it will be useful to content analyze French and South Korean debates from the same point of view.

Theoretical Underpinning

Benoit's (1999, 2007) Functional Theory of Political Campaign Discourse will provide the theoretical grounding for this investigation. Benoit articulates several basic propositions in his theory. First, he posits that voting is a comparative act. All that is necessary for a political candidate to obtain a citizen's vote (if a vote is cast) is to be perceived as *preferable* to one's opponents. This means, second, that candidates must distinguish themselves from opponents; one

cannot be preferable to another candidate if the two contenders are indistinguishable. Of course, candidates strive to capture the votes of citizens who are undecided or independent, whose beliefs frequently lie in the middle of the political spectrum (see, e.g., Downs, 1958). This leads them to take some similar positions as they seek the support of the same voters. For example, Page (1978) noted that Downs'

economic theory of democracy calls for a candidate's policy stands to echo the policy preferences of the public, and many spatial models—especially those of the public opinion variety—predict that the midpoint of public opinion on issues has an important influence upon the stands that a candidate takes. (p. 29)

Page found that in 1968 "Across a wide variety of issues, then, both Humphrey and Nixon took positions which corresponded fairly closely with what the average American favored" (p. 47). Importantly, Page also reported that the two candidates *disagreed* with the mid-point of public opinion on 15% of the 72 issues he examined: Humphrey was more liberal and Nixon was more conservative on some issues. So, although candidates adopt similar positions on many issues, there must be some distinctions or voters would have no basis for preferring one candidate over the other.

Third, political campaign messages are the means for establishing distinctions between candidates. Benoit's fourth assumption is that campaign discourse can establish preferability via three functions: acclaims (positive statements about oneself), attacks (criticisms of one's opponent), and defenses (refutations of attacks from an opponent). These three functions work as a rough form of cost-benefit analysis as citizens compare candidates: acclaims can increase one's own benefits, attacks can increase an opponent's costs, and defenses can reduce one's alleged costs (this should not be taken to imply that voters quantify costs or benefits or engage in mathematical calculations; the point is that acclaims tend to increase perceived benefits, attacks have a tendency to increase apparent costs, and defenses are capable of reducing costs). Benoit (2007) also postulates that these three functions can occur on two potential topics, policy and character.

Functional theory also further sub-divides each policy utterance into three variants: past deeds (accomplishments or failures), future plans (specific campaign promises) and general goals (objectives). Character comments are divided into three forms: personal qualities (personality traits), leadership ability (experience in office), and ideals (values or principles). Examples of attacks and acclaims on the various forms of policy and character can be found in Benoit and Brazeal (2002) or Benoit and Harthcock (1999).

Acclaims, in principle, have no drawbacks. That is, it is possible for a particular acclaim to be offensive to voters, the act of identifying a candidate's desirable quality is not offensive. Attacks, on the other hand, could generate some backlash because many voters report that they do not like mudslinging (Merritt, 1984; Stewart, 1975). Finally, defenses have three potential drawbacks (Benoit,

2007). They usually occur in a candidate's weaker area, so responding to them takes the candidate off-message. They may foster the impression that the candidate is reactive instead of proactive. Finally, one must identify the attack to refute it in a defense. This means that a defense may remind or inform voters of a potential weakness (this drawback is less of a concern in debates because voters probably just say the opponent attacked the defending candidate). The first prediction is that acclaims will be more common than attacks and attacks will outnumber defenses.

H1. Acclaims will be the most frequent theme defenses the least common theme.

Furthermore, public opinion poll data shows that, at least in America, more voters say that policy is a more important determinant of their vote than character (Benoit, 2003). Because we expect candidates to attempt to adapt their messages to audience preferences, we expect that:

H2. Policy themes will be more common than character themes.

Incumbents usually have various advantages, such as greater name recognition than the opponent, greater ability to attract media coverage, and the ability to provide governmental largess to certain areas of the country. Some voters need to have a reason to "change horses in the middle of the stream" or switch from the incumbent to another president. This means that challengers tend to attack more, and acclaim less, than incumbents.

H3. Incumbent party candidates will use more acclaiming themes, and fewer attacking themes, than challengers.

Functional Theory highlights the incumbent's record as a resource that both candidates use, although in quite different ways. The incumbent looks for successes during the first term in office and uses those accomplishments as the basis for acclaims. The challenger, on the other hand, looks for failures and uses them as the basis for attacks. Of course, the challenger usually has a record in office, but the incumbent's record, *as president*, is arguably the better evidence for evaluating a person running for president than a challenger's record in a different office (e.g., governors and mayors have little foreign policy experience; senators do not have executive branch experience). So, although the records of both candidates are discussed, there is a tendency to discuss the incumbent's record even more than the challenger's, and we predict:

H4. Incumbent candidates will use past deeds more for acclaiming themes, and less for attacking themes, than challengers.

Finally, both general goals and ideals are easier to acclaim than to attack (Benoit, 2007). Few would disagree with the goal of creating more jobs or making the country safe from terrorists. Who could dispute ideals such as freedom or justice? We predict that both general goals and ideals will be used more to acclaim than to attack.

H5. General goals will be used more frequently in acclaiming than attacking themes.

H6. Ideals will be used more frequently in acclaiming than attacking themes.

Although this study does not collect data on effects of political campaign messages, reason exists to believe that the functions and topics of these messages merit scholarly attention. Reinneman and Maurer (2005) report evidence that viewers of German debates respond differently to acclaims than attacks. Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1995) contend that negative campaigns (where attacks are more common than acclaims) can decrease turnout by voters. Benoit (2003) found that American presidential candidates who discuss policy more, and character less, than opponents are more likely to win elections. This theory concerns concepts that matter in election campaign messages.

Context

Readers may not be equally familiar with the political systems of France, South Korea, and the United States. Obviously these three cultures have differences. However, the key assumptions of Functional Theory apply in all three countries: Candidates who seek political office (and are not running only to raise an issue) do so by persuading voters that they are preferable to opponents; Candidates for public office can argue for preferability on grounds of policy and character.

Two rounds of voting occur in France; the top two candidates in the first round compete again in a second election. The term of office was seven years until 2002 when it was reduced to five years. There is no limit on the number of terms a candidate may serve if re-elected. Televised debates began in France in the 1974 presidential election (although in 2002 Chirac refused to debate his opponent because his opponent was too extreme). French debates occur between the first and second votes so only two candidates participate in these debates. One debate of two hours (it sometimes runs 10-20 minutes longer) addresses four topics: politics, economy, social issues, and foreign policy. The format in France is confrontational, with both candidates sitting at the same table facing one another. The French joke that the candidates are “near enough to slap the opponent’s face,” although they have yet to come to blows. Moderators have a very limited role, introducing the candidates, describing the format, and shifting the topic (they only occasionally ask questions). Candidates are free to ask questions of their opponents, answer questions, attack their opponents, or rebut attacks from opponents. Debates were held in 1974, 1981, 1988, 1995, and 2007 but the texts of only 1988 and 1995 are available. In 1988, Francois Mitterand was the incumbent party candidate and Jacques Chirac the challenger. In 1995, Lionel Jospin was the incumbent party candidate and Chirac the challenger.

South Korea only uses one “round” of voting and in some years more than two candidates competes. The term of office has been five years since 1992. No candidate is allowed more than one term in office, and there is no Vice President for South Korea; these two factors may limit the effects of incumbency. This

means there is never incumbent candidate who seeks re-election; candidates run as members of the party of the president. Official televised debates first occurred in 1997 in South Korea (Hoi-Chang Lee was the incumbent party candidate; Dae-Jung Kim and In-Jae Lee were challengers) and were held again in 2002 (Moo-Hyuan Noh was the incumbent party candidate; Dae-Jung Kim and Hoi-Chang Lee were challengers). Three debates were held in both elections. The first debate concerned politics, foreign policy, and national security. Debate two focused on the economy. The final debate concerned such topics as social issues, culture, and education. Because there can be multiple candidates, popularity requirements determine who is permitted to debate. As in the United States, the moderator plays a larger role in controlling the content of debates. So far, the “town hall” format used in some recent U.S. presidential debates has not been used in South Korea.

The president of the United States is elected every four years; presidents are limited to two terms. The two major political parties in America are Republican and Democratic. General campaign debates have been held in 1960 and from 1976-2004. The debates of only one year included a third party candidate, Ross Perot in 1992 (eligibility is determined by the popularity of candidates as determined by public opinion polls and the Commission for Presidential Debates); we chose to focus on the candidates from the two major political parties in America. The number of debates featuring the two major party candidates has varied from one (1980) to four (1960), with most years having two or three debates. After 1960, when the four debates were one hour long, all presidential debates have been for ninety minutes. A moderator controls the format and asks questions or controls questions from journalists or, occasionally, voters. Candidates are usually limited to ninety seconds or less for each statement (answer to a question or response). Some years included opening or closing statements from the candidates. See the Appendix for a list of all candidates, incumbency, and election outcomes.

Sample

This study analyzed political candidate debates in two countries other than the United States. France and South Korea were selected for this study. First, we wanted to examine debates from a European country and from an Asian country to provide diverse texts for analysis. Second, we wanted to use countries that were not too dissimilar from the U.S. in order to facilitate comparison. Furthermore, our choices were severely limited by (1) the availability of texts of political leaders debates and (2) the availability of transcripts in languages with which the audiences were familiar (English, French, Korean). In all three countries (America, France, South Korea) the president is elected directly by citizens; in contrast, for example, in other countries such as Germany or Canada, voters do not cast ballots for the chancellor but for representatives from competing political parties to the Bundestag; the party or coalition of parties after the election then in control selects the chancellor or prime minister. Finally, we were able to obtain transcripts of debates from two different elections in both countries: 1988 and 1995 in France, and 1997 and 2002 in South Korea. Although debates have

been held in other years, we were unable to obtain transcripts of other debates from these countries. Data from content analysis of American presidential debates (Benoit et al., 2005, 2005; Benoit, Blaney, & Pier, 1998; Benoit & Brazeal, 2002; Benoit & Harthcock, 1999; Benoit & Wells, 1996; Wells, 1999) will also be reported to provide a point of comparison for the new data from France and South Korea.

Method

Content analysis was employed to test the predictions advanced here. The procedures replicated exactly the method employed in previous work applying Functional Theory to political campaign debates (Benoit, 2007). First, the unit of analysis was the theme, so each debate was unitized into themes (we also use the terms assertion and claim as synonyms). Berelson (1952) explained that a theme is “an assertion about a subject” (p. 18); Holsti (1969) defined a theme as “a single assertion about some subject” (p. 116). A theme is therefore a argument (argument_i; see O’Keefe, 1977) about the candidates (or parties). Because rhetoric is enthymematic, themes vary in length from a phrase to several sentences. Second, each theme was classified by function (acclaim, attack, or defense). The third step was to identify the topic of each theme as either policy or character. Next, the form of policy (past deed, future plan, general goal) or of character (personal quality, leadership ability, ideals) was identified. Two coders who were fluent in French and two who were fluent in Korean were trained to use the Functional approach and independently coded these debates (each coded about 55% of the text, providing a 10% overlap for calculating inter-coder reliability). 1168 themes were identified in the two French debates (584 themes per debate), 1982 themes were found in the six South Korean debates (315 themes per debate), and 7155 themes were located in the 23 American debates (311 themes per debate); recall that French debates tend to be longer than debates in the other countries. Inter-coder reliability was quantified using Cohen’s (1960) *kappa* using a random sample of approximately 10% of each debate transcript. For the French debates, reliability was .82 for functions, 1.0 for topics, .92 for form of policy, and .83 for form of character. For the South Korean debates, reliability was .87 for functions, .80 for topics, .86 for form of policy, and .90 for form of character. These levels are acceptable: Landis and Koch (1977) indicate that *kappas* of over .80 are “almost perfect” (p. 165). These relatively high figures for reliability may indicate that these variables (tone, topic) are more manifest than latent. Because the content analysis produces frequency data, *chi-square* goodness of fit tests will be used for hypotheses 1, 2, 5, and 6, and 2x2 *chi-square* for cross-categorized data will be employed for statistical analysis.

Results

The first hypothesis predicted that acclaims would be more common than attacks and that defenses would be the least common function. This prediction was supported for French (acclaims: 61%, attacks: 33%, defenses: 6%; χ^2 [$df = 2$] = 542.64, $p < .0001$), South Korean (acclaims: 55%, attacks: 35%, defenses:

10%; $\chi^2 [df = 2] = 595.15, p < .0001$), and American debates (acclaims: 57%, attacks: 35%, defenses: 8%; $\chi^2 [df = 2] = 2494.28, p < .0001$). For example, Mitterand offered this example of an acclaim in the French debate of 1988: "I propose a minimum guaranteed income for the poorest." Although this proposal is bound to be controversial with some voters, other voters do want to offer assistance to the poor. In contrast, Chirac criticized Mitterrand's record on crime in the same debate: "From 1981 to 1986, there were 600 more crimes and offenses more per day." Obviously, high crime rates are undesirable, making this statement an attack. Kim was accused of having broken his promise to not to run for office. He offered this illustration of a defense in a 1997 South Korean debate: "I have already made a public apology for breaking my word about retiring from the political world." As Table 1 reveals, acclaims in U.S. presidential debates ranged from 49%-74%, with a mean of 55%, the same as the mean for acclaims in South Korea and fairly close to the means for French (61%) acclaims. American debates used attacks in 24% to 42% of utterances, with a mean of 35%, which is the same as the mean in South Korean debates (35%) and very close to the means for attacks in French (33%) debates. Furthermore, defenses in U.S. debates varied from 2% to 14% with a mean of 10%. Again, this is the same proportion in South Korea (10%) and fairly close to the mean for French debates (6%). Clearly, the debates in all three countries employed acclaims most frequently and defenses least often.¹

Table 1. *Functions of French, South Korean, and American Debates*

| | Acclaims | Attacks | Defenses | χ^2 ($df = 2$) |
|--------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| French | | | | |
| 1988 | 353 (59%) | 219 (37%) | 25 (4%) | 542.64 $p < .0001$ |
| 1995 | 363 (64%) | 167 (29%) | 41 (7%) | |
| Total | 716 (61%) | 386 (33%) | 66 (6%) | |
| South Korean | | | | |
| 1997 | 485 (54%) | 323 (36%) | 91 (10%) | 595.15 $p < .0001$ |
| 2002 | 559 (56%) | 345 (35%) | 89 (9%) | |
| Total | 1044 (55%) | 668 (35%) | 180 (10%) | |
| American | | | | |
| 1960 | 329 (49%) | 258 (39%) | 83 (12%) | 2494.28 $p < .0001$ |
| 1976 | 363 (52%) | 294 (42%) | 47 (7%) | |
| 1980 | 114 (50%) | 88 (39%) | 23 (10%) | |
| 1984 | 239 (53%) | 164 (36%) | 51 (11%) | |
| 1988 | 550 (59%) | 301 (33%) | 75 (8%) | |
| 1992 | 309 (52%) | 203 (34%) | 85 (14%) | |
| 1996 | 548 (56%) | 346 (36%) | 78 (8%) | |
| 2000 | 860 (74%) | 281 (24%) | 24 (2%) | |
| 2004 | 738 (51%) | 566 (39%) | 138 (10%) | |
| Total | 4050 (57%) | 2501 (35%) | 604 (8%) | |

Hypothesis two concerned the use of policy and character, predicting that policy would be more common than character. This prediction was also confirmed. In France, the debates discussed policy eight times as often as character (89% to 11%; $\chi^2 [df = 1] = 669.58, p < .0001$). The South Korean debates emphasized policy over five times as much as character (84% policy, 16% character; $\chi^2 [df = 1] = 803.7, p < .0001$). In the United States, policy was discussed three times as often as character (74% policy, 25% character; $\chi^2 [df = 1] = 1580.76, p < .0001$). In 1997, Kim offered this example of a statement on policy: “The issue is about international competitiveness. The best solution will be to maintain or improve international competitiveness, without lay-offs.” Clearly, international trade is a policy topic. In contrast, Lee discussed his leadership ability, or experience in office, illustrating a character comment: “I have 30 years of experience as a judge. I also held other public offices, such as the Chairman of the Board of Audit and Inspection and Prime Minister. I was also the President in the main political party” (2002). Policy in U.S. debates varied from 66% to 93% (mean of 76%), whereas character ranged from 7% to 34% (mean of 25%). Although debates in all three countries stressed policy more than character, statistical analysis reveals that American debates discussed character more, and policy less, than either French ($\chi^2 [df = 1] = 141.84, p < .0001$) or South Korean ($\chi^2 [df = 1] = 106.39, p < .0001$) debates.

Table 2. *Topics of French, South Korean, and American Debates*

| | Policy | Character | χ^2 ($df = 1$) |
|--------------|------------|------------|-----------------------|
| French | | | |
| 1988 | 498 (87%) | 74 (13%) | 669.58 $p < .0001$ |
| 1995 | 483 (91%) | 47 (8%) | |
| Total | 981 (89%) | 121 (11%) | |
| South Korean | | | |
| 1997 | 666 (82%) | 142 (18%) | 803.7 $p < .0001$ |
| 2002 | 777 (86%) | 127 (14%) | |
| Total | 1443 (84%) | 269 (16%) | |
| American | | | |
| 1960 | 458 (78%) | 129 (22%) | 1580.76 $p < .0001$ |
| 1976 | 565 (86%) | 92 (14%) | |
| 1980 | 188 (93%) | 14 (7%) | |
| 1984 | 321 (80%) | 82 (28%) | |
| 1988 | 561 (66%) | 290 (34%) | |
| 1992 | 374 (73%) | 138 (27%) | |
| 1996 | 620 (69%) | 274 (31%) | |
| 2000 | 865 (76%) | 276 (24%) | |
| 2004 | 933 (72%) | 371 (28%) | |
| Total | 4885 (75%) | 1666 (25%) | |

The third hypothesis predicted that incumbents would acclaim more, and attack less, than challengers. In the French debates this prediction was confirmed, with incumbents acclaiming more (69% to 62%), and attacking less (31% to 38%) than challengers ($\chi^2 [df = 1] = 4.6, p < .05, V = .07$). Although the proportions of acclaims and attacks were ordered in the predicted direction in South Korea, the frequency of use of acclaims and attacks by incumbents and challengers was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 [df = 1] = 1.7, ns$). The difference was significant for American debates, with incumbents acclaiming more (72% to 54%) and attacking less (28%, 46%) than challengers ($\chi^2 [df = 1] = 235.88, p < .0001, V = .19$). See Table 3 for these data. Notice, however, that the effect size for the relationship between incumbency and function in American debates is noticeably larger ($V = .19$) than in France ($V = .07$).

Table 3. *Acclaims and Attacks by Incumbents versus Challengers in French, Korean, and American Debates*

| | Acclaims | Attacks | χ^2 ($df = 1$) |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| French Debates (1988, 1995) | | | |
| Incumbents | 377 (69%) | 171 (31%) | 4.6, $p < .05$ $V = .07$ |
| Challengers | 341 (62%) | 205 (38%) | |
| South Korean Debates (1997, 2002) | | | |
| Incumbents | 304 (64%) | 174 (36%) | 1.7, ns |
| Challengers | 742 (60%) | 494 (40%) | |
| American Debates (1960, 1976-2004) | | | |
| Incumbents | 2082 (72%) | 800 (28%) | 235.88, $p < .0001$ $V = .19$ |
| Challengers | 1968 (54%) | 1702 (46%) | |

The fourth prediction held that incumbent party candidates would utilize past deeds more as the basis for acclaims, and less for attacks, than challengers. This hypothesis was confirmed in the French debates, with the incumbent candidate acclaiming more (44% to 18%) and attacking less (56% to 82%) on past deeds than challengers ($\chi^2 [df = 1] = 28.73, p < .0001, V = .26$). However, this hypothesis was not confirmed in the South Korean debates (the difference insignificant: $\chi^2 [df = 1] = 1.39, ns$). American debates revealed the predicted pattern, with incumbents acclaiming more (72% to 18%) and attacking less (28% to 82%) than challengers on past deeds ($\chi^2 [df = 1] = 687.78, p < .00001, V = .55$). The effect size for this relationship in American debates was larger than in French debates ($V = .55, V = .26$, respectively). These data are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4. *Acclaims and Attacks on Past Deeds by Incumbents versus Challengers in French, Korean, and American Debates*

| | Acclaims | Attacks | χ^2 ($df = 1$) |
|------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| French Debates (1988, 1995) | | | |
| Incumbents | 45 (44%) | 57 (56%) | 28.73, $p < .0001$ $V = .26$ |
| Challengers | 60 (18%) | 279 (82%) | |
| South Korean Debates (1997, 2002) | | | |
| Incumbents | 75 (46%) | 88 (54%) | 1.39, ns |
| Challengers | 126 (52.5%) | 114 (47.5%) | |
| American Debates (1960, 1976-2004) | | | |
| Incumbents | 737 (72%) | 284 (28%) | 687.78, $p < .0001$ $V = .55$ |
| Challengers | 225 (18%) | 1046 (82%) | |

The fifth hypothesis predicted that general goals would be used more frequently to acclaim than to attack. This expectation was confirmed in French (326 acclaims and 71 attacks on general goals; χ^2 [df = 1] = 162.5, $p < .0001$), South Korean (511 acclaims and 92 attacks on general goals; χ^2 [df = 1] = 289.76, $p < .0001$), and American (1349 acclaims and 230 attacks on general goals; χ^2 [df = 1] = 791.6, $p < .0001$) debates. These data are reported in Table 5.

Table 5. *Forms of Policy in French, South Korean, and American Debates*

| | Past Deeds | | Future Plans | | General Goals | |
|----------------------------|------------|------|--------------|-----|---------------|-----|
| French | | | | | | |
| 1988 Mitterrand (I) | 41 | 58 | 18 | 8 | 74 | 10 |
| Chirac (C) | 105 | 73 | 27 | 13 | 58 | 13 |
| 1995 Jospin (I) | 34 | 30 | 57 | 10 | 109 | 22 |
| Chirac (C) | 21 | 41 | 19 | 29 | 85 | 26 |
| Total | 201 | 202 | 121 | 60 | 326 | 71 |
| South Korean | | | | | | |
| 1997 Lee (I) | 18 | 26 | 33 | 13 | 79 | 17 |
| Kim | 21 | 69 | 55 | 7 | 92 | 10 |
| Lee | 12 | 59 | 54 | 14 | 76 | 11 |
| 2002 Lee | 13 | 41 | 57 | 16 | 98 | 13 |
| Noh (I) | 27 | 31 | 47 | 19 | 68 | 18 |
| Kwon | 14 | 110 | 64 | 20 | 98 | 23 |
| Total | 105 | 336 | 310 | 89 | 511 | 92 |
| American (1960, 1976-2004) | | | | | | |
| Incumbents | 737 | 284 | 318 | 158 | 575 | 119 |
| Challengers | 225 | 1046 | 404 | 134 | 774 | 111 |

French debates: acclaims versus attacks on general goals $\chi^2 (df = 1) = 162.5, p < .0001$.

South Korean debates: acclaims versus attacks on general goals $\chi^2 (df = 1) = 289.76, p < .0001$.

American Debates: acclaims versus attacks on general goals $\chi^2 (df = 1) = 791.6, p < .0001$.

The last hypothesis predicted that, as with general goals, ideals would be used more frequently to acclaim than to attack. Only three utterances concerned ideals in the two French debates analyzed here; all were acclaims. This is certainly in the predicted direction but with the number of ideals so small it cannot be considered to be very strong support. Somewhat strong evidence for H6 can be found in South Korean debates: 68 acclaims and 1 attack on ideals ($\chi^2 [df = 1] = 63.14, p < .0001$). Candidates in U.S. presidential debates followed this pattern, with 413 acclaims and 91 attacks on ideals ($\chi^2 [df = 1] = 204.44, p < .0001$). These data are reported in Table 6.

Table 6. *Forms of Character in French, South Korean, and American Debates*

| | Personal Qualities | | Leadership Ability | | Ideals | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|--------|----|
| French | | | | | | |
| 1988 Mitterrand (I) | 9 | 24 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Chirac (C) | 10 | 16 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 1995 Jospin (I) | 19 | 7 | 7 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Chirac (C) | 7 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Total | 45 | 49 | 20 | 4 | 3 | 0 |
| South Korean | | | | | | |
| 1997 Lee (I) | 2 | 29 | 2 | 1 | 10 | 0 |
| Kim | 3 | 26 | 6 | 8 | 6 | 0 |
| Lee | 2 | 28 | 5 | 4 | 9 | 1 |
| 2002 Lee | 9 | 16 | 6 | 1 | 10 | 0 |
| Noh (I) | 7 | 17 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 0 |
| Kwon | 4 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 26 | 0 |
| Total | 27 | 133 | 23 | 17 | 68 | 1 |
| American (1960, 1976-2004) | | | | | | |
| Incumbents | 143 | 138 | 108 | 47 | 201 | 54 |
| Challengers | 178 | 225 | 175 | 118 | 212 | 37 |

French debates: too few instances to calculate acclaims versus attacks on ideals.
 South Korean debates: acclaims versus attacks on ideals $\chi^2 (df = 1) = 63.14, p < .0001$.

American debates: acclaims versus attacks on ideals $\chi^2 (df = 1) = 204.44, p < .0001$.

Implications

The two replications reported here provide support for the claim that some factors influencing the production of political campaign discourse work across cultures. Overall, acclaims are the most common function, attacks are the second most frequent function, and defenses are the least used function in France, South Korea, Israel (Benoit & Sheaffer, 2006), and the U.S. Functional Theory explains that these three functions have different drawbacks which lead to this distribution of functions. Attacks may upset those voters who profess to dislike mudslinging. Defenses, in contrast, have three drawbacks (two most applicable to debates). First, one is usually attacked in an area of weakness, so defending against an attack is likely to take a candidate “off-message.” Second, defenses may encourage the impression that a candidate is reactive rather than proactive. Third, if there is a chance the audience is not aware of an attack, or has forgotten it, a defense could inform or remind voters of a potential weakness (although this not likely to be a concern in debates). For these reasons, we expect acclaims to outnumber attacks and defenses to be the least common function. It is clear that some attributes of political campaign messages occur across countries (although of course we cannot from these data conclude that these relationships will hold true in all countries).

Second, Functional Theory predicts that policy will be more common than character because public opinion poll data reveals that more American voters report that policy is a more important determinant of their vote for president than character. Although we do not have comparable public opinion data from France, South Korea, or Israel (Benoit & Sheaffer, 2006), content analysis of their debates reveal that these candidates emphasized policy more than character. Another similarity is the emphasis on policy over character in political debates. The results on topic emphasis from these countries are also consistent with Baker and Norpath’s (1981) study of the 1972 German debates. Of course we cannot be sure this pattern will replicate in other countries (or in every debate), but so far discussion of policy is more common than character in debates in several countries.

In fact, the emphasis on policy was significantly greater in both France and South Korea than in the United States or Israel (Benoit & Sheaffer, 2006). If candidates are responding to the interests of their electorates, this could mean that character is even less important (or important to even fewer voters) in those two countries than in America or Israel. The tradition of quite sharp political party ideological differences in France may be one reason policy is emphasized so much more in France than in the United States.

Third, predictions for incumbency (H3 and H4) were upheld in France, the United States, and Israel (Benoit & Sheaffer, 2006) but not South Korea. In France, candidates from the incumbent party acclaim more, and attack less, than challengers. Incumbent party candidates in that country are also more likely to use past deeds for acclaims (and less for attacks) than challengers. This is reasonable because, as the theory posits, only the incumbent party candidate has a recent record in the office sought. That record provides a resource (past deeds)

which incumbents can use to acclaim (but not to attack) and challengers can use to attack (but not to acclaim). Of course, challengers can acclaim records in other offices, and incumbents can attack the challenger's record in other offices, but the record in the presidency is more relevant to the vote choice for president. Similarly, the leaders of the challenging parties in the 1972 German debates tended to attack the incumbent party's record, which the incumbent party candidates defended (Baker & Norpoth, 1981). In contrast, no candidate in South Korea had a record in the office sought, a key element of incumbency in functional theory. Interestingly, this prediction was upheld overall in Israel, but not in 1988. However, the close election results in 1984 led to a unity governing from 1984-1988 in which the prime minister was from one major party from 1984-1986 and the other major party from 1986-1988. Thus, Functional Theory acknowledges that when neither candidate, or both candidates, have a record in office, this situation influences production of messages by incumbents and challengers. Of course, it is possible that other factors, such as cultural differences between countries, contextual differences, or individual tendencies of particular candidates, could account for contrasting results.

The situation in France underscores the importance of understanding the specific political context when interpreting data on such variables as incumbency. France has both a president (elected by direct vote of the people) and a prime minister (who represents the party or coalition of parties with the most seats in the assembly). In 1988, Mitterand was the president and his opponent, Chirac, was the prime minister. In 1995, neither Chirac nor Jospin served as president or prime minister. It is not surprising, therefore, to discover that past deeds (most of which are acclaims or attacks on the incumbent party candidate's record) were employed much more frequently in 1988 (when the candidates were a president and a prime minister) than in 1995 (when neither candidate was a president or a prime minister): 277 to 126. The candidates apparently shifted to more discussion of general goals in the latter debates (242 in 1995, up from 155 in 1988).

This generally consistent relationship between incumbency and function, however, did not occur in South Korean debates. This difference could arise from several factors. First, candidates are limited to a single term in office, so no sitting incumbent president may run for reelection in South Korea. Furthermore, the South Korean government does not have a vice president. In the U.S., vice presidents (e.g., the first George H. W. Bush and Al Gore, for example) usually run for the presidency when their running-mate cannot run again. Third, political parties may be less well-established in South Korea (South Korea's two political parties have not existed for as long as the Democratic and Republican parties in the U.S.), weakening the incumbent party ties. The fact that both debates featured three candidates (two "challengers") may also have influenced the results (in the United States, only one campaign, 1992, featured three candidates). Incumbency appears to have a larger influence on political debates in America and France than in South Korea. This underscores the importance of understanding the differences in political systems of the countries from which political campaign messages are being investigated.

Finally, candidates in political debates use general goals and ideas much more often as the basis for acclaims than for attacks. So many goals, values, and principles are considered desirable (e.g., creating jobs, equality) by most voters that it is much easier to acclaim than attack with these message forms. This suggests that all forms of political campaign discourse (e.g., general goals, ideals) are not equally easy for candidates to use for acclaims *and* attacks.

We believe it is important to acknowledge limitations of this analysis. First, it includes only three countries. Second, in two of those countries, France and South Korea, only two campaigns are represented. Finally, we do not attempt to answer every potential question about these debates. However, these replications add to our understanding of political leaders' debates around the world.

Conclusion

This replication of research on political campaign messages in France and South Korea, two different contexts, extends our cross-cultural understanding of an increasingly important message form: political leaders debates. The analysis reveals both similarities and differences across culture. It seems clear that additional research will help clarify the nature of political campaign research in the many countries which elect their leaders via political campaigns. It is possible that other factors, such as historical or cultural differences, influenced the nature and content of these debates. And, of course, the questions asked in debates encourage the candidates to address particular topics. However, regardless of what factor or factors influenced the content of these messages, this is the content that was available to voters and the news media for their consideration. One obvious need is for research on televised political debates in countries with a parliamentary system (such as Germany). However, as became evident in the discussion, we must remain cognizant of diversity in the political systems of different countries.

This line of research can be extended and augmented in many ways. First, debates are being held for other offices (such as mayor) both in the U.S. and other countries. This method could be expanded to help understand debates for other political offices. Second, this approach can be applied to other forms of discourse, such as political television spots, webpages, blogs, stump speeches, or direct mail advertising (see Benoit, 2007, for discussion of Functional Theory research on other message forms, mainly on American campaigns). Research in this tradition has contrasted campaign messages from incumbents versus challengers and Democrats versus Republicans (Benoit, 2007); research could also investigate the influence of other variables such as gender, age, or ethnicity on candidate messages. Fourth, case studies of specific political campaigns for offices at various levels and in different countries could help illuminate the influence of contextual factors. Furthermore, Functional Theory does not attempt to address every potentially important question about political debates. Other interesting questions include the use of supporting materials in campaign messages, such as evidence or metaphors. Mixed-method research (see, e.g., Benoit & Holbert, in press; Creswell, 2003, or Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) could com-

bine Functional Analysis of campaign messages with audience effects research (e.g., focus groups, survey) of the same messages. Many opportunities exist for extending our understanding of political campaign messages around the world.

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Appendix: Political Debate Participants

| | Incumbency | Outcome |
|---------------------|------------|---------|
| France 1988 | | |
| Francois Mitterrand | Incumbent | Winner |
| Jacque Chirac | Challenger | Loser |
| France 1995 | | |
| Lionel Jospin | Incumbent* | Loser |
| Jacque Chirac | Challenger | Winner |
| South Korea 1997 | | |
| Hoi-Chang Lee | Incumbent* | Loser |
| Dae-Jung Kim | Challenger | Winner |
| In-Jae Lee | Challenger | Loser |
| South Korea 2002 | | |
| Moo-Hyun Noh | Incumbent* | Winner |
| Hoi-Chang Lee | Challenger | Loser |
| Young-Ghil Kwon | Challenger | Loser |
| U.S. 1960 | | |
| Richard M. Nixon | Incumbent* | Loser |
| John F. Kennedy | Challenger | Winner |
| U.S. 1976 | | |
| Gerald Ford | Incumbent | Loser |
| Jimmy Carter | Challenger | Winner |
| U.S. 1980 | | |
| Jimmy Carter | Incumbent | Loser |
| Ronald Reagan | Challenger | Winner |
| U.S. 1984 | | |
| Ronald Reagan | Incumbent | Winner |
| Walter Mondale | Challenger | Loser |
| U.S. 1988 | | |
| George W. Bush | Incumbent* | Winner |
| Michael Dukakis | Challenger | Loser |
| U.S. 1992 | | |
| George W. Bush | Incumbent | Loser |
| Bill Clinton | Challenger | Winner |
| H. Ross Perot | Challenger | Loser |

U.S. 1996

| | | |
|--------------|-----------|--------|
| Bill Clinton | Incumbent | Winner |
|--------------|-----------|--------|

| | | |
|----------|------------|-------|
| Bob Dole | Challenger | Loser |
|----------|------------|-------|

U.S. 2000

| | | |
|---------|------------|-------|
| Al Gore | Incumbent* | Loser |
|---------|------------|-------|

| | | |
|----------------|------------|--------|
| George W. Bush | Challenger | Winner |
|----------------|------------|--------|

U.S. 2004

| | | |
|----------------|-----------|--------|
| George W. Bush | Incumbent | Winner |
|----------------|-----------|--------|

| | | |
|------------|------------|-------|
| John Kerry | Challenger | Loser |
|------------|------------|-------|

*incumbent party candidate

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Critiquing Debate

James P. Dimock

Debaters enjoy debating more than debate itself. The closer one gets to becoming “an old debater” (a category to which I will inevitably have to resign myself sooner or later), the more likely we are to find ourselves debating on the side of “the way debate used to be” or “the way debate is supposed to be.” I don’t malign this seemingly inevitable progression or even my place in it. I think the tendency to re-examine ourselves says something about our activity.

I enter this debate about debate, I think I should begin by defining my side of the flow, or to at least identify which side of the flow I am attacking. My purpose is not to condemn debating or to defend the good old days of debate. Rather I hope to engage in a critique of the activity. Debaters are familiar with critique, often spelled with a “k,” as an attack upon the philosophical or ideological assumptions of the opponent’s argument but critiques exist outside the world of debate as well and their purpose is not merely to win arguments. Critique, as Ingram and Simon-Ingram (1992) noted, aims “at emancipating ... addresses from ideology” (p. xxviii) and McKerrow (1989) argued the practice of critical rhetoric is “to unmask or demystify the discourse of power” and “to understand the integration of power/knowledge in society” (p. 91). My critique is concerned not with what is good or bad debating, but with how debate constructs “a particular vision of the world” and the “forms of power ... embraced or implicated” (McKerrow, 2001, p. 621) by the activity. Specifically, the focus of my effort is on the practice of competitive debating, in particular how debate practices control and organize knowledge in fundamentally undemocratic ways.

That debate should lend itself to undemocratic ideology is ironic. The activity of debate has long been justified and defended on the grounds of its democratic-ness. Advocates of debate, at both the high school and collegiate level, have grounded their support for the activity on its capacity to train students in the skills necessary for citizenship in a democratic society. Freely (1996) contended that, “Society benefits if debate is encouraged, both because free and open debate protects the rights of individuals and because debate offers society a way of reaching optimal decisions” (p. 6). The connection between participation in debate and democracy is a core assumption of debate coaches and forensic educators. In Mitchell’s (1998) words, the connection between democracy and debate is a “faith inscribed in the American Forensic Association’s Credo, reproduced in scores of argumentation textbooks, and rehearsed over and over again in introductory argumentation courses” (para. 2). The advocates of debate support the link between debate and participation in a democratic society. Muir (1993), for example, has claimed:

... debate involves certain skills, including research and policy evaluation, that evolve along with the debater’s consciousness of the complexities of moral and political dilemmas. This conceptual development is a basis for the formation of ideas and relational thinking necessary for effective public

decision making, making even the game of debate a significant benefit in solving real world problems. (p. 287)

The advocates of contest debating assume almost categorically that debating teaches students to question assumptions, think critically and research positions—all keys to arguing effectively. If we take as a given the premise that a democratic society depends upon argument and, second, that debate provides students with instruction in the art of argumentation, then it is reasonable to conclude debate should be valued by and fostered in a democratic society. Such reasoning holds, however, only insofar as we can reasonably assume all argument is equally democratic. If the assumption doesn't hold, however, then undemocratic argumentation must be distinguished from the democratic. Thus, the purpose of my critique.

I believe two aspects of contest debating run counter to the democratic goals of the activity: concision and the unqualified obedience to authority; each aspect addressed in turn.

Concision

One of the most anti-critical dimensions of debating is the structural imposition of concision upon argumentation. I borrow the concept from Noam Chomsky who identified concision as a property of the propaganda model of the media. The model posits that the mass-media filters news and information in order to marginalize dissent and protect moneyed and powerful interests. In the context of mass-media, “concision means you have to be able to say things between two commercials” (Chomsky, 2002, p. 387). Concision as a structural constraint “imposes conformism in a very deep way because if you have to meet the condition of concision, you can only either repeat conventional platitudes or else you sound like you are from Neptune” (p. 387). If a person says, for example, that Iran sponsors terrorism, the claim sounds perfectly reasonable and the speaker is simply repeating a position said over and over again. Thus, little if any evidence is required to back up the claim. The claim can be made concisely. Suppose, however, the speaker was to make an unconventional claim by stating the United States sponsors terrorism. Under such conditions, Chomsky contended, people have a right to demand evidence in support of that claim. Chomsky explained the dilemma:

This structural requirement of concision that's imposed by our media disallows the possibility of explanation; in fact, that's its propaganda function. It means that you can repeat conventional platitudes, but you can't say anything out of the ordinary without sounding as if you're from Neptune, a wacko, because to explain what you meant—and people have a right to ask if it's an unconventional thought—would take a bit of time. (p. 387)

One only need watch television news pundits like Bill O'Reilly to see the concision principle in action: the more the guests' opinions differ from the host,

the less they are allowed to speak. Even those who do get to talk at length are getting only a minute or two to explain themselves. Only those who are able to express simple ideas that require little or no supporting analysis or evidence are able to get their point across clearly. The further outside the mainstream an idea is, the more likely the guest will sound like someone “from Neptune.” Intentional or not, Chomsky concluded, concision is “highly functional to impose thought control” (p. 387). It makes it very difficult to challenge established political dogmas and makes it easy to ridicule those who do.

Experts on debating and argumentation have derided the impact of concision on other forms of debating. The first broadcast political debate in the United States, a presidential primary debate between Thomas Dewey and Harold Stassen, lasted for an hour with each candidate being given twenty minutes for his opening statement and eight and a half minute for rebuttals. The debate was on a single topic: whether or not the communist Party should be outlawed. In his analysis of the debate, Kane (1987) suggested the debate had a meaningful impact on the Oregon State Primary after which Dewey’s failing campaign was “resurrected” and Stassen’s “was all but finished” (p. 252). Since then, however, the political campaign debates have gotten considerably shorter. Kennedy and Nixon had only eight-minute opening statements followed by two-and-a-half minute responses to questions. In the 2004 Presidential debates between George Bush and John Kerry, the time allotted per question was only two minutes. While the length of time for the debates permits the covering of many subjects, nothing can be covered in any depth. The format for debates in presidential campaigns has been tinkered with many times over the years but, as Kane observed, “No degree of tampering ... will compensate for the basic inadequacy that one cannot develop a meaningful position in a very few minutes” (p. 250). Debates may influence voters, yet scholars of argumentation and debating have been negative in their assessment of the quality of these “debates.” The debates are certainly not critical in the sense I am using the term here nor could they be so constrained by concision.

This principle of concision is also at work in contest debating. Time constraints ensure argumentation is limited and that conventional points of view will dominate the debate. Positions firmly within the mainstream require only the sparsest analysis and scantest evidence. The quality or depth of support is hardly at issue since the position is presumed already. Opposition, on the other hand, requires considerable support and is subjected to intense scrutiny. A debater need only suggest Iran has no right to arm itself with nuclear weapons, but considerable resources would be required to support the contention that the United States has no right to their weapons.

Concision is not simply a byproduct of the time constraints imposed on speakers; after all, we must be *some* reasonable time limits both to ensure that the debate is fair (both sides get equal amounts of time) and that the debate tournament is manageable (you can’t schedule multiple rounds of competition unless you have some sense of how long each round will be). Placing limits on time is perfectly reasonable. We should observe, however, how short time limits are given the complexity of the issues considered. Even a simple question of policy

must consider reasons for changing policy (harms and inherency), the nature of the change to be made (plan) and the grounds for expecting positive change in conditions (solvency). The complexity of topics debated has increase dramatically since formal intercollegiate debating began, yet time limits have changed little. The topic of the first National Debate Tournament in 1947 was “Resolved: That labor should be given a direct share in the management of industry” (National Debate Tournament, n.d. “Anticipating,” para. 10). In 2008 - 2009, debaters will consider:

Resolved: that the United States Federal Government should substantially reduce its agricultural support, at least eliminating nearly all of the domestic subsidies, for biofuels, Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations, corn, cotton, dairy, fisheries, rice, soybeans, sugar and/or wheat. (NDT, n.d. “Topics,” para. 1)

As the complexity of the topic increases, the inherent complexity of policy questions increases exponentially. Yet the time permitted to address complexity has not.

As complexity of topics increases, so too does the need for concision. More issues means the time dedicated to each issue is less. Good debaters are at least tacitly aware of this condition and use it to their competitive advantage, wherever possible taking the stance most likely to have little need of rigorous advocacy. Such positions are likely to favor the existing structure and current political dogmas. Change can be advocated, but the basic structure and assumptions of the status quo are not challenged. To extend a metaphor used by radicals (see, for example Friedberg, 2007), it’s permissible to rearrange who gets how much of the pie, as long as the baker remains the same.

The pedagogical foundations of debating, assume that students engage in the activity in order to develop skills conducive to their participation in a democratic society as informed and engaged citizens. Debating should habituate students to questioning assumptions and demanding that claims be justified on the basis of accurate information and sound reasoning. Debaters conditioned upon concision as both a structural constraint and a strategic necessity, however, inculcate blind spots and constrain thought. Debaters trained to argue within the status quo but not to challenge its basic assumptions might well be more dangerous to the cause of genuine democracy than had they had no such training at all. Those who have had no training are, at least, not brainwashed into believing they have reached the limits of what can be argued.

Obedience to Authority

Since Aristotle, scholars of argumentation have identified different types of arguments debaters might use in defense or refutation of a given claim. How those types of argument are delineated depends upon the person making the classifications. We generally recognize arguments can be divided into two distinctly different classes. Aristotle (1946) distinguished between artistic proofs (ethos, pathos and logos) and inartistic proofs (“witnesses, evidence given under Speaker and Gavel, Vol 46 (2009)

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torture, written contracts, and so on”) (p. 1355b). Rhetorician Richard M. Weaver (1974) classified arguments as “‘internal’ in the sense that they involve our own interpretation of experience” and “‘external’ sources” of argument “which utilize the interpretation of others” (p. 144). External arguments, in the simplest form, involve citation of authorities or the quoting of witness testimony. I, for example, could have made the distinction between internal and external arguments based upon my own understanding of the structure of arguments. Instead, however, I invoked Weaver and Aristotle as authorities in order to make my argument. The basic structure of the argument from authority can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Minor Premise: | <i>If</i> | Weaver and Aristotle distinguish between internal and external forms of argument. |
| Major Premise: | <i>and if</i> | Weaver and Aristotle have sufficient expertise that we can accept their conclusions without further support. |
| Therefore Conclusion: | <i>then necessarily</i> | There is a distinction between internal and external forms of argument. |

The syllogism makes apparent such arguments “have no intrinsic force; whatever persuasive power they carry is derived from the credit of the testifier

or the weight of the authority” (Weaver, 1974, p. 146). The lack of intrinsic force does not mean, however, that arguments from authority and testimony are not legitimate forms of argument. Rather, it means such arguments depend upon the credibility of the witness or expert which lie outside the argument, thus they are called external arguments.

Even the best arguers will often base claims upon authority and it is certainly true that critical thinkers, speakers, and writers cite sources of their information (Dimock, Treinen, Cronn-Mills & Jersak, 2008). It is important, however, to avoid obfuscating the distinction between citing sources and the argument from authority as a distinct mode of argument.

Figure 2

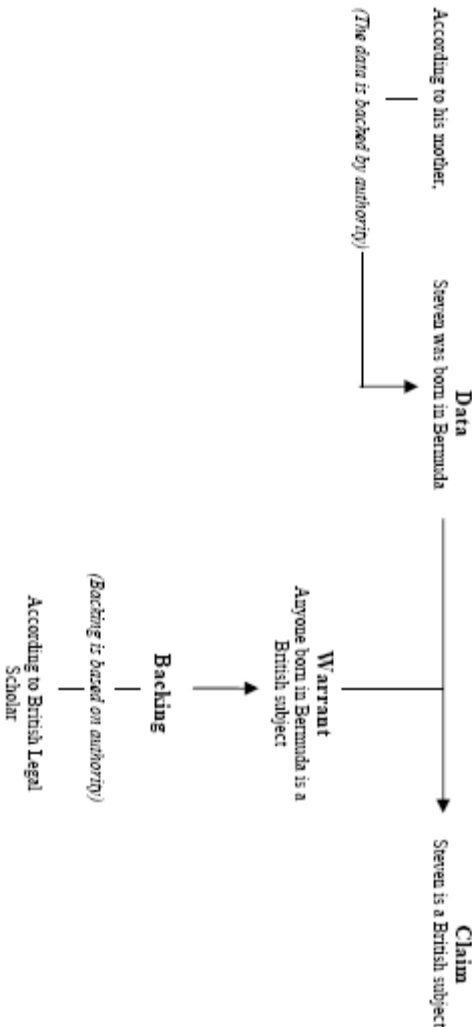
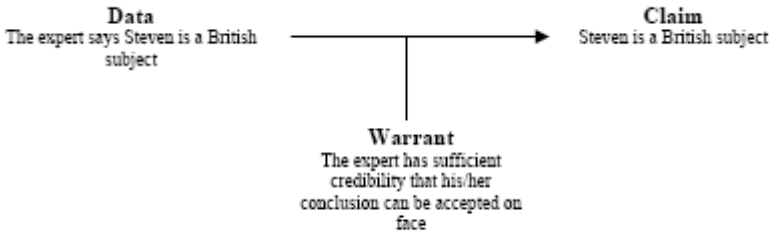


Figure 3



The arguments in Figures 1 and 2 are both based on Toulmin's (1964) model of argument but I have modified them slightly to highlight the distinction between citing sources and arguing from authority. In Figure 1, the argument is supported by authority in order to establish key facts or concepts but the argument itself stands on the strength of the arguer's inference, the conclusion drawn from those facts and concepts. The argument from authority, as seen in Figure 2, is distinctly different. Therein, the conclusion is sustained entirely by authority. The data (where Steven was born) and the warrant (who is a British subject under British law) are presumably there but they are in the mind of the expert. As auditors we are not privy to the data used, the concepts that provide the warrant; only the conclusion and the assurance (which is often enthymematic) that we should take his or her word for it.

I think it is important to stress nothing inherently wrong with the argument from authority. Authority is especially valuable to arguers who are unable to ground arguments in their own experience (just because I have never been to Iraq doesn't mean I should be disqualified from arguing about the Iraq War), provide arguers with perfectly reasonable shortcuts (it is easier and more reasonable to defer to experts on legal questions than research all of the statutes and relevant case law on my own). Indeed, in some cases the conclusions of respected authorities and experts should trump those of the inexpert. If I choke on biscotti at my favorite coffee shop, the only opinions I am interested in are those of persons who are trained in the Heimlich maneuver. No one else's opinion matters.

In such cases, the argument from authority can be qualified. If we draw upon the testimony of those who have been to Iraq when we have not been there for ourselves, we would look at the quality of that testimony: How many witnesses do we ground our argument upon? What is the range of the witnesses' experience? Are the witnesses reliable and credible? When we allow experts to synthesize information and ideas for us, as in the case of legal scholarship we ask different questions: Is the expert qualified? Is the opinion rendered within the expert's field of experience and training? Does he or she have the support of other experts within the field? Does he or she have any agenda which might call into question his or her conclusions? Finally, with respect to technical processes

or procedures, we can qualify the technician: Where and how was the technician trained? How much experience does he or she have?

Arguments from authority are an important component in the arguer's toolbox. It is important that we, as scholars of argumentation, understand the principles and limits of authority as a mode of argument. Unfortunately, however, scholars of argument have tended to pay little attention to the argument from authority. Neglect of the argument from authority begins with Aristotle (1946) who chose to ignore the 'inartistic proofs' and concentrate upon those proofs "such as we can ourselves construct by means of the principles of rhetoric" (p. 1355b). In the Enlightenment, the argument from authority was considered a fallacious "reluctance to challenge authorities that are learned, eminent or powerful" (Hamblin, 1970, p. 162). The philosopher John Locke called arguments from authority "*argumentum ad verecundiam*," and dismissed as fallacious the invocation not only of "*worthless* authorities" but also those "*worthy* authorities, whom it is normally reasonable to trust, maybe wrong" (Hamblin, 1970, p. 162). Contemporary scholars have continued to marginalize the argument from authority. For example, in what might be the most extensive treatment of argumentation and argumentation theory in recent years, van Eemeren and his colleagues (1996) invest almost nothing in the subject of the argumentation from authority continuing to favor other modes of inference and reasoning. But if scholars have been dismissive of the argument from authority, debaters have embraced it whole heartedly.

Freeley's *Argumentation and Debate* has been a standard in the discipline for more than 40 years and the textbook is noted for being principally a work on debate rather than argumentation theory (Hostettler, 1961; Bjork, 1994). Thus *Argumentation and Debate* is a good indicator of what is valued by instructors of debate as opposed to those who emphasize argumentation. Now in its 11th edition, Freeley and Steinberg (2005) have dedicated chapters to the structure of arguments (Chapter 8), the types of arguments (Chapter 9), and fallacies (Chapter 10). Balancing this treatment of argumentation, three chapters are dedicated to evidence wherein Freeley and Steinberg's treat such topics as the location of sources, reading critically, types of evidence, tests of evidence, and other dimensions of the argument from authority. As much weight is placed upon the argument from authority as is given to all other modes and types of arguments combined. Clearly, Freeley and Steinberg give considerably more attention to the argument from authority than van Eemeren et al. give the topic.

I do not wish to suggest that I have conducted a systematic investigation of argumentation or debate textbooks. I believe, however, the difference between Freeley and Steinberg's attention to testimonial and authoritative evidence and that given by van Eemeren et al. is indicative of the different treatment given the subject of authority is given in the two arenas. In argumentation studies, the subject is given little attention and clearly marginalized as a form of argument while in debate it is prioritized. Argumentation scholars may unfairly exclude the argument from authority but within the sphere of interscholastic and intercolle-

giate debate, the argument from authority is not merely a mode of argument; it is *the* primary mode of argument.

All arguers probably make use of the argument from authority to some extent or another and using such arguments is perfectly reasonable. My concern here and what I believe should concern all of us who think debate should be grounded in a democratic pedagogy is the overreliance on the argument from authority to the exclusion of other modes of argument.

Arguments from authority have a presumptive status in competitive debate. If a debater must choose between the use of authority and any other mode of argument, debaters will pick the argument from authority opting other forms of argument only when the option to cite evidence is not available. The opponent's rebuttal will predictably be that, although the argument might be cogent, there was "no evidence." When evidence clashes with any other form of argument, evidence wins and debaters know it. As coaches and judges we reinforce it.

I think the reliance upon a single mode of argument is unquestionably uncritical, like a carpenter who might have had some theoretical training in the use of tools but who really only uses a hammer. Certainly, the hammer is a useful tool and necessary for some tasks but I would have a hard time calling anyone a master carpenter who did not also have a working knowledge of the saw, the screwdriver, and a host of other essential tools. In the same way, we cannot justly claim to be teaching argumentation when in truth we are only teaching one type of argument, even if we are teaching it very well.

This prioritization of one mode of argument at the expense of all others is more than just educationally unsound, it is also uncritical. Rhetorician Richard Weaver (1953) said that how a person argues "tells us how he is thinking about the world" (p. 55) and is thus "a truer index of his beliefs than his explicit profession of principles" (p. 58). Weaver concluded that those who prefer the argument from definition, as he did, tended toward conservatism while those who argued from circumstance were liberal. Extending that position, I contend that those who favor the argument from authority are not necessarily conservative or liberal but technocratic.

Democracy assumes people are able to understand social, political, and economic questions, to weigh evidence, and make reasoned decisions. Conversely, technocracy (as I am using the term herein) assumes that people are generally incapable of understanding, analysis, and reasoned decision-making on such issues.

Noam Chomsky (2006) offered an example of the distinction between democratic and technocratic thinking. Chomsky noted that although he is perhaps most well-known for his political and social commentary, he is education and expertise is in the field of linguistics. His critics have often used this fact against him, suggesting that he is unqualified to render commentary on matters of public policy and international relations. Chomsky's response is that such criticism is not only irrelevant but indicative of an undemocratic mindset. "The alleged complexity, depth and obscurity" of political and social questions are:

...part of the illusion propagated by the system of ideological control which aims to make these issues seem remote from the general population and to persuade them of their incapacity to organized their own affairs or to understand the social world in which they live without the tutelage of intermediaries. (p. 70)

The insistence upon authority to validate claims raised in the political sphere precludes ordinary citizens from voicing their beliefs on political questions removing them from the political process. It effectively domesticates the demos and excludes them from the political sphere. The citizen is positioned outside the political discourse, assigned the role of passive observer while participation is left to experts.

Debaters are not to analyze issues for themselves or exercise what Chomsky called their own “Cartesian common sense” which he believed required little more than “willingness to look at the facts with an open mind, to put simple assumptions to the test, and to pursue an argument to its conclusion” (Chomsky, 2006, p. 70). Instead, debaters are required to cite experts, to make not their own judgments but to discover those of qualified others and recite them at the prescribed moment.

Ultimately, privileging authority is incompatible with the critical perspective. The obedience to authority, the assumptions that for every question there is an expert who can provide the answer, and ordinary people are not competent to discuss policy options without appeal to those who have the ‘right’ kind of knowledge: these are the core premises of technocratic thinking. I would contend, no great step is required to move from the position that experts alone have the right to draw conclusions about policy questions to the position that experts should be the ones making policy decisions. There is simply nothing democratic about that.

Conclusion

The problems posed by concision and the overemphasis of the argumentation from authority are interrelated concerns. The problem of concision is exacerbated by overly-broad topics. So is the problem of overreliance on authority. As Ziegemuller (1996) noted “although there was, over the years, some gradual increase in the amount of evidence used by debaters at the NDT, the rapid expansion in the quantity of evidence used largely coincided with the adoption of ... broad topics” (para. 8). As topics become unmanageably broad, it makes it difficult for debaters to develop their own sense of the ideas or to explore them in depth. Unable to make personal judgments upon the issues, debaters are forced to rely upon the judgments of others.

Debaters who use the argument from authority are also able to argue more concisely than those who develop other modes of analysis. One need only return to Figure 2 and Figure 3 to see which is more concise. Furthermore, the argument from authority aggravates the uncritical nature of concision. Concision favors dominant opinions and current political dogma which are repeated over

and over again in the media. It is thus far easier to find evidence to support mainstream viewpoints and perspectives. Constrained by concision, authorities whose conclusions are too far outside the mainstream must be quoted at greater length in order to make their claims appear rational. Debaters who keep their positions within the very narrow range of the dominant paradigm have a considerable tactical advantage over those who attempt to argue from outside that paradigm.

Concision and the overreliance on authority are practices which make it very difficult to challenge the dominant paradigm. Because they reinforce the dominant ideology, which has tended to favor some groups (white, male, straight, Christian, Western, elites, etc.) while marginalizing others (people of color, women, GLBT, non-Christian, non-Western, poor, etc.). For a long time, we have justified our activity on the grounds that it prepares young people for leadership. But what kinds of leaders will they be? Whether they move on to take roles in government, industry and finance or even the academy, will they be the kind of leaders who are instilled with a respect for democracy? Debate, as it is currently practiced, is designed to produce technocratic elites not democratic citizens.

In our civic culture, individuals are feeling more and more distant from the processes of democracy. Zinn (1997) has noted, for example, that “surveys since the early seventies show that 70 to 80 percent of Americans are distrustful of government, business and the military” (p. 474). An even stronger indicator of people’s alienation from the political process is the low voter turnout, especially among the most disenfranchised segments of the population. The Census Bureau reported that in 2004 voter turnout was up but still only 64 percent and rates were lower among those who are the most marginalized in the status quo: racial minorities, the poor and the youth (Faler, 2005). Voter turnout rates are dismal but the rates of actual participation in politics have been pathetic. While there was an upsurge of participation in 2008, whether this is the beginning of trend or an anomaly remains to be seen. We can conclude, however, that a democratic society is not possible without citizens who see themselves as empowered agents of action capable of understanding issues and making reasoned decisions. We cannot train leaders to do not believe that ordinary people are capable of understanding issues and making reasoned decisions and expect democracy to flourish or even survive.

I debated throughout high school and college. I don’t write this critique because I hate debate or resent debaters. I genuinely believe that no activity has done more for me intellectually than debate. I am convinced that it is an empowering activity and I believe thousands of others like me are proof of that. But as a critical scholar, I cannot come to the conclusion that debate is *personally* empowering and stop there. I cannot accept the conclusion that debating develops critical thinkers but not critically-minded citizens and believe we are doing good enough. I don’t believe debate has failed. I believe debate has failed to take the next step.

We can improve the critical capacity of debating and transform the activity into a truly critical education:

1. We need to fight concision and allow for arguments and positions to be fully considered. This means we need to extend time limits and to ask narrower questions. We simply cannot expect anyone to explain what is wrong with the Horn of Africa and how to fix it in less than ten minutes.
2. We need to value alternative modes of argument and not just as off-beat kritiks offered as merely another way to try and win the ballot. Thus, we need to stop being just judges of debate and start becoming scholars and students of argumentation. Arbitrary changes to the rules have been tried and have failed because we have continued to think of ourselves as debaters rather than as arguers and judges of debates rather than as teachers of argument.
3. We need to start taking our mission seriously. Debate is a game but like any good game its purpose is to instruct and to instill values. If we truly believe we are preparing students for leadership in a democracy and that our activity exists in order to strengthen the foundation of a free society, we should start acting like those values matter.

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New Wine in Old Wineskins Questioning the Value of Research Questions in Rhetorical Criticism

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Recent years have seen a trend toward the inclusion and heightened valuing of research questions in competitive Rhetorical Criticism (Communication Analysis). The inclusion of this content element is quite a new phenomenon on the national-level competitive circuit. In fact, the absence of such research questions in competitive speeches was highlighted by Ott as recently as 1998. But by 2007-2008, the inclusion of a research question was established as essentially *de rigueur* for a vast number of judges. For example, consider the ballots received this past year by a competitively successful rhetorical criticism entry I coached. At one tournament, all five ballots written in response to this speech (2 in Prelims, 3 in Finals) wrote the research question at the very top of the ballot. For four of the five judges, their assessment of the handling of this question was clearly central to the scores they assigned. Three questioned the quality of the question: (1) “this is a big question to ask based on this one incident,” (2) “Islamaphobia: relevant, but a bit out of the public consciousness (for a while now),” and (3) “your research question needs clearer, specific focus – you could apply it to *many* artifacts. How can you focus the question on this specific artifact?” The fourth judge meanwhile focused on the adequacy of the question’s answer, stating that the response needed to be “extended.” Ballot comments about this speech’s research question continued throughout the year – requiring this aspect of the speech to be the single most frequently rewritten and rethought aspect of the speech across the length of the competitive season.

To borrow language from many Persuasive speakers, “this is not an isolated incident.” As both a coach and a frequent tab-room worker, I have read innumerable ballots written by critics judging this event. Research questions have clearly become a crucial component in many judging paradigms. Given the precipitous rise of this speech component, it is important that we assess the nature and worth of emphasizing research questions in competitive rhetorical criticism. In order to do so, we will: first, establish a philosophical perspective from which to answer the question (we will privilege the vision of forensics as an “educational liberal art”); second, speculate about the reasons why this element has so quickly gained favor among judges; third, assess the degree to which this element meshes with other required elements of competitive speeches in this category; and fourth and finally, propose a paradigm shift.

A Philosophical Grounding

The philosophy we accept dictates the forensics world we build. Ott (1998) stresses this fact, opening his article with a quotation from Faules (1968), which states: “At some time during a teacher’s career he [sic] will be asked to explain Speaker and Gavel, Vol 46 (2009) www.dsr-tka.org/

why he [sic] is asking students to perform in a certain way or to carry out a particular task. His answer will determine whether he is an educator or [simply] a trainer, whether he himself is educated, and whether he has considered the reason for his beliefs. The educator knows the ‘why’ of what he does, and to him theory and conceptual knowledge take precedence over conditioned responses....Pedagogy is generated by theory, and theory comes from a philosophy which is grounded in certain values (p. 1).”

Perhaps the most popular metaphor used over the years to frame the discussion of forensics-as-education has been McBath’s “educational laboratory” (1975). For example, Burnett, Brand, and Meister (2003) point to Ulrich (1984) and Whitney (1997) as examples of community members who have relied on this metaphor. But while the laboratory metaphor can be interpreted in quite positive ways (particularly if we envision the laboratory as a place where exploration and risks are dared within a safe environment), this metaphor becomes problematic if we envision the laboratory as a site where “one right answer” (a single Platonic “Truth”) is envisioned as the ultimate end sought. Thus, Aden’s definition of forensics as a “liberal art” (1991) may be a more satisfying way to conceptualize the field. In any case, a significant numbers of scholars have stressed the significance of educational goals in forensics. Others, however, question this vision. Instead, some believe it is better described as a competitive playing field – a world in which education is an appealing shibboleth but competition is a full-blooded reality. Thus, Burnett, Brand and Meister (2003) title their article “Winning is Everything: Education as Myth in Forensics.” Providing an explanation for this title, they write: “current practices in forensics focus on competition and not on an often-referenced education model....although forensics can be viewed as both an educational and a competitive activity, the practice of competition co-opts education. In Burke’s terms, through the focus on competition, we have developed a ‘trained incapacity’ to focus on the merits of education....Our training at best blinds, and at the least clouds, the mythic “educational” virtues of the forensics community (p. 12).”

In the face of these two visions of our activity, this essay is committed to a value paradigm which asserts the primacy of educational values over competitive values. While the activity undeniably is highly competitive in nature, my concern is with what I see as the “ultimate justification” for forensics. The position staked out here asserts that the value of forensics is massively diminished if it is defined primarily as an act of competition. This is not to deny that competitive is a powerful and valuable teacher of many valuable concrete skills and mental perspectives. However, I believe that competitive goals are too often privileged to the detriment of more important ethical, practical, emotional, spiritual, and life-learning educational goals. Thus, as applied to the question at hand, this paper seeks to determine whether or not the inclusion of research questions in competitive rhetorical criticism: (1) does or does not make “logical sense” within the context of critical writing at this level of educational growth among students, and (2) does or does not help students to better prepare for graduate work in communication studies (or related fields).

Why Have Judge-Critics Embraced the Use of Research Questions?

The answers suggested here in response to this question are at best speculative. I have not yet attempted to gather any empirical data on this subject, and so I am relying on informal conversations, a reading of the extant literature, a study of various ballots written by judges, and my own instincts in order to reach my conclusions. Tentatively, I believe that the circuit's turn toward research questions is based in part upon: (1) a general desire for change in the event/activity, (2) a desire to deepen the level of thinking (cognitive complexity) demanded by the event, (3) a desire to connect students more deeply to the scholarly traditions of our discipline, and (4) a desire to clarify the extant judging criteria (an urge for additional standardization).

First, humans desire change. While we appreciate continuity and tradition, we also want to try new things and take new paths. We need to believe that we have new insights to offer, new discoveries to make, new vistas to look out over, new roads others have not seen before that deserve to be traveled. When it comes to academia, schools periodically create new "Five Year Plans" that project goals and objectives for the future that will take them beyond where they stand at present. Academic departments periodically review their curricula and major/minor tracks with an eye toward updating and enhancing them. Instructors regularly rethink the individual courses they teach, looking for ways (both minor and major) to improve them. This general urge certainly applies to the educational laboratory of forensics at large as well as to the written and unwritten "rules" the community employs in relation to the individual speaking events. We do not want to "do the same thing forever." Nor do we need to. Nor should we. In fact, even the quickest glance at the field of rhetorical criticism as an academic discipline demonstrates the need to evolve our practices. As noted by Foss (1989, p. 71), the modern-day pursuit of rhetorical criticism can be (in a certain sense) dated to its birth in 1925 with the publication by Herbert A. Wichelns of his article "The Literary Criticism of Oratory." For the next forty years or so, Neo-Aristotelianism constituted the virtually singular track critics trod in their work. But this all changed in the mid-1960's, triggered by the work of Edwin Black. As a field, we discovered that there were a lot more ways to look at rhetoric, a lot more tools available to dissect it, a lot more questions to ask about it, and a lot more insights to be derived from it. Today, rhetorical critics revel in and rely on the freedom to study a vast array of rhetorical artifacts from a plethora of perspectives. These perspectives are typically grounded in the work of other critics, but each work of criticism is a unique blend of past knowledge, a particular rhetorical artifact, and the unique insights of the particular critic. No critic is "locked in" to the boundaries established by another. To a very meaningful degree, each writer is free to write and rewrite the rules they individually play by. Thus, as it relates to competitive forensics, it makes sense that our community "bucks against traditional constraints" and wants to find new ways to pursue this event.

Second, in our role as educators we genuinely yearn to teach our students more. One aspect of this desire is particularly relevant here. Adherents of the traditional Western style of thinking, we want our students to demonstrate their ability to think in depth by showing us that they can connect the fragments of their thoughts on any given subject in a linear and maximally-realized way. Including a research question, at first glance, appears to be a way to demand greater coherence in speeches. It's presence implies that the student has followed a logical and mentally progressive process in writing the speech: they must have begun with an artifact, which then gave birth to a research question, which then caused the student to search for and locate the "ideal tool" by which to answer that question, which then demanded an application of the tool to the artifact, which then (through the application process) produced a clear and coherent answer to the question. This is, after all, the research paradigm associated with the "hard sciences" we often idealize and seek to emulate. Littlejohn (1983) defines the process of academic inquiry accordingly:

Inquiry involves processes of systematic, disciplined ordering of experience that lead to the development of understanding and knowledge Inquiry is focused; it involves a planned means or method and it has an expected outcome. The investigator is never sure of the exact outcome of inquiry and can anticipate only the general form or nature of the results. These scholars also share a general approach to inquiry that involves three stages. The first and guiding stage of all inquiry is *asking questions*. Gerald Miller and Henry Nicholson [1976], in fact, believe that inquiry is 'nothing more...than the process of asking interesting, significant questions...and providing disciplined, systematic answers to them.'...the second stage of inquiry is *observation*....The third stage of inquiry is *constructing answers*. Here, the scholar attempts to define, to describe and explain, to make judgments. This stage, which is the focus of this book, is usually referred to as *theory*. (p. 9)

This general process substantially reflects the standardized outline we expect students to employ when writing competitive rhetorical criticism speeches today: ask a question, observe the phenomenon (apply a rhetorical method to a rhetorical artifact as a lens through which to view its properties), and then answer the question (derive critical conclusions). Thus, many judges may well believe that they are enhancing the education of the students they critique by requiring them to present clear and pointed research questions. In this context, the use of research questions is perceived by judge-critics as a valuable addition to the educational laboratory.

Third, as rhetorical scholars ourselves, we seek to pass on the knowledge of our field to our students. We want to aid them as they begin the journey toward becoming rhetoricians. Ott (1998) reminds us that "[t]he academic discipline of speech communication and the activity of intercollegiate forensics are natural allies....Collectively, these two traditions represent a unique intersection of theory and practice (p. 53)." Accordingly, LaMaster (2005) observes that "Rhetorical Criticism is modeled after academic rhetorical criticism" (p. 32). At some

level, we hope and intend that participating in this competitive event will better prepare our students for possible future study in the discipline. The value of working with this event for students who are considering going on to graduate school is often stressed – and indeed, a significant number of forensics competitors ultimately pursue careers in the area of rhetorical scholarship.

A fourth reason also can be suggested as to why judge-critics have embraced the inclusion of research questions in competitive speeches. As participants in forensics, we feel a constant pressure toward higher levels of standardization. We want to be able to evaluate students as fairly as possible. We feel pressure to offer “mainstream” comments that demonstrate our understanding of and adherence to “unwritten rules” that enhance the do-ability of coaching and the predictability of results. As a rising number of our colleagues talk about and vote on the basis of research questions, the likelihood that we also will adopt this practice increases. Thus, it becomes even more important that we evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of this trend now, before it becomes even more deeply entrenched in our collective judging paradigm.

Evaluating the “Fit” of the Research Question in the Practice of Competitive Rhetorical Criticism

In order to conduct this evaluation, it is essential to begin with Littlejohn’s preceding description of the inquiry process. By analyzing the progression he describes, we can observe that two critical concepts are central to it: (1) a linear time progression, and (2) a step-to-step freedom to make choices at any given stage of the process depending on what has happened in the preceding stage. I will argue that both of these essential components of the inquiry process are impossible to achieve in a genuine way within the current standardized rhetorical criticism model.

First, the inquiry process mandates that the research question pre-date the selection not only of the general body of theory the researcher employs (Marxism, feminism, or whatever), but also – and much more importantly – precedes the selection of the particular rhetorical tenets (“methodological elements” we often call them in forensics) the critic employs in relation to the general body of theory. Thus, the research question points the way to a general critical perspective, but does not immediately mandate the selection of particular “methodological constructs” (those appear later in the process). An extended quotation from Ott (1998) helps to clarify the point here:

Modern textbooks on rhetorical criticism survey several methods. These methods are unified, not by a set of narrow rhetorical tenets, but by a general outlook. In *Rhetoric and Popular culture*, for instance, Brummett identifies five key methods: marxist, feminist and psychoanalytic, dramatic/narrative, media-centered, and culture-centered. Brock, Scott, and Chesbro’s *Methods of Rhetorical Criticism* is organized around the methods of fantasy-theme, neo-Aristotelianism, dramatic, narrative, generic, feminist, and deconstructionist. Similarly, Foss’s *Rhetorical Criticism* covers cluster,

neo-Aristotelianism, fantasy-theme, feminist, generic, ideological, narrative, and pentadic....All of these methods exist, not as a narrow set of controlling terms, but as a general perspective on discourse. Genre criticism generally examines the shared expectations created by classes of texts...and so forth. *This scholarly view of method has two important consequences. First, each method can produce an infinitude of distinct, yet valuable analyses. A feminist criticism of a text, for instance, might look at repressed desire, or phallic representations, or sexist language, for there is no single, prescribed way to do feminist criticism. Second, any number of methods could be brought to bear on a single text, each yielding its own valuable insights.* (p. 62, emphasis added)

Only after the critic selects her or his general method (their broad critical outlook) does she or he start to dissect the artifact, studying it closely in order to then identify the particular critical constructs that will be useful in order to dissect this particular artifact from this particular general stance. This brings us to the second key issue at stake in our discussion: the concept of intellectual freedom. To reiterate Ott once more, “a feminist criticism of a text, for instance, might look at repressed desire, or phallic representations, or sexist language, for there is no single, prescribed way to do feminist criticism” (p. 62, emphasis again added). The writer-critic must be free, based on their analysis of the rhetorical text at hand, to make choices about which specific rhetorical constructs will and will not be essential in order to unlock certain aspects of the text (not all aspects) from this particular critical angle, with no presumption being made that this is the “only” viable angle, or even necessarily the “best” angle. In fact, the words “only” and “best” are invalid and intellectually stunting descriptors of the task being attempted.

Rhetorical criticism, as practiced in competitive speeches, robs the research process of both its temporal flow and its intellectual freedom. We require that students model their work after that of a more “established” scholar. Accordingly, we require that they select “a model” and use only the tenets (steps, concepts, components) directly employed by that earlier scholar when that scholar analyzed some other artifact. Ott (1998) again illuminates this process, noting that “what passes as method in forensics is simply one critic’s analysis of a particular instance of discourse. Although scholarly critics use methods, such as the ideological perspective, their analyses are themselves not methods (pp. 62-62).” In other words, “feminism” is a “method” – but the particular concepts used by author Jane Doe to study the feminist aspects of Artifact One do not in and of themselves constitute a “rhetorical method.” The pitfalls inherent in this tendency to misdefine the word “method” are also noted by Ott, when he explains that any given author “identifies certain principles at work in the examined discourse, but *those principles are not a method*. They are the scholar’s critical observations, and when a student uses those observations as a method, the student critic is, in effect, pirating someone else’s critical observations concerning a specific rhetorical artifact and forcing those observations to account for another instance of discourse” (p. 63, emphasis added). Thus, by defining the phrase

“rhetorical method” in this manner, the following holes in the intellectual process inevitably arise.

First, students become hopelessly tangled in the intellectual time-progression they should be following. They are unavoidably locked into an infinitely regressive circle of action. They cannot choose a question then choose a (general) rhetorical method then choose relevant constructs, because once they get to stage three (choosing relevant constructs) they discover that those concepts have already been chosen for them. They can’t choose constructs that fit their research question, especially as that question applies to the artifact they want to study. Instead, they must follow the lead of the earlier author. And that earlier author was trying to answer a particular research question of their own in relation to a particular artifact of their own choosing. Logically, the only way the student can coherently enter this circuit is to use the same research question the original author pursued, and to apply it to a rhetorical artifact that is as similar as possible to the original rhetorical artifact. Doing this is difficult at best and impossible in toto. And when the student tries to do anything else, the process disintegrates completely. How can they possibly answer a different question about a different artifact using the same constructs? Again, Ott explains this well:

Competitive RC is still caught in the 1960s model of methodological pluralism. Although student criticisms are characterized by a wide variety of theories, the overall approach to RC continues to entail a narrow and reductionistic conception of methods and to be animated by method. In forcing a narrow set of principles gleaned from a specific rhetorical analysis to account for the rhetoric they are analyzing, student critics tend to fall into one of two traps. On the one hand, many students mangle a critic’s controlling principles until they fit the discourse they are analyzing. Some students, on the other hand, disfigure a discourse until it fits the controlling principles found in a published rhetorical analysis. Hence, students shred their artifact by ignoring language that does do [sic] not fit the method and by quoting textual fragments out of context to create a perfect correspondence between text and method. Competitive rhetorical criticisms tend to lack any real explanatory power because they force the practice to fit the theory, or the theory to fit the practice. (p. 65)

Locked into the use of another author’s “method” (as the term is misdefined), students must resolve the time-progression problem by abandoning the ideal of freedom. They must march lock-step with the author whose work they emulate. Thus, grasping one horn of the dilemma, students who seek to answer their artificially-duplicated research questions can only replicate the same answer discovered by the original author. The student can only produce “unimaginative and unenlightening criticism” (Ott, 1998, p. 63). The only alternative is to grasp the other horn of the conundrum and distort the tool and/or the artifact

in a way which produces a “new answer” generated by critical misrepresentation. Neither horn is educationally appealing.

It is important to note that Ott observed this problem arising prior to our contemporary addiction to the research question. For him, it is generated by our misdefinition of the term “method” alone. And I agree with him. But I take the position here that this problem is significantly exacerbated by the movement toward including research questions. At an earlier time in our field’s history, students and coaches at some level “understood” that competitive RCs were inevitably emulative acts of learning. They have always been similar to the ancient practice of “learning by imitation.” This style of teaching has a long and respectable history in our field. It dates back to the school of speech founded by Isocrates in 392 B.C.E., at which students relied heavily on imitating models in order to develop their own skills (Golden, Coleman, Berquist and Sproule, 2003, p. 83). In the same way, competitive rhetorical criticism has long encouraged students to copy others first (rely on the clusters of critical terms recognized scholars in the field have shaped), learn from that, then go on to do more “original” work. But our demand that students use research questions (as well as the relatively recent escalation in the time allotted to “critical conclusions”) produces a significant shift in our mental imaging of the game. Students are now being told that they must produce original questions and reach original answers – but that they can only do so by using absolutely unoriginal clusters of critical concepts (“methods”) developed by somebody else to take some other intellectual journey. We are asking students to do the ultimately un-doable.

Proposing a Paradigm Shift

At least as recently as the early 1980’s, the typical competitive rhetorical criticism speech employed a largely “imitative” approach to the study of rhetorical theory. It relied on requiring students to imitate/emulate the critical process followed by established scholars in the field in order to learn through modeling. But in recent years, as we have de-emphasized the importance of detailed “application steps” and escalated the prominence of “critical conclusions,” as we have shifted away from canonical “mainstream” or “previously discussed” rhetorical artifacts and toward the study of artifacts typified by “recency, shock value, and obscurity” (Ott, 1998, p. 55), we have moved further and further away from a primarily imitative approach to writing competitive rhetorical criticisms and evolved toward a writing model that edges closer to the academic inquiry process. This evolution is clearly apparent in our recent efforts to graft the research question (an element central to the academic inquiry process) onto the competitive prototype. Accordingly, we are currently attempting (consciously or unconsciously) to reap the benefits of two quite different types of teaching/learning approaches: the “old” imitation-based style and an emerging “academic inquiry” style. While either model in and of itself has value, the two simply do not blend very well – and students who attempt to travel down both paths at once are very likely to end up writing speeches which distort or misrepresent the learning process, the actual “process-as-experienced” chronology of their work, their understanding of theory, their operational definitions of critical

constructs, their selection and interpretation of data from the artifact, and the conclusions they attempt to reach.

I believe that we must abandon the attempt to reconcile the irreconcilable and choose between these two models. Or rather, we should make room in this competitive event for students to choose (based on their personal and individual levels of expertise, based on their personal and individual learning needs) which of the two writing models to employ when constructing any given speech.

There is no reason why every single rhetorical criticism speech needs to cleave to exactly the same writing format. If the goal of forensics is in fact to educate students (we return to the philosophical roots established for this paper at this point), then we need to coach and judge all competitive events based on their ability to enable student learning. Ultimately, I believe that we've gotten our priorities turned around. Overall, forensics events have evolved to the point that a single ideal unwritten prototype tends to define our thinking relative to any given event. This prototype tells us in great detail exactly what the structure, content elements, delivery, research base, topic choice and so on of any given speech in any given competitive category "should be." These standardized prototypes make it easier for us to coach any given event, easier for us to judge any given event, and easier for students to "learn the rules to win" in any given event. But since when is education supposed to be about making things "easy?" Granted, any student who follows the prototype will learn "something." But there are so many things that the prototype cannot teach – and so many students who will learn the prototype, perfect it, and then ask (in the words of the old Peggy Lee song): "Is that all there is?" The answer, of course, is that is not all there is. There is so much more to learn, if we'll just give ourselves permission to teach it and our students permission to immerse themselves in it.

Which brings us to a proposal. Let us make room for at least two different prototypes in the event we call "Rhetorical Criticism" ("Communication Analysis"). Students who feel that they can learn more from the imitative approach at any given point in their career should be allowed (better yet, encouraged) to revert to the writing style of the early 1980's, when comparatively more time and effort were invested in the "application" step of the speech, research questions were not expected, and critical conclusions (which play a minor role in published journal articles anyway) were minor or nonexistent. Students who employ this model could "learn from the masters" and dig deep into a set of critical constructs deemed coherent by an established scholar. They would be held accountable for demonstrating a clear, coherent, and detailed ability to understand and apply a limited set of critical constructs. Yet, even as we consider returning to this model, it is important that such a return should ideally attempt to address and resolve some of the problems noted by scholars at that time. For example, as noted by Givens (1994, p. 31), Murphy (1988) bemoaned the fact that, even twenty years ago, too much speech time was being devoted to the explanation and building of method and not enough to actual analysis and application. According to Murphy, as of 1988 "judges want[ed] an introduction to the method, an explanation of the method, an application of the method, and methodological

conclusions (p. 4).” As a result, according to Givens (1994, p. 31), competitors made “the methodology, not the artifact, the focus of their speeches.” A return to a model which eliminates research questions and de-emphasizes critical conclusions would still face the challenge of optimally balancing the explanation vs. the application of theory.

On the other hand, students should also have a second choice. They should be able to write speeches which reflect a full and genuine use of the inquiry process if they so choose. These students would produce work highly similar to what we see published in our professional journals. They would start with a research question, select a “method” (defined as feminism, Marxism, genre criticism, or the like), then select a set of specific critical constructs which they personally are convinced will operationalize that method for the particular artifact they have chosen, then apply these constructs, then draw critical conclusions. In other words, the crucial difference between this second model and the style we currently employ on the circuit lies in where the precise list of sub-steps or critical constructs comes from. Under this model, I propose that we abandon the search for a particular article or book chapter written by somebody else which offers up a pre-digested set of “steps.” These “steps” are in any case a sort of Holy Grail which many authors don’t really offer, even though forensics conventions and terminology compel us to look for these “concrete lists.” These conventions pressure us to deduce or identify a “set of steps” which often aren’t there in the original article to begin with. If we simply abandon the search for the “perfect list” or the “ideal article” – if we rethink our definition of and expectations concerning what constitutes a “critical method” – then we can clear the way to genuine critical inquiry. Students can create their own “lists of steps,” select their own clusters of “critical constructs,” and thus be empowered to ask and answer research questions in a much more genuine way.

Ultimately, we are drawn back to the question of what philosophy we wish to be guided by. Are we really just “trainers” who can coach students to follow a set of rules in order to win awards? Or are we in fact educators, who are determined to offer each student who comes to us an optimal opportunity to learn as much as possible from as many different angles as possible in order to develop a cognitive groundwork which will serve them well as they move on toward the graduate schools (possibly) and careers (probably) and lives (definitely) which will follow the brief span of their undergraduate competitive careers? Consciously or unconsciously, willingly or unwillingly, every choice we make as coaches contributes to the answering of this question – for the circuit at large, and for the individual programs we are invested in. Whether or not we include research questions in Rhetorical Criticism is just one small piece of this puzzle. We are certainly not defined as teachers, or as a community, by the way we respond to this one “narrow” conundrum. But the way we approach the answering of this question, wherever we ultimately take our stand, forces us to confront basic issues we cannot ignore. How can we refine any given event to ensure that it makes logical and theoretical “sense?” How can we make sure that each event exists not in “competitive limbo” but rather in relation to our general field of study? How can we use each event to teach our students things they don’t al-

ready know and skills that will serve them well later? What responsibilities do we bear as educators?

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Distortion in the Description of Scholarly Research Methods in Competitive Forensics

Leah White

Introduction

Communication analysis, or rhetorical criticism, has been my favorite event since I first competed in the category my senior year of college. Now as a coach, I enjoy watching my students wrestle with academic theory as they struggle to communicate arguments. Students who initially found the event intimidating are drawn to its lure as an activity which challenges them to see social events from a constantly changing perspective. Ballots present new questions never considered, which often lead to further revisions as the student tries to master her or his analysis. I am always eager to judge this category. I am continually impressed with the critical observations our students are making. As Rosenthal (1985) argues “The roots of intercollegiate forensics are planted firmly in the field of rhetoric. Thus, rhetorical criticism is one of the most important speaking events, since it may be used to educate students in the scholarly intricacies of the academic parent” (p. 137). Simply put, I never tire of this event.

As with all love affairs, however, the object of my affection has flaws. I have tried my best to ignore or rationalize these flaws. I argue with myself that the event just needs more time, perhaps two more minutes, to really show its potential. Maybe all the event lacks is an opportunity to ask and answer questions. But now that communication analysis and I have been together for nearly two decades, I must come to terms with the fact that our relationship is growing stale. Older, I am no longer comfortable embracing an event that is not meeting its full pedagogical potential.

Since the inception of the event, forensic educators have struggled to define their expectations for competitive rhetorical criticism or communication analysis. Harris (1987) writes “rhetorical criticism means different things to different parts of the forensic community and the result is confusion about how the event should be judged and prepared and what expectations we have regarding the final product” (p. 21). Yet if this is still indeed the case, I wonder why of all the events it seems to have become one of the most standardized. Ott (1998) argues “certain identifiable traits pervade the event of rhetorical criticism; moreover, judges police and thereby reinforce these traits through their judging practices” (54). According to Ott (1998), these traits include; topics driven by “recency, shock value, and obscurity” (p. 55); “a three-point organizational pattern featuring method, application, and implications” (p. 56); a method which “drives the analysis section” (p. 57); and a final section “proving the rhetor was a rhetorical success or failure” (p. 57). Like Ott (1998), I find myself most troubled by the way the event has been driven to a limited definition of what is an appropriate methodology for a rhetorical criticism. He argues, “In forensics, a rhetorical

method most often refers to a student's reduction of a practicing critic's rhetorical analysis to a set of key principles" (Ott, 1998, p. 56). In practice, this means a student is allowed to use one (and on rare occasions two) scholarly publications from which to pull her or his analytical framework.

Dean and Benoit's (1984) content analysis of ballots in rhetorical criticism revealed "Judges indicate that they consider it the critic's task to choose one approach and then justify the utility of that selection" (p. 105). The justification for this limited approach is based on the idea that "methodology provides a narrowing function so that the student can hope to fit the analysis and criticism into the ten minute framework which is mandated by the contest situation" (Dean, 1985, p.121). This "narrowing function" is where many of my concerns with the event are found. Specifically, in this article I am concerned with our expectations regarding how students select and apply "methods" to their chosen topics. I argue that due to artificial expectations dictated by the unwritten rules of the event, students are not able to engage in accurate application of their selected scholarly articles. I will develop this argument by examining four communication analysis speeches presented in final rounds at the AFA-NIET to determine how accurately these students explain and represent their selected scholarship. I conclude the essay by offering suggestions for how we can encourage students to incorporate rhetorical theory into speeches in a more educationally sound way.

Analysis of Student Speeches

In an effort to offer the most accurate analysis of current practice, I randomly selected my sample speeches from the twelve speeches presented in the 2007 and 2008 AFA-NIET final rounds of communication analysis. Before selecting my sample, I made certain I could locate all twelve of the scholarly articles the students cited as the sources for their methodologies. Once I had collected the articles, I randomly drew the names of the four students whose speeches I would analyze. Once my sample was finalized, I viewed each of the four speeches and transcribed all elements of the speeches pertaining to the explanation of the selected methodologies. I then carefully read each of the scholarly articles, comparing the content of the articles to my transcriptions of each speech. I took note of any instances when I perceived there to be inaccuracies between the arguments stated in the articles cited and the explanations given by the students in the speeches. When discrepancies were noted, I would watch the speech again to verify the accuracy of my transcriptions.

Before moving into the results of my analysis, I would like to offer an explanation regarding how I categorized two distinct approaches to utilizing scholarly articles as sources for methodologies. German (1985) compares critical methodologies in rhetorical criticism to camera lenses which "provide varied perspectives on the photographer's subject" (p. 86). In my experience as a coach, there seem to be two main ways to use an article as the method, or lens, for a communication analysis or rhetorical criticism speech. Essentially, the method is what allows one to build their analysis, and this is guided by either the

“blue print” or the “tool box” approach. In the blue print approach, a student will use an article that clearly lays out specific steps or stages a rhetor must follow in order to accomplish some rhetorical act. In a sense, the student layers the preexisting blueprint on his/her artifact and shows how the concepts appear in the application. The tool box approach, however, is not nearly as tidy. Here, the student, usually with the help of a coach, extracts a framework from the article. The ideas used for the analysis are present in the article, but not mapped out in any clearly identifiable way. Essentially, the student picks and chooses the ideas that are needed to conduct the analysis. German (1985) warns, however, that “because distortions of complex systems of thought are not acceptable, a critic should be careful when using only selected aspects of the methodology” (p. 96). Generally, as long as the tools are indeed found in the article, and the combined use of those tools does not create major contradictions, this approach can be an effective way to manage the significant constraint of having to explain a method for analysis in no more than 3 minutes.

The first speech I selected for my analysis was delivered at the 2007 AFA-NIET. Hopper’s (2007) speech analyzes the “Ova the Rainbow” web site, which is sponsored by an egg donation and surrogacy agency. Hopper asks the research question, “Does the new advertising and selection process of “OvathRainbow.com” rhetorically commodify human life?” To analyze this artifact, Hopper utilized Hirschman and Hill’s (2000) article, “On Human Commoditization and Resistance: A Model Based on Buchenwald Concentration Camp.” In her speech, Hopper seeks to argue that the Ova The Rainbow web site functions to commodify the women who choose to serve as egg donors for the agency. In that the article provides a clear model, her use of this essay places her in the “blueprint” category.

My analysis of Hopper’s (2007) speech reveals several concerns regarding the accuracy with which the original article is applied in the speech. My first observation is Hopper gave the incorrect article title and publication date for the method. Hopper cites the article as “On human commodification and resistance” as published in the June 2006 *Journal of Psychology and Marketing*. The article, however, seems to only appear in the June 2000 issue of *Psychology and Marketing* and the full title is “On human commoditization and resistance: A model based on Buchenwald concentration camp”. I assume the discrepancy in the date is the result of a memorization error, rather than any calculated attempt to alter the citation. Additionally, students often drop the secondary level of an article title to either avoid confusion or save time. Of far greater concern to me, however, is that the term *commoditization* is replaced in the title of the article, as well as throughout Hopper’s speech, as *commodification*. At no point in Hirschman and Hill’s (2000) essay do they use the term commodification. They specifically state, “Our intention is to construct a model of human commoditization derived from a historic instance of this process” (Hirschman & Hill, 2000, p. 470). They define commoditization as “the transformation of a human being into the property of another person” (Hirschman & Hill, 2000, p. 469-470) and clearly indicate that they are basing their work in the original model of commoditization as presented by Kopytoff (1986). Hopper gives no nod to the fact Hir-

schman and Hill's model is not original, nor does she explain her choice to use the term commodification rather than commoditization.

A brief investigation of the terms in several online dictionaries reveals that the words can be used interchangeably and are often considered synonyms. Yet, I can think of no reason, other than a memorization or clerical error, why a speaker would not honor the original choice of the authors. This seems especially important when Hirschman and Hill (2000) are clearly building off the work of a previous scholar who chose the term commoditization rather than commodification. Although little is lost in the meaning of the term substitution, I will admit it took me considerably longer to track down Hopper's (2007) method than it did to find others included in this study.

Other inconsistencies between the original article and Hopper's (2007) speech occurred with respect to how she explained and applied the principles of the commoditization process. Initially, Hopper describes the first stage of the process, 'pre-commodification,' [sic] as "recognition and identification of wanted and unwanted characteristics in a product." This definition, however, is not mentioned in any form in the two paragraph explanation of this stage of the process as given by Hirschman and Hill. In fact, the explanation of pre-commodification given in the article makes no mention of products, but rather is focused on consumers and their choices. Hirschman and Hill (2000) define the pre-commodification stage as one where people "are assumed at the outset to enjoy all the rights and privileges of selfhood" (p. 474). Consistent with the article, Hopper does explain how our collective purchase choices come to define us as individuals. What she does not clarify, however, is according to Hirschman and Hill, when one becomes a commoditized person, the previously unimportant consumption decisions become crucial to personal identity. They argue, "The absence of meaningful choice can wreak havoc on the maintenance of selfhood and identity" (Hirschman & Hill, 2000, p. 474). Given the article is analyzing the narratives of those who were held as Nazi prisoners at Buchenwald, to ignore the significance a loss of consumer agency has on the commoditized seems fundamental to the method and problematic that it is not mentioned in Hoppers speech.

When Hopper explains the second stage of the process, initiation, she does discuss the stripping of individuality felt by the commodified [sic] but still does not clarify the importance of the loss of agency. Rather she focuses on how the loss of the commodified's [sic] individuality results in the person being seen as a unit who is "assigned an identifier such as a number" (Hopper 2007). Although the explanation of the method in the article does not mention the assignment of identifiers, the application section does use the example of camp prisoners being assigned serial numbers and colored triangles as a means to externally impose a new identity. My analysis shows Hopper's discussion of the second stage of the commoditization process to be the most consistent with the article.

Hopper's (2007) discussion of the third stage of the commoditization process reveals further inconsistencies with the original article. Hirschman and Hill (2000) label the third stage of the process "Externally Imposed Maintenance

of Commoditization versus Resistance to Commoditization” (p. 474) which Hopper abbreviates to simply “Externally Imposed Maintenance”. Due to time constraints, speakers often need to abbreviate or revise labels found in a selected method, but my concern with this relabeling by Hopper is by truncating the label she ignores the key aspect of this stage of the commoditization process. According to Hirschman and Hill (2000), this stage of the process focuses heavily on the idea that “those enforcing commoditization will do so by restricting all meaningful consumer-behavior choice” (p. 475). Hopper makes no mention of consumer behavior, once again ignoring the agency of the commoditized. The major misrepresentation of the method is found, however, in that the authors clearly imply that at this stage of the process there is “an ongoing struggle” (Hirschman & Hill, 2000, p. 474) between those seeking to commoditize others and those struggling to resist that commoditization. At no point in her explanation of the method or during the application of the method to her artifact, does Hopper make mention of the presence of a struggle between the commoditizer and the commoditized.

Essentially, Hopper (2007) has removed any aspect of agency of the commoditized from her discussion. Perhaps this choice would not bother me if the subject of Hirschman and Hill’s (2000) essay wasn’t one of the most horrific examples of human commoditization in history. To not mention the significant role of resistance in the process seems to remove the one shred of agency the commoditized still have. Ignoring that element of the article is somewhat like Hopper’s own version of ideological commoditization of Hirschman and Hill’s article. The difficulties Hopper has in accurately representing her selected scholarly article are directly tied to the constraints she must deal with as a speaker in this competitive context. Judges will not *allow* her to ignore or adapt a step in an established model, but she is also dealing with a time limit which prevents her from ever fully explaining every nuance in the methodology. It is highly possible the distinction was present in an earlier draft of the speech. My assessment is that Hopper’s inaccuracies with respect to the application of this segment of the method are significant, but short of using an entirely different article, I am unsure how she could fully explain the tension between the commoditizer and commoditized.

The second speech I selected for my analysis was presented at the 2008 AFA-NIET. Moscaritolo’s (2008) speech analyzes the “Blasphemy Challenge,” which is a call for people to denounce the Holy Spirit in self-posted videos on you-tube, as presented on www.blasphemychallenge.com. He asks the question, “How effectively does the Blasphemy Challenge’s use of coming out rhetoric give voice to the American atheist movement?” To analyze this project, Moscaritolo used Chirrey’s February 2003 *Journal of Sociolinguistics* article, “‘I hereby come out’: What sort of speech act is coming out?” which he inaccurately cited as being from the July 2003 issue. Given that the actual month does not appear on the printed copy of the article, and one must look specifically at the electronic index to verify the publication month, his citation error is understandable. In that the article centers around the presentation of interview data, does not provide a clear model or process to be followed and Moscaritolo extracts his

framework from the general ideas of the essay, he is using the “toolbox” approach to constructing his method.

In his explanation of the base assumptions guiding the article, unlike Hopper (2007) who neglected to mention the theoretical base on which her authors’ grounded their article, Moscaritolo (2008) does indicate that Chirrey’s (2003) study is grounded in an understanding of J.L. Austin’s concept of speech acts. He specifically mentions prelocutionary acts which are those that produce psychological consequences. Although Chirrey does define Austin’s concepts of locutionary and illocutionary acts as well, Moscaritolo’s choice to reference only prelocutionary acts is justified because the article focuses on “the extent to which and the ways in which the speaker’s and hearer’s realities are altered” in the utterance of coming out (Chirrey, 2003, p. 26). Although he does not go into detail regarding the performative aspects of such speech acts, Moscaritolo is able to make his reference to Austin in one brief clause, therefore adding accuracy to his interpretation of Chirrey’s article without taking too much of his limited time.

The accuracy with which he sets up the general assumption of Chirrey’s article, however, is not consistent with the remainder of his speech. My major concern with Moscaritolo’s speech is that he seems to have taken a very liberal approach to the toolbox style of method construction. He states Chirrey “articulates three main tenets” which he labels “external catalyst; listener response; and collective representation” (Moscaritolo 2008). This wording implies that Chirrey is presenting clear argument claims related to each of these “tenets”. A close reading of Chirrey’s article does not easily reveal the argument sources for these tenets. I believe misleading statements such as this are common in competition given that judges expect clearly identifiable steps or stages which they can outline and then follow throughout the second point. If one is using the toolbox approach to building a method for analysis, competitive success hinges on the student’s ability to present those ideas as if they appeared in the article as bolded subject headings.

Initially, when describing the first tenet, Moscaritolo (2008) states, “Chirrey finds that the choice to come out is often catalyzed by an external force” and then he cites Chirrey’s example of a lesbian whose “choice to come out was in response to her relatives constantly asking when she would get married”. At no point in Chirrey’s article do I find a direct discussion of the necessity of a catalyst in order for someone to come out. In fact, the example Moscaritolo offers is actually found in a section of the article where Chirrey is describing the expected outcomes many gays and lesbians hope to experience as a result of coming out. Chirrey (2003) states, “One lesbian told me that her hoped-for outcomes included that relatives would stop asking her when she would get married” (p. 34). The presence of a catalyst motivating coming out statements seems somewhat self-evident, but my reading of the article does not identify this as one of Chirrey’s main lines of argument. I do not disagree with Moscaritolo’s claim regarding the importance of a catalyst; I just disagree with the isolation of this idea as a specific tenet found in Chirrey’s article.

When explaining the second tenet, Moscaritolo (2008) states, “Chirrey argues that coming out is dependent on the listener’s subsequent behavior and thoughts”. This is consistent with my reading of Chirrey’s (2003) article, in that to truly explore the prelocutionary aspect of the act of coming out, the vast majority of her essay focuses on the reactions of listeners to coming out statements. She offers numerous examples of both positive and negative reactions from listeners. The example provided by Moscaritolo to correspond with his explanation of this idea fits well with the argument and is explained in a way consistent with how the example was originally used by Chirrey.

Moscaritolo (2008) explains his third tenet as the argument that “coming out creates a collective representation” and then describes Chirrey’s example of how the British media represented the coming out of British Pop Idol, Will Young. The way Moscaritolo frames this example, however, is not consistent with Chirrey’s use. In her article, Chirrey (2003) argues she seeks to “examine the diversity of prelocutionary acts in which a coming-out locution may result” (p. 31). She recognizes “subjectivity has an influence on the prelocutionary acts of coming out” (Chirrey, 2003, p.31). To illustrate this argument, when describing the experiences of Will Young, she cited *both* positive and negative media portrayals of Young’s statements. For example, she reports *The Guardian* “frames Young’s action in terms of a neutral act of revelation of information that is viewed in a non-judgmental way” (Chirrey, 2003, p.32). She also offers examples of newspapers that framed Young’s statements as an “admission” or “confession” thus identifying his homosexual identity as something criminal or deviant. Moscaritolo limits his interpretation of Chirrey’s argument to these negative examples, ignoring the possibility that a coming out statement could result in a positive collective representation. Although I do not disagree with Moscaritolo’s identification of collective representations, I am concerned with his framing of this tenet as primarily a negative outcome. As with my critique of Hopper’s (2007) speech, I suspect this decision was driven by time constraints, rather than any calculated attempt to disregard an aspect of Chirrey’s article.

The third speech I selected for my analysis was presented in 2007. Schultz’s (2007) speech analyzes the Washington Defense of Marriage Alliance’s successful effort to send forward ballot initiative 957. This initiative satirically called for all heterosexual couples in the state of Washington to prove the biological ability to procreate before being allowed to marry as well as produce a child within three years to avoid having the marriage annulled. Schultz analyzes this satirical movement asking the question, “How does the introduction of a law shape the culture around a particular social issue?” He uses James Boyd White’s essay, “Law as rhetoric, rhetoric as law: The arts of cultural and communal life” published in the summer 1985 *University of Chicago Law Review* as the source for his critical method. Schultz argues that because the article “examines the way that law communicatively reflects and shapes culture” it is a useful lens through which to process his artifact. White’s essay offers Schultz a toolbox from which to build his analytical framework, but as compared to other speeches, this toolbox is more neatly organized. Although Schultz does need to extract the framework he uses, his first two tenets are clearly previewed as main argu-

ments of a core section of the essay. The third tenet is pulled from a synthesis of the overall argument of the piece.

Initially, Schultz (2007) does an excellent job of summarizing the main idea of the essay into a concise yet highly accurate overview. Schultz explains White (1985) “rejects the traditional Western notion of law as synonymous with authority, instead adopting a more classical notion of law as a series of discourses; as an ongoing conversation.” This is consistent with the opening paragraph of White’s essay where he writes, “law is most usefully seen not, as it usually is by academics and philosophers, as a system of rules, but as a branch of rhetoric...as the central art by which community and culture are established, maintained and transformed” (White, 1985, p. 684). My only concern with how Schultz contextualizes the essay is that he argues White “steeps” his writings “heavily in communication theory” when White actually focuses exclusively on rhetorical theory. The distinction is not imperative, as one can easily argue rhetoric is a branch of communication theory.

Schultz’ (2007) explanation of the first two tenets of his framework is quite consistent with how White (1985) presents the ideas in the essay. The first two tenets are pulled from the third main section of the article where White outlines what he views as the “three aspects of the lawyer’s work” (688). Although White does not give these aspects tidy labels, the tags Schultz applies to the arguments are tightly grounded in the text. Schultz calls the first tenet, “law as rhetoric” and explains that this means a lawyer is a rhetor who is expected to speak in the language of his or her “time and place.” This is clearly grounded in White’s (1985) argument that, “the lawyer, like any rhetorician, must always start by speaking the language of his or her audience, whatever it may be” (p. 688). Schultz refers to examples given by White to help explain this idea.

Schultz (2007) labels the second tenet “legal rhetoric as ever changing” and explains this as the principle that it is a lawyer’s responsibility to change language in order to fit strategic needs, in that the lawyer must not just interpret a case, but also help determine how we should talk about the case. This is consistent with White’s (1985) explanation of the second aspect of a lawyer’s work which he argues, “For in speaking the language of the law, the lawyer must always be ready to try to change it.... That is, the lawyer is always saying not only, ‘here is how this case should be decided,’ but also, ‘Here—in this language—is the way this case and similar cases should be talked about’” (p. 690).

Schultz starts to drift from the neatly organized part of the toolbox when he identifies the third tenet he wishes to use from the essay. Whereas White (1985) explains the third aspect of a lawyer’s work is an acceptance of “ethical or communal character, or its socially constitutive nature” (p. 690), Schultz chooses to not discuss the link to ethos, but focuses only on the aspect of what he labels “legal rhetoric as constitutive”. Schultz describes the third tenet of his method as the idea “in any legal proceedings, some narratives are privileged over others” and as a result, “the persons or social groups associated with those narratives are also privileged, thereby reshaping the fabric of our society”. Toward the end of the essay when White (1985) begins to synthesize his ideas, he writes,

“The basic idea of the legal hearing is that two stories will be told in opposition or competition and a choice made between them” (697). Thus, although Schultz is basically building a specific tenet for analysis from one of the most general arguments of the essay as a whole, the argument is clearly present in the essay as the constitutive nature of legal rhetoric is White’s primary claim.

Of the speeches analyzed, Schultz (2007) provides the most accurate representation of his selected article. This may in part be due to the fact that White’s (1985) article offers the freedom of a toolbox approach while also giving some clear organizational clues regarding his key arguments. Schultz, therefore, can select the aspects of the article that best meet his needs, but is not at as much risk as Moscaritolo (2008) who had to do more to impose an artificial structure on the ideas found in his article.

The final speech I analyzed for this project was presented in 2008. Conner’s (2008) speech analyzes people’s nonviolent reactions to the interactive video art installation “Domestic Tension.” This installation appeared at Chicago’s Flatfile Gallery, but anyone could logon and take part in the experience which involved allowing people to shoot the artist with a remote control paintball gun. Some participants responded by creating a virtual shield to protect the artist. It is this response that Conner explores by asking the question, “How did participation in interactive violence encourage some players to adopt non-violent rhetoric?” To explore this issue, Conner used Shuen-shing Lee’s essay “‘I lose, therefore I think’: A search for contemplation amid wars of push-button glare” found in the December 2003 online journal *Game Studies: The International Journal of Computer Game Research*. She suggests that because this article “attempts to explain why some violent video games cause players to act or think in a non-violent way” it is an appropriate method to use when examining Domestic Tension. My main concern with Conner’s application of this essay springs from her justification statement. Lee explains the goal of the essay is to examine computer games “imbued with socio-political critique” which he describes as games involving “a careful examination of certain aspects of society, often self-reflexively criticizing the dominant tendencies of the game industry itself. They appropriate and twist the established gaming models and schemas of popular games. These re-calibrations challenge the supposition that games equal fun” (para 1). Therefore, the purpose of his essay is to explore how such games result in contemplative or critical thinking rather than nonviolence. Clearly a cognitive response can be considered nonviolent, but Conner’s justification of the method implies that the article’s main focus is on the nonviolent *actions* of gamers rather than the ways such games influence gamers’ critical reflections of the game industry itself.

Conner (2008) also uses the toolbox approach to building a critical framework. Lee’s (2003) essay is essentially a discussion of several games which he describes as art games, or those that are “serious in their desire to transform games into a medium of expression for voices unheard, visions seldom seen” (para. 30). He turns to current scholarly critiques of video games to guide his analysis. From Lee’s article, Conner extracts three “qualities” that need to be present in a video game if “players will respond with nonviolent rhetoric”. As

previously stated, this misrepresents the article, in that Lee is discussing the qualities of art games which lead gamers to critical reflection of the violence present in games not their nonviolent responses. With the exception of the third quality, however, I am able to find clear links between Conner's selected tools and Lee's arguments.

Initially, Conner (2008) explains that in order for there to be a nonviolent response to a video game, "the game must be endless." She explains this as the idea that regardless of the actions taken in the game it will continue indefinitely. Her assessment is that the "endlessness of the game represents the endlessness of violence". This is consistent with Lee's arguments with respect to how art games can lead to critical reflection among gamers. He describes such games as having, "a metaphorical end, en route to which a specific kind of player is able to realize the implications of "to lose" in an intentionally un-winnable form" (Lee, 2003, para.11). Conner references Lee's example of the game *New York Defender* where players unsuccessfully try to protect New York from a terrorist attack. Because the attackers continue to multiply, there is no way for the gamer to successfully intercept them all. Thus, the game never ends and the message is that it is impossible to stop the violence of terrorism.

Conner (2008) states the second quality needed in a game to provoke a non-violent response is "the game must avoid score keeping." Lee (2003) spends a significant portion of his article discussing how art games do not keep score in the traditional manner of other video games. He suggests that by "Faithfully addressing painful issues of the real world, both games [*New York Defender* and *Kabul Kaboom*] 'show' their message in action rather than 'tell' it in a non-interactive statement, an accomplishment made possible mainly by the anti-competitive twist of the you-never-win form" (Lee, 2003, para. 8). Conner's explanation of this quality as the idea that one "can't be a winner in a situation where people must risk their lives to find food" is consistent with Lee's (2003) assessment that an art game "embodies a tragic form" by illustrating the real horrors of the daily lives of those "characters" often depicted in traditional video games (para 2). Thus, Conner is accurate in her use of the argument the lack of score keeping in a videogame leads to a nontraditional response to that game.

Although I can find evidence of the first two qualities Conner (2008) discusses, I struggled to determine a direct link in Lee's (2003) article to her third quality which she states is "games must produce feelings of guilt". At no point in the article do I find a discussion of guilt. Lee does mention the idea of regret as it relates to how gamers bemoan choices they made during the game that hindered their performance. Yet this discussion does not link to feelings of guilt. My assessment is Conner is equating Lee's discussion of basic critical dissonance a gamer feels when playing an art game with a more specific feeling of guilt guided by ethical concerns. Conner states Lee argues for a game to provoke nonviolent rhetoric, it uses realistic elements which "forces players to consider the ethical implications of their actions in the game." Lee does discuss how the use of real identities in a game can lead a player to engage in social critique, and he does cite the same example Conner provides, but he does not tie this to spe-

cific feelings of guilt. Lee (2003) describes such elements as transforming “play from a gaming action into a thinking event, from a means of fun-seeking to a schema for the revelation of the games' critical engagement (para. 26). By linking this argument to issues of guilt and ethical implications, Conner seems to be overreaching what Lee is arguing. Conner adds an element of value judgment to an argument where Lee is suggesting critical reflection. In that Conner bases the answer to her stated research question on the fulfillment of this third tenet, the inaccuracy of this representation of the article is concerning. I do not dispute Conner's evaluation of the situation she is analyzing, only her interpretation of Lee's stance. Once again, much like the other speeches analyzed, I suspect this discrepancy has much more to do with Conner's obligations as a speaker to mimic a standardized speech format, than any strategic choice to misrepresent the article.

Discussion and Recommendations

My analysis of these four speeches revealed all of the speakers have presented, to varying degrees, inaccuracies between their original scholarly articles and how they represent that scholarship in their speeches. Some of these inaccuracies can be explained by simple human error. Often when a student is memorizing a speech, details such as the exact month in which a publication appeared get misconstrued. This does not excuse the inaccuracies, but rather serves as a reminder to coaches that we should periodically do a “fact check” with our students' speeches to verify that the citations and quotations in the original manuscript are indeed what have been memorized. I honestly believe many of the discrepancies found in student speeches are the result of busy lives and overcrowded minds. I would rather see us focus our efforts on being more careful than wasting time assessing the motives of our peers.

As a forensic educator, the larger level inaccuracies I identified cause me significant discomfort. As a scholar I respect the obligation we have to represent each other's work in a way that is accurate and respectful. Yet, at the same time, as an educator I also understand the limitations with which my students are working. I therefore must agree with Paine (2008) when he wrote of rhetorical criticism, “We are asking students to do the ultimately un-doable” (p. 125). I support Kay and Aden (1989) who wrote “We maintain that the use of methodology hurts, rather than helps, student efforts to provide original insight. The method tells students what to find and how it should be presented – a recipe in all sense of the word” (p. 35). I believe we as coaches and judges are responsible for developing unobtainable expectations for this event. In our attempts to create standardization for evaluation (Dean 1985; Larson 1985; Harris 1987), we have created a situation where our students must cut corners and engage in academic practices we would not accept in any other educational setting. With this assessment in mind, I propose we need to seriously consider dismantling some of the destructive norms we have created.

Neither the AFA-NIET nor NFA event descriptions dictate such a limited conceptualization of methodology be used in communication analysis or rhetorical criticism speeches. The AFA-NIET description explains the event is, “de-

signed to offer an explanation and/or evaluation of a communication event such as a speech, speaker, movement, poem, poster, film, campaign, etc., through the use of rhetorical principles” (AFA-NIET 2006-2007 Description of Events). Nowhere in this event description does it mandate these principles must be found in easily applied units of three tenets and pulled from a recently published book or article. These are constraints we ourselves have imposed on the event. The NFA event description for rhetorical criticism is not quite as general, as it explains the event is “designed to offer an explanation and/or evaluation of a rhetorical event. Any legitimate critical methodology is permissible” (NFA By-laws). NFA does use the term methodology. Yet current practice in academic rhetorical criticism allows for significant flexibility in the interpretation of this term. I propose we follow this lead in our own competitive practice and support Murphy (1988) who argued twenty years ago, “The importance attached to the development of the methodology in the student speech, however, should be reduced” (p.8). As I agree with Kay and Aden (1989) who state in response to Murphy “if we abandon the idea of theoretical foundation entirely, we find ourselves without standards” (p. 36) I am not yet willing to completely relinquish a critical lens through which to guide analysis, but I am ready to search for some alternatives.

I am most drawn to the ideas advocating the use of a broad theoretical perspective as a student’s guiding analytical framework. This idea has been presented by various scholars over the course of the past two decades (Kay & Aden, 1989; Ott, 1998; Paine, 2008) yet we have not yet allowed ourselves to relinquish the comfort provided by event standardization in order to move forward. Initially, Kay and Aden (1989) argue that students should use a “perspective rather than a set of labels” (p. 36). They hope to find an approach that will respect “the need and desirability of both an established theoretical approach and independent student insight” (Kay & Aden, 1989, p. 37). They suggest the community embrace the use of a critical perspective which they define as:

A critical perspective differs from a methodology in that no concrete step-by-step instructions are laid out; a perspective is basically a theoretical foundation from which the student can build his or her own ideas within the province of rhetoric. Students borrow the basic ideas of rhetorical scholars to make their own ideas clearer and more complete (Kay & Aden, 1989, p. 37)

Ott’s (1998) suggestions for improvement are consistent with Kay & Aden. Ott references rhetorical criticism textbooks which organize methods into general categories related to the types of questions they can answer and how they approach discourse as a broad concept. He addresses the criticism this approach will result in students falling into the habit of using only a handful of well known traditional scholars stating, “each method can produce an infinitude of distinct, yet valuable analyses. A feminist criticism of a text, for instance, might look at repressed desire, or phallic representations, or sexist language, for *there*

is no single, prescribed way to do feminist criticism” (Ott, 1998, p. 62). Had our community allowed Moscaritolo (2008) the use of a general perspective in guiding his analysis, rather than the limiting constraint of having to select one scholarly article, he may have been able to turn to current writings in queer theory that clearly do indicate the presence of a catalyst in coming out rhetoric. He then could have used the Chirrey (2003) article to support his claim coming out rhetoric can be applied to a variety of situations where one finds him or herself marginalized and maligned. Further, Conner (2008) could have embraced the general concept of cognitive dissonance as a theoretical perspective which she could have then layered into a discussion of how interactive violent games can provoke critical thought. Rather than closing doors, this approach seems to open them.

Some skeptics of this approach argue undergraduate students are not yet able to handle the difficulties of being responsible for exploring multiple rhetorical perspectives. In fact, some critics also question the ability of judges to evaluate speeches grounded in less specific critical frameworks. Paine (2008) offers an intriguing compromise. Although Paine reached his conclusions based on his critique of our activity’s commitment to the obligatory research question in communication analysis and rhetorical criticism, his recommendations serve my purposes quite well. Paine (2008) suggests we need not formally “choose” an acceptable formula for the event for “if the goal of forensics is in fact to educate students...then we need to coach and judge all competitive events based on their ability to enable student learning” (p. 125). To that end, he suggests novice competitors be encouraged to use the “imitative” approach to the event that was popular in the early 1980s. This approach, which is much like what I have termed the “blueprint” style of method development, “relied on requiring students to imitate/emulate the critical process followed by established scholars in the field in order to learn through modeling” (Paine, 2008, p. 125). I would suggest these students return to using the primary works upon which so many academic works have been based. There is a reason scholars continue to turn to influences such as Bitzer, Burke, Foucault, and Condit. These scholars have offered us important understandings about how rhetorical arguments function. Why do we expect our forensic students to ignore these influences in speeches when in our classes we still teach these theories as fundamental? Students choosing this approach would, “dig deep into a set of critical constructs deemed coherent by an established scholar” (Paine, 2008, p. 126). This approach is not unlike popular assignments in introductory rhetorical criticism courses and will serve to introduce forensic students to the concept of rhetorical analysis.

For those students who wish to push themselves with the event, Paine (2008) offers the “inquiry” approach. He explains

I propose that we abandon the search for a particular article or book chapter written by somebody else which offers up a pre-digested set of “steps.”...If we simply abandon the search for the “perfect list” or the “ideal article” – if we rethink our definition of and expectations concerning what constitutes a ‘critical method’ –then we can clear the way to genuine critical inquiry.

Students can create their own ‘lists of steps,’ select their own clusters of ‘critical constructs,’ and thus be empowered to ask and answer research questions in a much more genuine way. (Paine, 2008, p. 126)

I do not believe that this approach is beyond the capabilities of our students. In fact, I firmly believe by embracing Kay & Aden’s (1989) critical perspective or Paine’s (2008) inquiry approach to communication analysis and rhetorical criticism, our students will finally have the freedom to illustrate how insightful they really can be. Rather than having to constantly rework and revise a speech so all the pieces “fit” the constraints, students would be allowed to open their analyses in a variety of directions.

The difficult step, however, is not recognizing what needs to be changed, but rather putting those changes into practice. When students choose to violate the norms in our events, they run the risk of limiting their competitive outcomes. I don’t know how many times I have encouraged a student to do something in an unconventional way, to only reverse my advice a few tournaments later. I feel badly that the student is becoming demoralized by receiving low scores because he or she chose not to use a research question in communication analysis or used a statement of reasons organizational pattern in persuasion. I challenge judges, myself included, to think carefully about the ways in which our application of evaluative norms may be harming the pedagogical outcomes of our events. Change happens slowly in our activity. Often the change is seen one ballot at a time. We all need to begin writing those ballots.

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A Response to White

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If someone were to have asked me in the spring of 2008 if I thought that I was providing an honest and reliable interpretation of my communication analysis model, I would have said yes. Several months removed from the speech community, my answer remains the same. This letter is my response to Dr. Leah White's criticisms of my interpretation of *I Lose, Therefore I Think: A Search for Contemplation Amid Wars of Push-Button Glare* by Shuen-shing Lee—the article that served as my communication analysis model (Conner, 2008). I hope that this letter provides a more in-depth justification of my interpretation. However, I recognize that I may have incorrectly, albeit innocently, interpreted the article. If the community ultimately decides that such a misinterpretation occurred, I contend that the misinterpretation can be attributed to flaws within the event and the speech community.

In 2007, Iraqi-American performance artist Wafaa Bilal unveiled an online interactive experience entitled *Domestic Tension* (Artner, 2007, para. 1). For one month, gaming enthusiasts could shoot Bilal with a paintball gun that had been programmed to fire when instructed to do so by a computer (Artner, 2007, para. 1-3). Bilal's goal was to draw a parallel between the game and the conflict in Iraq; gamers saw, first-hand, the damage that computerized weapons could cause (Artner, 2007, para. 10). After shooting Bilal, one group of guilt-ridden gamers refused to relinquish control of the gun; countless others apologized for their actions (Artner, 2007, para. 6). Thus, I asked the following question: how did participation in interactive violence encourage some players to adopt non-violent rhetoric? (Conner, 2008)

Finding a model was not easy. I started by looking at communication articles on performance art – the Theatre of the Oppressed, specifically. Because *Domestic Tension* was not scripted and because gamers did not have the traditional opportunity to demonstrate conflict avoidance, I decided that a Theatre of the Oppressed paradigm was inappropriate for the analysis (Artner, 2007). During the fall 2007 semester, I answered the research question using Gallagher and Zagacki's *Visibility and Rhetoric: Epiphanies and Transformations in the Life Photographs of the Selma Marches of 1965* (2007). Judges commented that, while the model applied nicely to the artifact, *Domestic Tension* relied on more than just visual rhetoric to convey its message. Moreover, a few judges noted that the model was very similar to the model used by Emily Winderman in the 2007 AFA-NIET finals; if memory serves me, Winderman used an article by Gallagher and Zagacki that applied their rhetorical framework to the paintings of Norman Rockwell (Winderman, 2007). Nonetheless, I felt compelled to find a new model over the holiday break. In her paper, Dr. White suggested that I could have used a model based on cognitive dissonance (White, 2008, p. 18). What's funny is that I seriously considered cognitive dissonance, but given its

age and basis in social psychology, I figured that its use would be competitively disadvantageous. The sense of relief that I felt when I found Lee's article is indescribable, and I still believe that the article was appropriate for the analysis.

I justified the use of Lee's article by stating that it "attempts to explain why some violent video games cause players to act or think in a nonviolent way" (Conner, 2008). Dr. White contends that the article's main focus is on "the ways games influence gamers' critical reflections of the game industry itself" and "the qualities of art games which lead gamers to critical reflection of the violence present in games" (White, 2008, p. 14). Both of these elements are part of Lee's thesis (Lee, 2003, para. 1). I concede that Lee does not explicitly state that video games can cause players to act or think in a nonviolent way (Lee, 2003). However, the idea is implicit in the thesis and throughout the article; thus, I contend that my justification was valid; moreover, it avoided complicated gaming jargon. The thesis paragraph reads that some video games "offer alternative goals, such as meditative play or off-gaming engagement" (Lee, 2003, para. 1). I argue that the term "meditative play" means that players think critically while playing the game, and the term "off-gaming engagement" means that players act outside of the gaming realm. The idea that some video games can make players act or think in a certain way is further illustrated in the section on intentionally unwinnable games. Lee argues that these games create "off-gaming thinkers who wonder what sort of player the game would like him or her to become" and that "they're trying to make you think" (Lee, 2003, para. 11-12). In sum, my rhetorical question asked why *Domestic Tension* players responded with nonviolent rhetoric (Conner, 2008). The use of Lee's article was a valid means of answering that question because it discusses how video games produce both off-gaming engagement and critical thought, the latter of which can lead to action.

I argued that "games must produce feelings of guilt" in order to create non-violent thought or action (Conner, 2008). Dr. White is correct in arguing that Lee never once mentions the word "guilt" (White, 2008, para. 15). In retrospect, "guilt" is a word that was used to shorten the tagline. However, the word "guilt" describes the negative reflection that I alluded to when I argued that games must "use realistic elements, in order to force the player to consider the implications of his or her actions" (Conner, 2008). Lee clearly addresses this idea in his paper. Lee describes the game *Adam Killer*, in which players shoot at a photograph of a person (Lee, 2003, para. 24). He says that the game "frightens one in a certain way by conjuring up the memory of the Columbine shooters" making "fun-seekers uneasy with 'trigger happiness' since the shooting is distinct from that executed in confrontation with a horde of monsters or an army of anonymous pawns" (Lee, 2003, para. 24). Lee concludes that "the combination of real and surreal or artificial disrupts the player's gaming habitus and diverts him to the dimension of social critique" (Lee, 2003, para. 24). I'm guilty of condensing ideas to save time, but my argument is no different from Lee's complicated explanation.

Communication scholars may not agree with my interpretation, and I acknowledge the possibility that I may have inadvertently misinterpreted Lee's

article. However, I argue that such a misinterpretation is attributable to flaws within the event and the speech community.

First, communication analysis has some serious time issues which inevitably cause critical and relevant materials to be cut from the speaker's speech. Lee's article comes to thirteen Microsoft Word pages and has seven subsections (Lee, 2003). For competitive purposes, students are told to choose two or three main points to explain the article. Thus, students either cut pertinent ideas or try to combine ideas in a way that deviates from the author's original intention. Moreover, communication analysis, more so than any other event, encourages an unequal time distribution; students are told to spend more time on the implications than on the explanation and application. I could have included the parts of Lee's thesis that Dr. White highlighted, but that would have been competitively disadvantageous. To prevent misrepresentation, the community either has to extend the time limits or change the judging paradigm to focus less on implications. But something has to be done. If accuracy is ignored, misrepresentation will still occur. If too much emphasis is placed on accuracy, students will use short models that don't apply to their artifact.

My second argument is one that I am hesitant to make, but I feel as though it has to be made because I do not hear anyone else making it. I was very fortunate in that I found competitive success while on one of the smallest teams in the community. I realize the irony in what I'm about to say, but I don't think that communication analysis promotes equality amongst programs. First, the discipline of communication is expanding and many subcategories have been recognized, including business communication, political communication, and even computer gaming communication. A student from a larger program seemingly has a better opportunity to interpret his or her model correctly; there is a better chance that a larger school will have a faculty member that specializes in a communication subcategory. My undergraduate institution had two communication professors; both were forced to teach introductory and organizational communication courses, and neither had a clue about computer gaming communication.

Second, students from small programs are less likely to have coaches with communication backgrounds; thus, without guidance, students are more likely to misinterpret communication articles. My undergraduate institution had two coaches. Both were working towards their doctorate degrees in political science, and one does not touch individual events with a ten foot pole. That left me and our head coach to figure out if our interpretation was reliable, whereas students from larger programs had more opportunities for input. Finally, students from small programs are less likely to be able to create communication analysis speeches. Communication analysis requires students to follow a recipe more so than any other event. Neither my coach nor I knew how to write a communication analysis. For a semester, I tirelessly transcribed the speeches of Kashif Powell, Matthew Collie, and Christine Zani, among others. But even after I got the basic structure down, my coach and I had a laundry list of questions, including: does the model have to be communication-based; must the artifact have

been created with a communicative purpose in mind; do you have to have three tenets; may you combine several tenets to into one tenet; if the author did not make an argument clear, may you extrapolate on that argument? While my coach and I eventually found answers to many of these questions, I would imagine that there are students that limit themselves to familiar events because they don't know how to write a competitive communication analysis.

The creators of communication analysis had good intentions. As public speakers, we should strive to understand the foundations of communication. However, I don't know that those intentions are being met, and I believe that the event should be changed dramatically. First, communication majors aren't the only ones who participate in the event. I double majored in biology and political science; while I did my best to accurately represent the works of communication scholars, I never felt as comfortable in communication analysis as I did in extemporaneous speaking – an event in which I knew what I was talking about. Some would say that students who do not feel comfortable with the event should not participate in the event; it's a good argument, but it's not feasible in a community where students are pressured to participate in as many events as possible, so that their school wins sweepstakes awards and receives funding. Moreover, judges and audience members are not always familiar with complicated communication jargon; competitors end up being judged based on the uniqueness of their artifact, rather than on the power of their rhetorical arguments. Finally, as I mentioned earlier, communication continues to mesh with other disciplines. Often, a framework from another discipline would be more appropriate and more effective in answering the research question, but many judges refuse to consider non-communicative frameworks.

I think that a dramatic change is needed. While I am no longer part of the speech community, I hope that scholars use my suggestions to transform communication analysis into a more effective analytical forum. Perhaps we should drop the "communication" part and create an event called "artifact analysis." Students would use the same formula that is currently used in communication analysis; the only difference is that students would not be limited to the discipline of communication. For example, let's say that a peace agreement is signed between Israel and Palestine within the next month. A student would explain a political science theory, apply that theory to the peace agreement, and draw implications about the potential success of the agreement. This method would not solve all of the problems that I've discussed, but it mitigates some of the major ones. First, a major reason why misrepresentation happens is because students do not feel comfortable discussing communicative principles. This event would allow students to use artifacts and models from their major, making misinterpretation less likely. Additionally, students from smaller programs could choose disciplines in which their coaches or faculty members specialize, again decreasing the likelihood of misrepresentation. Furthermore, some judges and audience members would better comprehend the speeches presented. Some would argue that judges with backgrounds in communication would be less effective adjudicators, but I would argue that judges currently comprehend topics, from other disciplines, in events like informative and persuasion with little difficulty. Final-

ly, this event would call attention to social issues that would be difficult to present in other events. The example about the peace agreement could potentially be done as an informative, but most judges would not appreciate three speculative implications.

I have no hard feelings towards Dr. White, nor will I have hard feelings towards scholars who disagree with my interpretation. A contentious dialogue may be necessary to advance an event that meant a lot to me as a competitor and to further the interests of the speech community as a whole.

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