AN ALTERNATIVE TO NDT DEBATE

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INTRODUCTION

I gather from past critiques of this
final round that it is customary to
deliver a Philippic upon the rapid-
fire delivery of the debaters and upon
the general concept of the spread. It
is a custom I choose to ignore
because, in my view, such condemna-
tions mistake the fundamental nature
of modern academic debate. They
assume that debate is a speech
activity, at least one important aim
of which is the persuasion of the
audience. In fact, debate is an
intellectual game which employs speech
communication merely as a matter of
convenience. It is far easier and
quicker to conduct a twelve round
tournament employing verbal communi-
cation than to utilize written
interchanges. But the speech is
peripheral rather than essential, and
the location of the debate programs
under the aegis of speech or communi-
cation departments is largely a
historical accident. The essence of
debate is the intellectual clash
between two teams; to that end we
engage in intensive research, develop
second-line argumentations and devise
strategems for the unwary opponent.
The purpose of the game is to discover
which team can out-think the other.
The spread is simply one of many
tactics which may be employed in
pursuit of that end.[1]

Mark Arnold, the coach of the team
winning the 1974 National Debate Tournament,
is not an atypical proponent of NDT debate
philosophy. In order to win a bid to the
National Debate Tournament, the debate coach
encourages his students to practice what
Roger Hufford called, "the spread, the
squirrel, and the silences."[2] William
Reynolds identified a number of factors
which contributed to the downfall of NDT
debate as "the only game in town" when he
wrote:

The first influence reflects a growing
tolerance for marginal interpretations
of topics (the so-called squirrel case)
that permits propositions to become
virtually all things to all men. A
second influence has resulted in a

sacrifice of quality of proof for
quantity and bulk (the so-called
spread argument). This practice has
led not only to the habitual use of
severely truncated arguments,
lacking necessary explanation and
logical development--in many instan-
ces, they are little more than mere
assertions thinly supported by what
passes for expert testimony--but also
to the legitimization of case forms
and structure whose efficacy appears
to rest more on strategic concerns
than on products of reasonable
analysis. Finally, partially as an
outgrowth of the spread, violence
has been done to the communicative
process itself. Clarity, precision,
and impressiveness in style have
given way to jargon--for example, the
use of such words as spread, squirrel,
P.O.'s, disads, PMN's to mention only
a few--wordiness, and involuted
syntax. Rate in delivery has surpassed
the phenomenal, destroying in the
process the unique dimension of meaning
that is conveyed only through the oral
expression of ideas.[3]

The purpose of this paper is to examine
an alternative to NDT debate with respect to
its history, distinctions, theoretical con-
siderations and the role of the judge in
determining future theory.

CEDA DEBATE

A number of solutions to the so-called
"deterioration of intercollegiate debate
competition" have been proposed in the form
of rules, directions to resolution-writing
committees, and instructions to judges. One
alternative to NDT style debate, CEDA,
carries a roster of nearly 150 schools.
CEDA originated in the mind of Dr. Jack
Howe, "during a lonely, monotonous, night-
time car ride between Tucson and Long Beach
in late July, 1971. The speaker (Howe) had
just learned that the national proposition
for the coming year was once again one
requiring boundless research on a topic so

broadly worded that it literally invited the squirrels to come down from the trees."[4]

Howe proposed a number of objectives for his fledgling debate association. He wished to see more of a balance among the use of evidence, analysis and delivery. He felt the use of cross-examination techniques and a resolution which was quite different from that used by NDT competitors would educationally benefit the debaters. In addition, he chose to propose timely and interesting topics for individuals who did not wish to vie for NDT bids but who would desire the opportunity for intercollegiate competition. Finally, Dr. Howe believed a healthy approach to competition could be found in creating the rivalry among schools rather than individual teams from the same squad.[5]

DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN NDT AND CEDA

The initial distinction between NDT and CEDA debate primarily rested on the use of cross-examination periods between constructves. However, in 1973 NDT adopted the cross-examination format as well. Present literature speaks of differences between policy (NDT) and value of non-policy (CEDA) debate theory. It should be made clear at this time that CEDA is not now nor has ever been strictly committed to value or non-policy debate topics.

Is there basically a difference between the types of propositions debated by NDT and CEDA? Ronald J. Matlon, in his watershed article on value debate theory wrote "They (value propositions) are closely intertwined with statements of fact and attitudes about policy."[6] Indeed, looking back at past propositions of value one can find a policy implicit in legal protection and explicit in Affirmative Action, Human Rights, and National Service.

Jan Vasilius, a veteran CEDA debater as well as coach, also speaks to the interdependence of value and policy in CEDA but points out a more subtle distinction. CEDA, she claims, focuses on an idea rather than on action as typifies the NDT approach.[7] Thus, one distinction between NDT and CEDA concerns the interpretation of resolutional wording by the debaters. Rarely does one hear a definition of terms in an NDT round. Delineating planks of elaborate plans has superceded the traditional semantic clash. Concealed interpretations of the topic often do not emerge until cross-examination of the first affirmative.

Waxing classical for a moment and returning to the artistic proof of Aristotle, NDT seems to be preoccupied with evidence and the logical appeals, while CEDA debate emphasizes pathos and most particularly ethos in the modern sense of credibility. The use of humor and demonstrations of facility with language, while not found in all CEDA rounds, are more likely to be rewarded by a ballot in CEDA debate.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Coaches, making the transition from teaching NDT-style debating to CEDA-style debating decry the dearth of literature in the area of value or non-policy debate. Thomas Kane directed the membership of the American Forensic Association to vote against proposing a value topic for NDT, arguing that NDT presently had a consistent set of judging standards. He insisted that in order to debate and to teach debate, there must be a theoretical basis which is virtually non-existent in the area of value propositions.[8] Value argumentation or non-policy debate is as well-grounded in classical concepts as policy debate.

TOPICALITY

Topicality will be examined initially since it appears to be a much more relevant and persuasive argument in CEDA debate than

in NDT. James Edward Sayer advises the debater that:

> The stipulated definition ought to clarify a resolution; it ought not to obfuscate the issues or stupify the opponents or leave the judges in a state of shock. The stipulated definition ought to protect argument against flagrant equivocation, not insure it. Apparently as far as I can figure out, the misuses of stipulation began when we were debating "Resolved that law enforcement agencies should be given greater freedom in the investigation and prosecution of crime." We started working fairly straightforward court cases and, all of a sudden, marijuana was blooming in profusion all over the circuit.[10]

This is not just another indictment of NDT and the prevalence of "squirrel" cases. CEDA debaters take Sayer's advice to heart. Topicality is an arguable issue to value debate since criteria for the value is set up in terms of definitions. In NDT, there is an unwritten agreement among the participants that any case will be debated, no matter how strained an interpretation of the resolution since, after all, "we are here to debate." According to a survey taken at the final CEDA tournament of the year at which Sweepstakes is awarded, Rob Norton found that outside of California, coaches tended to judge the issue of topicality differently in CEDA than in NDT.[11] For example, with the compulsory national service topic, the topicality of a foster grandparent program was challenged by a negative who insisted with sufficient documentation that the only reasonable definition of compulsory national service was military conscription.

In a non-policy debate, a value must be supported by a system without exception. Thus, a topicality argument in CEDA rests with the affirmative's ability to entirely justify the resolution. The concept of "value extrapolation" as defined by Jan Vasilius "asks if the single case under consideration would be sufficient to adopt the resolutional value as a whole, thus considering the individual case as either a symbol or metaphor for the entire topic.[12] With the compulsory national service topic, affirmatives found it difficult to justify such programs as the Peace Corps as topical for that reason.

CLASSICAL ARGUMENTATION

The classic notions of burden of proof, presumption and prima faciality are particularly significant to CEDA debate. The notion of burden of proof is one we have inherited from law courts in which the accused must be proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. Traditionally in debate, the affirmative has been saddled with the burden of proof. This does not change when the proposition is non-policy or value. Some topics may be worded awkwardly at times so that it appears that the negative is proferring a change from the status quo. This in no way shifts the burden to the negative side. According to Brockriede and Ehninger, "the burden of proof may, therefore, most accurately and usefully be defined as the risk involved in advancing the proposition."[13] Presumption, the other side of the coin, has been defined by Richard Whately as "in favor of any supposition, means, not (as has been sometimes erroneously imagined) a preponderance of probability in its favor, but such a preoccupation of the ground, as implies that it must stand good until some sufficient reason is adduced against it, in short, that the burden of proof lies on the side of him who would dispute it."[14] A proposition should be worded so that the negative has the benefit of presumption, however, the interpretation of the word has broadened

since Whately's time to favor existing institutions (the ubiquitous status quo in policy debate) and, since the early twentieth century, to deny change. Thus, with "Resolved that a U.S. foreign policy significantly directed toward human rights is desirable," affirmatives were not dealing with a change from the present system.

There are also those who believe that presumption favors audience predispositions or popular belief. This writer opposes such an interpretation on the basis of time constraints. Imagine the frustration of the debater who must first argue the issue of presumption before he can get to the issues of the debate. According to the Reno Judging Survey, when asked if the negative team in CEDA debate enjoyed presumption in value questions, the results were mixed with as many people agreeing, as disagreeing, as remaining neutral. The uncertain coaches indicated that the wording of the topic would affect possession of presumption. In the question, however, "If the negative team in CEDA debate can persuade me that what the negative team defends is as desirable as the resolution, I am likely to vote negative." The overwhelming majority agreed with the question.[15] It would seem to this writer that coaches are having trouble with the concept of presumption in theory rather than in practice, and that the matter of presumption needs clarification. Presumption only becomes a significant issue in a debate when the judge cannot decide between two teams. Matlon suggests that with the "popular belief" and "judges' preconceived attitudes" interpretations of presumption, that presumption be allowed to shift from round to round.[16] This would require the debaters to assess public opinion polls and to discover the biases of individual critics.

David Zarefsky has suggested that presumption be redefined, "not in favor of maintaining the present system, but against the specific resolution being argued."[17] This writer does not believe that it is necessary to embrace the hypothesis testing model in order to accept this definition of presumption. Furthermore, this definition puts us back into the context of values and counter-values. The latin dictum "de gustabus non est disputandum" requires that the side upholding the burden of proof define criteria for certain values and then argue the designative issues (Does the subject meet the criteria?). The side enjoying presumption would oppose those values. In case of a tie, the opposition would take the ballot simply because the affirmative has failed to present a prima facie case. Brockriede and Ehninger tell us that a prima facie case is "a case that any reasonable judge would consider strong enough to stand unless or until refutation is offered against it."[18] In policy debate, a case is not considered prima facie unless such stock issues as inherency, significance and solvency are delineated. But what of non-policy debate in which there are no stock issues to check off in the judge's mind?

STOCK ISSUES

With the formulation of stasis in the *Rhetorica ad Herrenium*, neophyte lawyers discovered the benefits of stock issues in the invention of their legal arguments. Debaters of policy propositions are carefully taught the implications of inherency, significance and solvency. Faules, Rieke and Rhodes, however, warn that these stock issues "can become crutches used in place of genuine analysis."[19] A case has already been made that value debate lacks the theoretical advantage that policy debate enjoys, however, a number of argumentation theorists point to two stock issues for value resolutions. Windes and Hastings address "the

major process of argument used to support value propositions...reasoning from characteristics to a value judgment."[20] Brockriede and Ehninger label the criteria for the value as the "definitive" issue while judging whether the situation meets the criteria is named the "designative" issue.[21] Don Brownlee suggests that since value propositions debated by CEDA are intricately interwoven into policy decisions, that traditional policy stock issues of "ill, blame, cure and cost" are applicable.[22] While these particular stock issues have not yet garnered practitioners in competition, the idea of borrowing theory from other areas of debate strategies is not new to CEDA. The goals-criteria case was utilized by early practitioners of CEDA who argued policy propositions but wished a different approach than comparative advantage. Goals-criteria structure was also discovered efficacious in affirming propositions of value and especially the hybrids of the last few years, setting up a criteria for value or values defended by the affirmative appears to be a prima facie duty for the judges responding to the Reno Survey. The majority agreed with the statement "the value or values a team defends in CEDA debate must be made quite explicit by the team before it is likely I would vote for them."[23]

An additional source of inspiration for the creation of stock issues for non-policy debate can be found in the study of values from the psychological point of view. Debaters should be required to read the works of Milton Rokeach as well as contemporary debate texts. Sociological studies of shifts in values may prove useful in planning affirmative strategy. One of the first places in which stock value issues should emerge is the hodge-podge second negative constructive in which any and all arguments are labeled value objections. The origins of this speech are obvious. However, even though a policy may be explicitly mentioned in the resolution, allowable plan attacks must be generic in nature. In other words, the objections are not specific to the financing, workability, etc., of the policy but rather may be harms that occur from any example of the resolution. Another area in addition to generic policy objections might be violations of hierarchical values or "counter-values." If the affirmative team supports the resolution "Affirmative action promotes deleterious hiring practices," the negative can argue that without affirmative action, minorities are denied freedom of opportunity, a more important value than costing an employer decreased productivity.

According to the Reno survey no coach disagreed with the statement "If the negative team in CEDA debate can persuade me that what the affirmative team defends will violate values more important than those it (the affirmative) defends, I am likely to vote for the negative."[24] Since value hierarchies comprise "all or nothing" voting issues, it would behoove debaters to pursue this line of analysis. Philosophical arguments are also dumped into the vast wasteland of value objections when they might be more appropriately placed first in negative constructive observations. The second negative is also a repository for a myriad of justification arguments. With the compulsory national service resolution, arguments denying the justification of compulsion by the negative would have been more effective when located in a concerted topicality attack than lost in a muddled collection on the back of the flow. This writer believes that if the trend toward value-policy hybrids continues with the value of desirability emphasized, the stock issues will emerge at an alarming rate.

Those coaches who deplore the deterioration of NDT debate have virtually no one to blame but themselves. Debaters will shape their behavior based on the ballots they receive. Granted that there is a great deal of "in-breeding" going on in the field; successful debaters go on to become coaches and critics who reinforce the techniques which served them well. In addition the practice of assigning only certain judges to high-powered rounds of NDT insured that the coaches who refused to flow unintelligible speeches would not be given the opportunity to do so. Jack Howe charged: "The practice of 'seeding judges' is one of the most reprehensible on the contemporary tournament scene and can be justified only if we concede that a small elite among us have beheld the true Grail and thoroughly 'appreciate' contemporary debate."[25] The membership of CEDA should well pay heed to the lesson offered by NDT. All of us are accountable for what happens to intercollegiate debate. Raymond Zeuschner points to the "hundreds of small decisions made each week in advising our students, participating in our local academic settings, casting ballots in individual rounds of competition and in discussions with our colleagues" as the way intercollegiate competition is defined.[26]

Debaters and critics new to value or non-policy debate are understandingly confused with respect to a criteria for judging. Stock issues which guide NDT judges do not really apply. Value propositions which contain terms like "policy" and "program" muddy the waters even more. Ballots printed especially for CEDA have included instructions to judges which advise that a plan is not required, that inherency arguments do not pertain and that counterplans are not allowed. According to the Reno Survey the impact of this kind of information on the criteria for judging

appears to be minimal. When asked if the "Note to Judges" (appearing on the widely used Northridge ballot) affected judging of CEDA debate, the majority tended to be uncertain or to disagree with the statement.[27] It would seem that a theoretical model really does not influence the critics either. This writer firmly believes that the value proposition judge does not have to be a "policy maker," a "hypothesis tester," an "evaluator of argumentation skills," a "tabual rosa" or even "stock issue" tabulator. It is interesting to note that an analysis of the judging philosophies submitted by critics of NDT demonstrated that while coaches may catagorize themselves in one or another of the theoretical models, they are basically consistent with each other, not with their stated philosophies. Cross and Matlon characterized the academic debate judge as an individual open to new theoretical considerations.[28] Thus research appears to bear out Robert Trapp's conviction that judges are indeed situationally-guided in their decisions rather than directed by some closed system model.[29]

CONCLUSION

Coaches and debaters, disgruntled by the excesses in NDT debate, have found a viable alternative in value or non-policy debate. The membership of CEDA at present argue quasi-value propositions. Theory is constantly evolving in the forensic laboratory. The relationship of value argumentation theory to classical concepts is undeniable. Stock issues will become more refined and sophisticated as debaters and critics enjoy more experience with the non-policy viewpoint. Speaking format and strategies are viewing a number of positive changes and innovations. The most important influence on the development of CEDA debate will be the debate ballot itself.

Coach and student, judge and participant
are joining in the on-going creation of
new theory in the field of non-policy
argumentation.

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[1] Annabel Dunham Hagood, "Argumentation Theory: A Crisis in Identity," Forensics as Communication, edited by James H. McBath (Skokie, Ill.: National Textbook Co., 1975) pp. 101-102.

[2] Roger Hufford, "The Debate Tournament," Eastern Communication Association Convention, Washington, D.C., March 20, 1974.

[3] William Reynolds, "Theory and Practice in Forensics," Forensics as Communication, p. 111. See also: Bill Henderson, "Theoretical Implications of Debating Non-Policy Propositions," (Speech Communication Association Convention, Washington, D.C., December 2, 1977), and Thomas Harris, "Academic Debate from a Game Perspective," (Eastern Communication Association Convention, Washington, D.C., March 22, 1974)

[4] Jack Howe, "Origins of CEDA," (Speech Communication Association Convention, New York City, November 1973), pp. 1-2.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ronald J. Matlon, "Debating Propositions of Value," Journal of the American Forensic Association, (Spring, 1978), p. 195.

[7] Jan Vasilius, "Presumption, Presumption, Wherefore Art Thou Presumption?" (Desert Argumentation Symposium, Tucson, Arizona, March 2, 1980).

[8] Thomas Kane, "Should the National Intercollegiate Debate Topic be a Non-policy Proposition?" (Speech Communication Association, Houston, Texas, December 28, 1975).

[9] Matlon, p. 196.

[10] James Edward Sayer, "What is Right and Wrong with Debate," Debate Issues, II (October 1977), p. 4.

[11] Rob Norton, "Reno Tournament Judging Survey," (mimeo, Humbolt State University, Arcata, Ca., April 13, 1980).

[12] Jan Vasilius, "Value Proposition Debate: A Pragmatic Approach," (Wyotana Graduate Communication Conference, Missoula, Montana, June, 1977).

[13] Wayne Brockriede and Douglas Ehninger, Decision by Debate, (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1967), p. 86.

[14] Richard Whately, Elements of Rhetoric, (New York: Sheldon and Co., 18__), p. 139.

[15] Norton, (unnumbered pages).

[16] Matlon, p. 194.

[17] David Zarefsky, "A Reformulation of the Concept of Presumption," (Central States Speech Association Convention, Chicago, Ill. April 7, 1972).

[18] Brockriede and Ehninger, p. 86.

[19] Donald F. Faules, Richard D. Rieke and Jack Rhodes, Directing Forensics, (Denver: Morton Publishing Co., 1978), p. 11_

[20] Russel R. Windes and Arthur Hastings, Argument and Advocacy, (New York: Random House, 1965), p. 221.

[21] Brockriede and Ehninger, p. 221-22. See also: Craig R. Smith and Daniel M. Hunsaker, The Bases of Argument, (Indianapolis, Bobbs Merrill, 1972), p. 73.

[22] Don Brownlee, "Advocacy and Values," The Forensic (January 1980).

[23] Norton.

[24] Norton.

[25] Jack Howe, "Controversial Practices in Forensics," Forensics as Communication, p. 125.

[26] Raymond Zeuschner, "Formulating Definitions and Goal Statements," Forensics as Communication, p. 94.

[27] Norton.

[28] John D. Cross and Ronald J. Matlon, "An Analysis of Judging Philosophies in Academic Debate," Journal of the American Forensic Association XV (Fall, 1978), pp. 110-123.

[29] Robert Trapp, "A Situationally-guided Perspective for Propositions of Judgment," (Speech Communication Association, Washington, D.C., December 2, 1977).