

# THE FORENSIC

PEITHO KALE DIKAIÄ

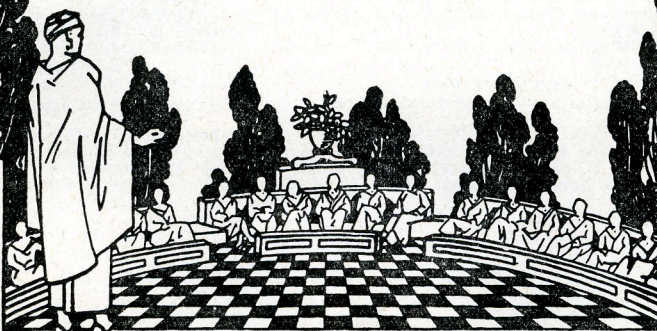
MARCH  
1948

SERIES 33

NUMBER 3

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# THE FORENSIC

OF PI KAPPA DELTA

SERIES 33

MARCH, 1948

No. 3

## *Assumptions Underlying Analysis In Debate*

WILBUR E. MOORE  
Central Michigan College



That there exist among debate coaches and debaters marked differences of opinion about what constitutes "correct analysis" of a debate proposition is evidenced by the disputes over the affirmative's duties regarding plan, accusations of illegitimate stratagems, and the quibbling over such terms as "federal," "world government," "compulsory arbitration," etc. The tendency of affirmatives to reduce their burden of proof by restricted definitions and the objections of the negatives to this practice have led debaters more and more to shift from issues of policy to issues of definition. Apparently wide training, which includes study of the standard works on argumentation, and broad experience, which includes participation in many strong tournaments, do not prevent confusing interpretations or shifting from issues of expediency to issues of definition on propositions of policy so that no logically adequate basis of decision is provided, for the writer has observed finalists in important tournaments devoting half their time to quibbling over what constitutes "substantial increase in power" and whether "compulsory arbitration" involves compulsory enforcement of the findings of an arbitration board, or merely the compulsion to arbitrate.

Although such debating at its worst can probably never be prevented, still it is the writer's belief that certain contributions in recent years by writers on psycho-logics and certain principles of analysis outlined nearly two thousand years ago by Quintilian can, if followed, do much to reduce the dissensions over interpretation and the shifts in issues.

Of the factors contributing to fruitless quibbling, the first perhaps, is an unawareness of the multivalued or variable character



of the terms in a debate proposition. A multivalued term is one to which may be assigned any one of a number of values.<sup>1</sup>

Before the validity of a proposition containing multivalued terms can be determined, agreement must be reached on the values to be assigned to the terms. For example, no one would think of debating the validity of the proposition  $x \times y = 30$  without first assigning values. Debate can not settle the values of be assigned. Agreement must be reached. Further, the values do not inhere in  $x$  or  $y$ . If we unconsciously assume that they do, then two persons may quibble over whether  $x = 5$  or  $6$  or  $10$ , and  $y = 6$  or  $5$  or  $3$ . The validity of a proposition containing such terms can not be evaluated until agreement is reached on the value (meaning) of  $x$ . The value of  $y$  may then be deduced. Debate about the validity of propositions containing multivalued terms is meaningless and fruitless.<sup>2</sup>

That the terms in debate propositions are multivalued or variable can usually be demonstrated without recourse to authority. The uncertainty and confusion in the evaluations of both judges and debaters after a debate over interpretation is generally apparent. The uncertainty as to which "is correct" results from the unconscious assumption that there is "a correct definition." However, if authority is needed, one may only look at the values given to "federal" or "government" in the *Oxford Dictionary* or *Encyclopedia of Political Science* to be convinced that such terms are variable.

Since they are variable, a debate on a proposition of policy becomes meaningless when either team refuses to accept the value assigned by its opponent. Further, since the values of terms like "government," "federal," "compulsory arbitration" are usually determined by custom (i.e. the values given to them by judges, political scientists, legislative acts, etc.) and since custom varies greatly, both teams in many instances may produce much reason and authority in support of the values they are assigning. The fact remains, however, that debate on the proposition has stopped and must remain meaningless until agreement can be reached.

It would seem to the writer that debaters trained to accept the assumption that the meanings *inhere* in the terms and the issues *inhere* in the proposition<sup>3</sup> instead of being assigned by them are more likely to assume that "their meanings are the real meanings." They are, therefore, more likely to be controlled by the

<sup>1</sup> Reichenbach, Hans, *Elements of Symbolic Logic*, pp. 80-91.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* See also Korzybski, Alfred, *Science and Sanity*, pp. 133-150.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Miller, Edd, "Special Types of Debate." *The Debaters Magazine*, II (Sept. 1946), 1945; Fritz, Charles, *The Method of Argument*, p. 49.



## *The Chief Faults of Debaters*



A board of four coaches who are nationally known for developing strong debate teams present here the chief faults of debaters. Read them. Then make out your list and send it to the Editor.



E. R. NICHOLS

### E. R. NICHOLS' LIST:

1. Insufficient research or lack of adequate preparation
2. Reliance on the gift of gab
3. Head-on collision style—no conception of strategic debating
4. Borrowing from other debaters—both slicker devices and arguments without any investigation to determine accuracy or honesty of statement
5. Ossified cases—no growth or development. Indicates laziness and self-complacency — especially true of winners
6. Lack of organization

7. Inability to analyze debate subjects and draw issues
8. Lack of conclusive and clinching evidence — too much general statement and personal opinion
9. Lack of clear, convincing, reasoning power
10. Misconception of the debate process

### MARTIN HOLCOMB'S LIST:

1. Repeated assertions without proof
2. Inaccurate statement of opponents' arguments
3. "File-card" rebuttals



MARTIN HOLCOMB





E. O. WOOD

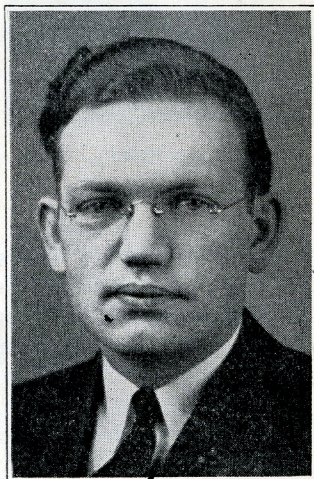
4. Relying on denials and numerous questions for rebuttal attacks
5. Rapid, loud and inarticulate speaking
6. Substituting glibness of tongue (when he has it) for evidence and reasoning
7. Lack of organization
8. Faulty analysis
9. Failure to clash
10. Absence of authentic information on the subject

#### E. O. WOOD'S LIST:

1. Insufficient knowledge of subject matter
2. Failure to meet issues
3. Poor platform behavior
4. Inadequate vocabulary
5. Quibbling over terms of question
6. Vagueness of affirmative stand
7. Quibbling over burden of proof
8. Misplaced oratorical endeavor
9. Monotony of delivery
10. General ineffectiveness of presentation

#### GLENN R. CAPP'S LIST:

1. Overstating conclusions — drawing sweeping conclusions from insufficient evidence — extravagant claims
2. Attacking personalities, appealing to prejudices, traditions, customs and ignorance as a substitute to attacking arguments directly with counter reasoning and evidence
3. Arguing about the meaning of a proposition instead of debating the issues
4. Resorting to name calling—for example, labeling a proposal as communistic without offering proof



GLENN R. CAPP



## *The Worst Faults of Debate Judges*



Twenty widely distributed and representative debate squads from schools having Pi Kappa Delta chapters were asked to enumerate their chief grievances against debate judges. Here is the list of chief offenses drawn up by the four squads that met the



The Southwestern Louisiana debate squad presents an "action portrait" of incompetent and inattentive debate judges.

Untrained judges: a chef, a janitor, a chemistry teacher, a barber.

Inattentive judges: the pipe cleaner, the sleeper, the make-up artist, the reader. And to make the picture complete, a book-reading timekeeper.

deadline. Duplications of ideas have not been eliminated since the wording may give slightly different emphasis. Debaters send your list to the Editor. At the end of the year a ranking of judges' faults will be made.

1. Use of substitute judges in tournaments who know practically nothing about debate
2. Coaches who, as judges, "cut off" strong teams to ease their own teams into more favorable positions
3. Coaches who, as judges, give the preference, often obviously,



- to cases which they themselves favor (and attempt to justify themselves to the "losing team" after the debate is over)
4. Judges who are apathetic — obviously. I admit that such apathy may be relative to the debaters' abilities, but our teams notice great differences in various judges
  5. Judges who take no notes, but who in the middle of a debate, write down their decisions and then sink back to wait for the end
  6. Coaches who, as judges, take notes and use them primarily to give their own team advance information
  7. Judges who are impressed by oratory far more than by debate. This is taking the easy way out
  8. Not judging objectively but with a predetermined evaluation of arguments
  9. Apparent non-interest in the debate
  10. Wishing to debate "issues" after the debate is over
  11. Evaluation of an authority because of political affiliations
  12. Giving an inferior team a decision to keep them from getting discouraged
  13. A judge who says, "By all rights you won the debate but my decision goes to the other side because you failed to answer a point to my satisfaction"
  14. A judge who debates and refutes arguments instead of letting the opposition do it.
  15. A judge who prefers the "shotgun blast" method of interrogation and expects the opposition to answer any and all questions
  16. Nodding or smiling in agreement or shaking the head in disagreement
  17. Lack of debate training
  18. Inattentiveness
  19. Lack of judging experience
  20. Non-sympathetic attitude toward a case that differs from his teams' cases
  21. Biases and prejudices
  22. Basing judgment on irrelevant factors
  23. Rendering decisions in the light of the institutions or coaches represented by the competing teams
  24. Permitting a team to influence his judgment during an informal discussion or visit after the close of the debate
  25. Disregarding a particular debate and rendering a decision in the light of the competing teams' past records
  26. Taking into consideration only one or two of the following factors instead of all:



- |                      |               |
|----------------------|---------------|
| a. case and argument | d. refutation |
| b. organization      | c. delivery   |
| c. evidence          |               |

27. Dis-interested attitude toward debate
28. Inattentiveness to speakers
29. Allowing personal prejudice to enter as a factor in decision
30. Using own knowledge to refute either or both cases
31. Placing too much value on speaking
32. Lack of understanding of types of reasoning
33. Faulty conception of affirmative's burden of proof
34. Failure to notice attempts of affirmative to use last rebuttal unfairly
35. Conferring between judges when there are more than one
36. Lacking of background knowledge of subject necessary to understand discussion

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### ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING ANALYSIS IN DEBATE

Continued from page 46

unconscious projective mechanisms and to refuse to be flexible at a time in the debate when some flexibility is necessary if the debate is to progress from definition and interpretation to policy. Acquaintance with the nature of different levels of language and with the logic of variables, should help to reduce quibbling over interpretations.

A second general principle that should prevent fruitless quibbling may be discovered in Quintilian's treatment of the status or essential basis of a cause. A proposition of policy will rest mainly on general considerations of right or expediency.<sup>4</sup> For the affirmative to choose for the essential basis an issue of definition, to debate whether their plan meets the requirements of the proposition instead of accepting an unquestioned burden of proof and "proving" the advantages of their proposal is to invite criticism and hazard victory.<sup>5</sup> Although minor issues on propositions of policy may involve fact or definition, adequate analysis of a proposition of policy will in greatest likelihood indicate that the main focus must be upon general considerations of good.

Debaters who are aware that they are responsible for the assigning of meanings and agreeing upon them early, and who are eager in discussions of policy to choose as a basis of their cause questions of "right" and "good" and "expediency," should raise the standards of debate and restore to it the respect which it deserves.

<sup>4</sup> Quintilian, *The Institutio Oratoria* (translated by H. E. Butler) Bk III, Chapt. 6.

<sup>5</sup> For an excellent summary see Baldwin, Charles Sears, *Ancient Rhetoric and Poetic*, pp 74-76.



## Talk and Talkers

"A demon of a man, a full-blooded, exuberant Philistine, with a demiurgic brain and a bull's body, a Philistine in all but his devotion to the welfare of the State, his deep strain of racial piety,—this was the grand thing in Webster,—with an all-subduing personal force, an eye as black as death and a look like a lion's, as the farmers in his native New Hampshire said, almost a foreigner, with his rustic manners, among those Boston lovers of elegance, he was fighting in and out of Congress, first for the Constitution, for the Union, imperilled by so many factions, and secondly for the manufacturing interests that lay behind New England's rising fortunes. With an oratorical gift as great as Burke's in learning, in unction, if not in cultivation,—for, while Webster had a feeling for the sublime, he had little feeling for the beautiful,—he fought for the solid facts of property and the good old Yankee motive of self-interest. As a lawyer, he was unapproachable. When he talked about other lawyers, he made them seem like characters in Plutarch. He could invest a common murder-case with the atmosphere of an Aeschylean drama." —Van Wyck Brooks.

---

"The most threatening obstacle to the attainment of our cherished goals—peace, material and cultural progress, security and understanding—is the shocking failure of communication among men. Our inability to communicate, to achieve understanding with one another across the barriers that have arisen from differences of groups, nation, religion, profession, skill and philosophy, is cast into bolder relief than ever before by our vastly increased ability to communicate across the barrier of space. We have overcome physical obstacles, but we are still waging an uphill struggle to overcome the obstacles born of men's ways of life. Words, ideas and institutions have different meanings for different individuals, groups, and fraternities of knowledge."—*Approaches to Group Understanding*.

---

The soldier Miles Standish couldn't speak. He sent a friend to plead his case. You know the result. He died a bachelor. John Alden couldn't speak either, but he at least tried and got in a scoring position. Priscilla Mullens was the only one of the famous trio who could speak. She saved the day with a few well chosen remarks.