tells us that we (as the agents of change/locus of control) cannot solve our problems. On the contrary, advertisements merely attempt to persuade us that our problems will continue only if we do not buy now. *Cannot* is not in the dictionary of any good ad executive.

The notion that inherency means proving that the status quo has problems it cannot address itself has hopelessly confused matters. To prove that the plan should be done, according to this logic, the Affirmative must prove it cannot be done. But if it cannot be done, what is the sense in arguing that it should be done? At best, this take on inherency leaves us with the policy reasoning in the near-asystatic category of the "ill-conceived" (Nadeau, 1964). It is here that the crutch of fiat appears to relieve debaters from the double-bind of "should-would." Before leaning on any crutch, however, it is important to ask whether a properly reasoned perspective would require the use of *ad hoc* correctives. If, for example, academic debate were taken, as it is sometimes purported to be, a serious laboratory for developing argument theory, we would be forced to conclude that politics is the art of the *impossible*. In the real world, we do not attempt to persuade those who already agree with us (although we may attempt to reinvigorate them). Likewise, we do not attempt to persuade those who disagree with us so strongly that we have no chance of success. Persuaders aim for fence-sitters, people who *could* be brought over. That fiat was introduced to counterbalance the "should-would" debate that emerges from *cannot* should have been a clue to the debate community that debate practice had taken a misstep.

A properly reasoned persuasive message is one balanced in a dance between, *can, will,* and *should.* If something *should* be done, the implication is that something *can* be done. One cannot "derive an ought from an is," but one can deny an *ought* with an *isn't.* As the old saying goes, "ought implies can." One might easily establish, for instance, that NASA has no particular obligation to send a manned mission to explore the interior of the Sun, because such a mission is not feasible at present or in the foreseeable future. On the other hand, it also makes no sense to argue for something which is not needed or which will happen regardless of action taken by the audience. If something *ought* to be done, this implies something *can* be done, but also that it *will not* occur otherwise. A proposed action lacks rational impetus if it is so likely to happen that we need not act (it *will* happen regardless). On the other hand, it cannot be so unsure as to be impossible (it *cannot*) happen. *Should* is balanced between *will* and *cannot*, between the inevitable and the impossible, such that any persuasive message needs to have an eye for arguing *not* that what is proposed *cannot* happen, but *will not* happen (unless the message is adhered to).

If determinism is true, as the philosopher Daniel Dennett (1984) remarks, it would appear that there is no counterfactual sense of *can.* What *can* happen is nothing more and nothing less than what *does* happen. This is "actualism," the view that only what actually happens is possible. Determinism seems to imply actualism, because it

describes a world in which only one sequence of events is realized in history. An indeterministic world would not make things better for us, however, because open possibilities (i.e., cases that genuinely could go either way) would not be governed by character and choice, but by chance fluctuations. What *can* happen in this case would not be the result of volitional acts, but the random swerves of the universe.

Dennett (1984) points the way out of intellectually suffocating grip of actualism by regarding *can* not as an ontological, but as an epistemological concept:

> The useful notion of "can," the notion that is relied upon not only in personal planning and deliberation, but also in science, is a concept of possibility-and with it, of course, interdefined concepts of impossibility and necessity-that are, contrary to first appearances, fundamentally "epistemic." (p. 148)

Can is relative to a perspective, often a level of organization (e.g., physics, chemistry, biology, psychology, sociology), and involves that which is "known" vs. that which is unknown.

What we *can* do is often relative to the perspective from which we observe variation. If, for example, we say that a person *can* choose to be a designated driver, do we mean that this choice does not violate the law of non-contradiction? We could, because it is certainly conceptually possible for a person to act as a designated driver. Alternatively, we might mean that the notion does not violate a physical law of nature, or law of human nature, or existing laws and rules, or limitations resulting from contingent attitudes. Can the great King Canute stop the tides from coming in by sole force of his sovereign proclamation? It is conceptually possible, but it is obviously impossible in terms of physical law. Suppose the question is, "Can people form and sustain utopian societies?" In this case, we would say that this *can* happen in the sense that we can conceive of a utopia and it certainly does not seem to entail a violation of physical law. It does, however, seem to involve violating laws of human nature. Humans, or so studies suggest, are built for self-interest as well as other-interest, for competition as well as cooperation, and this introduces a fundamental friction which (among other factors) appears to make genuine utopias impossible. The prospect of a utopian society seems so far away that most people would not seriously entertain proposals for a utopia. Yes, it *could* happen in the basic sense of sheer possibility, but (apparently) cannot happen in the sense of practical realization. It could happen in one sense, but it obviously cannot happen in another.

Questions of *can* get very uncomfortable when we approach the free will problem. Can Fred choose vanilla ice cream? His choice violates no law of nature. Vanilla ice cream is readily available and people consume vanilla ice cream on a regular basis. Suppose, however, that we knew everything there was to know about Fred's psychology and neurobiology, and knew that his brain was set-up such that he could

not choose vanilla ice cream (e.g., Fred has a deeply irrational fear of vanilla). What should we say now? We can certainly say that Fred *can* choose vanilla ice cream in the sense that nothing (outside him) is blocking him. It is readily available and he is at liberty to choose for himself, but if one knew all the facts about Fred (including the relevant detail that he will never voluntarily eat vanilla ice cream) would it make sense to try to sell him vanilla ice cream? If ought implies can, then the answer is clearly, "No."

Everyday humans, of course, are not Laplacean demons, so it is impossible that anyone could predict to a certainty the moves a person might make. From the epistemic vantage point of the ice cream seller, it might very well make good sense to attempt to sell Fred vanilla ice cream, because, for all he knows, Fred may be responsive to the suggestion. It is only in the case where one claims certainty, where one claims that something cannot happen, that attempts would be irrational.

The sense of *can* which is relevant to any attempt at a persuasive communication is the sense which reflects a reasonable likelihood that one's hearer would respond favorably to the message. In short, and in terms that are relevant to persuaders (and we should note that the proposition of legislation in Congress, as well as debate rounds, occurs in a persuasive context):

Cannot is that which is nonresponsive to persuasion; *Can* is that which, from our vantage point, is reasonably likely to be responsive to persuasion. The idea that an Affirmative plan should be proposed only in such case as there is no chance it could happen is simply preposterous. It reflects an imbalance in the dance between *can, will* and *should,* and their slippery counterparts, *cannot, will-not* and *should-not.*

Inherency argumentation lost this sense of balance at some point. My guess is that it began with the appearance of attitudinal inherency. Structural inherency is straightforward – an existing structure or a lack of necessary structure in the present system means that present conditions will continue unless action changing the existing structure is taken. Attitudinal inherency appears a bit flimsy in comparison. It offers no tangible structure (or lack of structure) that stands in the way. Perhaps to compensate for the fact that there is nothing preventing the status quo from exhibiting resolutional action, those arguing for attitudinal inherency felt compelled to argue that attitudes preventing action must be *very* strong as a hedge against the counternotion that these attitudes might easily change without the plan. At some point, the conversation wandered into the domain of *cannot.* And this is where things slide out of balance. If the target audience of the message, the people in a position to act on the message are dead-set against the message of the plan, then the problem of "should-would" appears. Congress and similar regulative bodies which serve as the locus of control in policy debates (i.e., the agent which is called upon to makes changes) cannot be called upon to fix the problem if their attitudes make it impossible to enact the plan.

The (Un)Corrective of Fiat

If the Affirmative argues that the plan cannot happen, what serious consideration does their policy message merit? Indeed, if the plan could not happen, is this not a reason that counts against the Affirmative? It is here that the fiction of fiat appears as a compensatory measure. What is troubling is that many debate scholars express the point of view that fiat is a necessity and not an *ad hoc* compensation. Abrams and Novak (1997), for example, remark, "Without the Affirmative Fiat power, the existing attitudes preclude ameliorating the societal faults and the Affirmative Plan" (p. 42). Snowball (1994) puts it more directly and pithily, stating, "Without the concept of Fiat, all debate would come to a screeching halt as the negative team simply shrugged their shoulders, pointed to the Inherency contention, and commented 'well, it just ain't gonna happen!'" (para. 77).

Debate scholars (e.g., Berube, Snider, & Pray, 1994) have generally speculated that fiat was likely introduced to get past the "should-would" argument, stipulating that the plan *would* pass, so that debaters may focus on the question of whether it *should* pass. There is a place for stipulation in argument, but one can only stipulate so much before the conversation becomes entirely artificial. There is an old joke about an economist who is stranded with a group of survivors on a very small island after being shipwrecked. The survivors have no food except for canned goods that they managed to salvage from the wreckage. The problem they face is that they have no means of opening the cans. At this point, the economist proudly chimes in with the solution *"First, we shall posit a can opener."* Although fiat is intended to focus the debate on questions of merit, whether a policy *should* be enacted cannot practically be discussed independent of some consideration of whether it *could* happen.

Two Ways Forward: Inside or Outside

If fiat is a mistake, as so many debate scholars have argued in the last decade, it must be recognized as a mistake that follows from a more fundamental mistake, the failure to frame inherency as a balanced concept. The absolute categorization of inherency as an all-or-nothing is what made the magic wand of fiat necessary in the first place. As Berube, Snider, and Pray (1994) comment, "Fiat is a tool to prop up a faltering paradigm" (p. 222). As inherency is presently argued, fiat is a necessary means of circumnavigating an imbalanced question. Getting rid of fiat, therefore, first requires dealing with the conceptual problem that led to it.

Two suggestions are offered here as means of rebalancing inherency and both are relative to whether the judge is asked to be context-internal to the proposed policy (i.e., is the judge being asked to imagine that she is a locus of control relative to this policy?) or context-external (i.e., making a guess as to whether the policy would have a chance of succeeding with the intended audience of policy makers). In the former case, attitudinal barriers should neither be

argued as reasons to endorse or reject the proposed policy. In the latter case, attitudinal barriers may be considered. Attitudinal inherency, even in this case, however, should not be taken to be an absolute-categorical issue.

Context Internal

In the context of a parliamentary debate round, if the Government team defines "This House" as the United States federal government (or whatever regulative body is identified, or interpreted to be, within the resolution), the judge is, in effect, in a time-space shift round whether she realizes it or not. That is, she is asked to imagine that she possesses the majority vote of the United States federal government. Also, if the debate takes place in the context of a policy-making paradigm (in which the judge pretends that she is a policy-maker who has the power to "vote up" or "vote down" the plan as a piece of proposed legislation), the upshot is the same. The judge is context-internal. She is implicated as the locus of control for the plan. Consequently, what the government (or regulative body) will do depends on her ballot.

Attitudinal inherency has nothing to do with the analysis in a context-internal framing of the debate round. The Affirmative cannot argue attitudinal inherency as proof of a barrier, because it is the judge who will decide (at the end of the round) whether she likes the policy or not. To argue that the judge is necessarily committed to a negative attitude such that she could *not* vote for the Affirmative plan would assume, by definition, that one does not have a fair judge. Alternatively, the Negative team cannot argue the "should-would" question on grounds of the attitudes of our actual empirical Congress, because the judge's attitudes *are* their attitudes. Any attitude which would have prevented the Congress from voting for the plan disappeared when the judge was asked to imagine that she was Congress (in that moment, her attitudes replaced theirs, and thus any preexisting attitudes were rendered moot).

Some might object to this proposal. How does this act of imagination leave us any better off than the fiction of fiat? Why should we exchange one fantasy for another? The answer is simple. Fiat, as it is presently conceived and operationalized, is a cheat introduced to climb out of a logical hole. The context-internal suggestion, at least, does not involve the embarrassment of spackling over a contradiction. Because the Negative, on this view, is not in a position to argue that prevailing attitudes would prevent the passage of the plan, there is no need for the Affirmative to wheel in the clunky apparatus of fiat to get past the inherency "should-would" question. This also means, however, that Affirmatives cannot help themselves to arguments about attitudes as blocking the plan either. In short, the Affirmative must argue structural inherency if they choose this path.

Context-External

For those who find all this make-believe to be off-putting, there is

another option. The judge might imagine herself to be exactly what she is, a judge in an academic debate round. The debaters, in turn, would imagine they are debaters interrogating the merits of a proposed policy. In this case, since the judge is not asked to imagine that she is the locus of control, the question of whether the plan has a reasonable chance of getting past the regulative body is indeed relevant. Since *can* is that which, from our vantage point, is reasonably likely to be responsive to persuasion, the Affirmative must minimally argue that it is reasonably plausible, relative to the exigencies illustrated by the harms (or the opportunity cost of failing to secure comparative advantages), that Congress would be willing to vote for their proposed plan.

A reasonable expectation is not a guarantee of success. After all, most real-world sales pitches fail. There should, however, be enough of a possibility of passing Congress (or whatever agent of action) that it makes sense to discuss the policy.

Yes, this means returning to the "should-would" argument. Attitudinal inherency is an option for the Affirmative, but the Affirmative should not argue strong or absolute attitudinal inherency (which establishes that the proposal has little to no chance of success). To be clear, the Affirmative should not argue attitudinal inherency as a reason why the plan *cannot* happen, only why it *will* not happen (e.g., policy makers are presently not thinking in the direction of resolutional action).

The Negative, however, may freely argue that strong attitudinal barriers are a reason why the plan would not be passed even if it were presented to the regulative body. Since the impossibility of the plan happening would be a reason to reject the plan, this is a valid consideration. The counterbalance to this, however, is not the *ad hoc* invocation of fiat, but rather the standard that the Affirmative only need establish that there is a reasonable expectation, from the vantage point of the debate round, that Congress would be reasonably likely to pass the plan if it were put to a vote.

Again, this standard does not hold the Affirmative to guaranteeing success, but merely establishing a reasonable expectation of success. If it is reasonable for a salesperson to make a sales call with only a one in ten chance of a sale, then it is not unreasonable to think that Affirmative debaters should be able to carve out a space where the proposing plans would be justified in cases where there was not a high probability of success. Consider that since 1999, Congress has only been passing about 5% of the bills it introduces (Tauberer, 2011). *If a 5% chance of passing is good enough for the average piece of legislation, why shouldn't it be good enough for the average plan to pass the "should-would" test in a debate round?* If we accept the congressional average as setting the standard (at least for policy cases invoking the United States federal government), then I think it should be clear that presumption heavily favors the Affirmative in potential questions of "should-would."

Yes, the Negative might always introduce the "should-would" as a "time suck" argument. Negative debaters might argue that the plan should not be considered, because it has no chance of passing, but this is true of any argument strategy that might be introduced by the Negative, as the proliferation of "spec" violations demonstrates. No amount of theory can make up for purely opportunistic debaters using what are often bad-faith arguments.

We can bracket the "should-would" question if we please, but it should be remembered that the more we bracket questions, the further removed we are from reality and the more we let students cheat on critical thinking, much like the economist who lazily posits a can opener.

As unpalatable as the "should-would" argument might be, it is preferable to faulty paradigms and clumsy fictions.

Stock issues do not just reflect rules of expectation (unwritten rules and norms associated with custom) or rules of fiat (arbitrarily/conventionally assigned rules), but rules of necessity that will re-assert themselves, no matter how boldly we refashion the vocabulary of debate. Whatever new terminologies are minted, for example, advocating policies will still have to come to terms with moving from a "problem" to a "solution." Consequently, the traditional stock issues of harms and solvency will never truly fall into disuse in debating policies. The same goes for the question of inherency; there is no sense in taking action to solve a problem, if substantive action is already imminent. This is not to say that whenever the practices of any debate community are unmasked, we will find the stock issues working with interchangeable functionality. Refashioning theory and practice is always somewhat implicated in the charge of "reinventing the wheel," but not all wheels are created equal. Some wheels are wobbly where others turn true. A significant wobble was introduced in academic debate when inherency analysis strayed into the terrain of *will-not* to *cannot*. Fiat was introduced as a counter-weight, but it was an *ad hoc* solution that only mitigated the wobble, and created some unexpected wobbles of its own. The solution is conceptually simple, but requires some practical skill. Debaters must once again learn to set the balance between *can, will,* and *should.*

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BOOK REVIEW

Hart, R. P., Childers, J. P., & Lind, C. J. (2013). *Political tone: How leaders talk and why*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Reviewed by BRIAN T. KAYLOR, JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

Growing up, one phrase I heard several times from my mother was "don't take that tone with me!" I sometimes feigned ignorance as if I did not know which she meant. Yet, perhaps it should have been the question: which tone? *Political Tone* seeks to explain contemporary U.S. presidential politics by considering tone, but in reality the authors explore tone by looking at various *tones*. Situating tone as a "subset" of style, the authors treat tone as "a tool people use (sometimes unwittingly) to create distinct social impressions via word choices" (pp. 8-9). The book, thus, is all about words, especially words used to describe politicians, parties, activists, and politics. This book takes words seriously as the authors demonstrate through their writing style and their rigorous analysis of what politicians say.

The authors strive to capture several important political tones and thus build their analysis on over 30,000 texts using the computer analysis program DICTION created by the lead author. Although the program has expanded over the past three decades, the book builds on the work of Hart and others in several books and numerous articles to understand political tone. This book, however, stands on its own and therefore should be accessible for those unfamiliar with Hart's earlier works and still insightful for those who have read those books. Those worried about a book full of computer printouts and numbers should not shy away from this book; the authors weave in textual examples to illustrate their findings and write with an engaging tone as they translate the graphs and numbers into arguments. While rhetorical computer analysis brings some limitations, the authors employ the method appropriately by utilizing their program to explore a massive body of texts to offer longitudinal analysis.
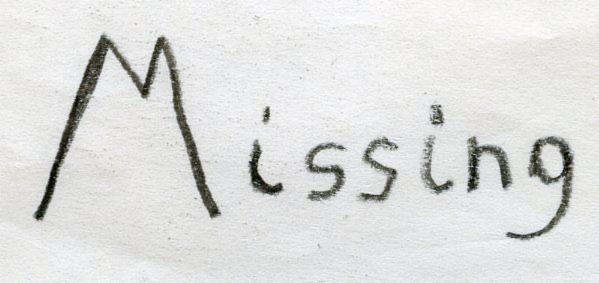
The book explores several different tones to offer varying ways of considering modern U.S. presidential politics. The first part of the book offers a sweeping look at trends that emerged in politics over the last seven decades, and explores factors helping to spark these dominant tones. Issues analyzed include diversity and the need to accommodate, voices of citizens and press, partisanship and tonal differences between Republicans and Democrats, religious rhetoric, time and urgency, and assertiveness. The second part of the book adopts a more case-study approach by focusing a chapter each on four politicians and their unique tones: Bill Clinton's "resilient tone" in the midst of the Lewinsky scandal, George W. Bush's "measured tone" despite critics who pegged Bush as an ideologue, Barack Obama's

"neighborly tone" during his first campaign and presidential term, and Sarah Palin's "wandering tone" that hurt her political rise. From the macro to the micro, the authors consider numerous politics tones to help explain contemporary politics. Although some of the conclusions are mundane and others perhaps controversial, the authors cover a variety of issues as they explore various nooks and crannies of politics.

Although Hart, Childers, and Lind purport to offer a book on "political tone," they actually explore the topic of tone by analyzing various political tones. In doing so, they offer a valuable monograph for those hoping to understand more about political communication or the power of language. Undoubtedly, other political tones could be considered that are missed in this book, and these additional perspectives would add to our understanding of "political tone" if we can truly speak of such a singular tone. To their credit, the authors acknowledge various difficulties created by the use of the word "tone." Ultimately, however, this book offers trends in political tones and what they suggest about politics today, and highlight unique political tones used by some politicians. Perhaps they and other scholars will build on this work with future explorations. Scholars of political communication, forensics competitors, and political activists and pundits can all gain from these insights and should all give similar attention to changes in political tones and to political figures employing unique tones.

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