

In formats that include reply speeches, the Negative has the advantage of having two speeches back-to-back (a Negative constructive speech and a reply speech), while the Affirmative has the advantage of having the last word. Developing strategies that take advantage of these positions is an important part of the reply speaker's craft. At the most immediate level, this means that Negative can reinforce their points more thoroughly and Affirmative can more effectively frame how the adjudicator should view the debate.

## BIASED ADJUDICATION

The reply speaker's speech is often called a "biased adjudication." "Adjudication" is a term for the feedback given by the adjudicator to speakers after a debate. It usually presents an overview of the debate as a whole, touches on the contributions of each speaker, and indicates which issues really dominated and which could have been dealt with more thoroughly. A biased adjudication does the same, but always, and unsurprisingly, concludes that the speaker's side had the better case. It pretends to be considered and balanced but highlights the points the speaker's own side wishes the adjudicator to consider as she reaches her decision, while expressing concern that the opposition may have misunderstood the real issue of the debate.

This approach to concluding is closer to the role of reviewer or critic than to the other roles mentioned above. In a review of a movie or book, the critic spends very little time recounting the plot, rather the focus is on the film in its totality: its underlying messages, its tensions and themes, its relation to the experiences of the audience and, ultimately, its strengths and weaknesses. The reply speaker's biased adjudication does much the same.

## Conclusion

The process of concluding is not about giving a faithful, objective account. Rather, it is about using those aspects of the debate that most favor the concluding speaker's side to prove that they have won. Sometimes a concluding speech is a form of rhetorical triage—presenting strong arguments that speak for themselves, patching up those that can be saved, and leaving those that are beyond saving to die quietly in the darker recesses of the audience's memory.

The concluding speech needs to accomplish a number of goals: demonstrating that the team has set out the arguments they said were necessary to prove their case, providing a framework for the adjudicator, tidying up some of the remarks that have gone before, and presenting everything in a comprehensible package. The final speaker uses