

1AR Meta-Truthing

Oh here it goes again!

Framework: Don’t vote on their theory shell just because other people have explained the jurisdictional nature of theory to you in the past. If they don’t say anything about their specific shell having jurisdictional nature, then do not vote on it. Saying “Voter” is not sufficient. I’m running a brand new argument in LD, called Meta-Truthing, which essentially acts as a theory on theory. But it comes first because it acts as a side constraint and a critique of their theory shell and the nature of debate itself. Thus we need to add a whole new level to debate above theory, which I shall deem as Meta-Truthing. If I lose my Meta-Truthing shell I lose the round, I took that risk so reward me for it.

Meta-Interpretation: 1NR theory is bad for LD

Meta-Violation: The Negative runs multiple positions that I have to go through before I can access my AC Framework.

History Lesson: The Origin of theory of debate traces its roots back to Policy debate and somewhere down the road people in the LD community found enough support in the judging community to begin running theory shells in their rounds. Although LD theory shells are in fact more like topicality shells in Policy

Meta-Standards:

Time Skew: The format for Lincoln Douglas debate was not built to deal with multiple off case positions and theory debates. This is noted by the fact that the first affirmative rebuttal is significantly shorter than the first negative rebuttal. The affirmative’s job is to break down the round in the 1AR so that the judge can focus in on the key issues of the round. Theory debate can be handled in CX because most violations of topicality or theory in Policy are brought up in the 1NC, a speech of 8 minutes. The 2AC then has an equal 8 minutes to initially leverage against the shells and the arguments against their case. Initial leverage is important in these debates because extensions out of the theory shell spell doom for any affirmative rebuttal. There is no such reciprocity of times in LD. This also allows for Policy debaters to go for multiple levels of the debate, even while dealing with theory. However 1NR theory forces the affirmative to cover all parts of NC before they can break down the round. I have to devote all of my time solving the theory problem before I can even begin to go back to my original position. In effect I either have to A) Sacrifice the quality of my arguments to go for everything or B) Focus in on a theory debate where most judges when hesitant to buy an RVI.

Bastardized Theory Shells: Lately debaters have noticed the inherent advantage for going for theory violations in the 1NR. Most debaters look to “Overload the AC with so much shit that they can’t handle it”. These conversations actually exist outside of this round. 1NR theory has no need for voters. If a true violation of ground has occurred, then there is more than enough time to try to fix that ground. The existence of voters in the 1NR shell show that the Negative is more concerned about winning the shell for the benefit of winning, than it is about stopping the abuse. This has caused a bastardization of theory shells in the LD community. Most sports have a rule book to tell someone when they are committing a violation; however, no such book exists in LD. And more importantly the ability to set those rules is never given to someone who is directly competing in the activity. There can never be fairness if only one team is allowed to set rules for the game. This gives incentive for LDers to try to find violations in search of a way to win rather than stop abuse in the future. This is proven by the fact that most theory shell violations are extremely blippy and usually last less than 1:30 minutes. It’s even worse when it comes to the voters of theory arguments. Debaters rely on the judge to be able to understand and interpret their theory short hand for them. “Voter: Fairness, if there are no rules to the game then no one plays them”, is not a sufficient reason to indict the affirmative of causing violation so bad that they need to lose the round. When people run these kinds of blippy theory shells they are relying on the judge to pick up the slack for them on theory especially on the jurisdictional nature of theory. Most theory shells are void of any explanation for why theory is an apriori voter. All it shows is that LD debaters understand that running theory is advantageous, not that running theory is a way to actually engage in any intellectual discussion or solve problems for future debates.

Better Debate: The issue of time skew goes beyond just being a structural issue. It causes the entire debate itself to be dumbed down into 2 sentence arguments thrown out against every single point. Because debate itself has devolved into a line by line game the Affirmative in this particular round would have had to spent \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ seconds per argument. This is in no way sufficient to explain clearly a claim, warrant, and impact in an intelligent manner in this short amount of time. It stretches out the Affirmative to the point where if I want to be competitive in this round I have to sacrifice my strength of arguments to fight back against the sheer size of the NC. Debate itself is losing its meaning at this point. Debate at this point becomes more about spreading out the debater so that they do not have time to sufficiently answer your case rather than about actually engaging in intellectual discussions.

Voters:

Education: Education is not just limited to the arguments that we talk about in round, but it is heavily reliant on the way debate is structured. Currently the existence of 1NR theory has been used to keep debate exclusionary; people cannot successfully enter the community because they do not have the resources to understand the very esoteric nature of theory. This is jurisdictional because it has impacts outside of the rounds

1. Many debaters come from Public schools who are entirely reliant on their funding, if schools really don’t see any educational benefits to debate they lose their funding and can’t compete, look around you tournaments have gotten smaller just in the last 4 years alone
2. This has caused debate to become elitist insofar as the esoteric nature of 1NR theory gives huge advantages to kids who can spend thousands of dollars out of pocket to go to large debate camps, and makes the even more about resources than about skill

Fairness: Debate needs to be changed in such a way that either A) Allows for the time for the AR to answer theory and case or B) We need to get rid of 1NR Theory. Since we can’t restructure the time scheme we have to go with the latter. As a judge you need to understand how fairness impacts the community. If you continue to vote up 1NR theory shells then you are essentially awarding an unfair practice, you reward people for forcing the rounds to be bogged into theory debates rather than about the actual topics.

Embarrassment: Debate strategies themselves spread through the grapevine every time something innovative is run for the first time. Meta-Truthing has value in so far as its name is absolutely ridiculous. People are going to have to go to their coaches and tell them that they loss to a “Meta-Truthing Shell” This has two impacts.

1. People will be embarrassed so much by the idea of losing to Meta-Truthing they won’t be as willing to run theory the next time
2. It will inspire other debaters to write similar shells and at least make the quality of theory debates go up because people will be less willing to run bad theory if there is an apriori check on it.

Vote on my Meta-Truthing so that we can finally get rid of Theory once and for all.