Section 1 is the links:

#### First, the affirmative proposes that we should evaluate the round through a consequentialist standard. This means the winner of the round is the debater that has the biggest impact. Naturally, this requires weighing impacts against each other.

#### Second, the affirmative treats the issues they talk about purely as a flow game instead of appealing to our emotions. The aff does nothing to make it sound like the impact of affirming is actually a bad thing in the real world; the language and attitude surrounding the impact make it clear that it is just that, an impact.

#### Third, rather than focusing on one impact scenarios and truly explaining the problems associated with that impact, the affirmative chooses to present multiple impact scenarios which forces the negative to engage by presenting more impacts or bigger impacts. The solution isn't to find realistic answers, but rather, the biggest impact possible.

#### Fourth, the affirmative runs ridiculous impact scenarios. <INSERT RANT HERE > We know these arguments are not true, but we treat them as legitimate impact stories because that is what we have been trained to do.

#### Section 2 is the harm:

#### The constant comparison of impacts has desensitized us. Gordon Mitchell[[1]](#footnote--1) explains how debate encourages its participants to view suffering as just another impact. He writes:

#### While an isolated academic space that affords students an opportunity to learn in a protected environment has significant pedagogical value (see e.g. Coverstone 1995, p. 8-9), the notion of the academic debate tournament as a sterile laboratory carries with it some disturbing implications, when the metaphor is extended to its limit. To the extent that the academic space begins to take on characteristics of a laboratory, the barriers demarcating such a space from other spheres of deliberation beyond the school grow taller and less permeable. When such barriers reach insurmountable dimensions, **argumentation in the academic setting unfolds on a purely simulated plane, with students practicing critical thinking and advocacy skills in** strictly **hypothetical thought-spaces**. Although they may research and track public argument as it unfolds outside the confines of the laboratory for research purposes, in this approach, **students witness argumentation beyond the walls of the academy as spectators, with little or no apparent recourse to directly participate** or alter the course of events (see Mitchell 1995; 1998). **The sense of detachment associated with the spectator posture is highlighted during episodes of alienation in which debaters cheer news of human suffering or misfortune. Instead of focusing on the visceral negative responses to news accounts of human death and misery, debaters overcome with the [zeal of]** competitive zeal of contest round **competition show a tendency to concentrate on the meanings that such evidence might hold for the strength of their** academic debate **arguments. For example, news reports of mass starvation might tidy up the "uniqueness of a disadvantage"** or bolster the "inherency of an affirmative case" (in the technical parlance of debate-speak). Murchland categorizes cultivation of this "spectator" mentality as one of the most politically debilitating failures of contemporary education: "Educational institutions have failed even more grievously to provide the kind of civic forums we need. In fact, one could easily conclude that the principle purposes of our schools is to deprive successor generations of their civic voice, to turn them into mute and uncomprehending spectators in the drama of political life" (1991,p. 8).

#### End quote. Not a single debater is concerned with the event itself but only its function in terms of the debate round. Debate is no longer a discussion of real world events, but rather, it is a clash of cards and numbers. Because of the mentality of circuit debate, we have become machines and lost our most important quality as humans: empathy. There are no human faces that we see dying, there are only quantities that we evaluate in terms of “magnitude and probability.” Consequently, we have become cut off from the impact of every event we discuss.

Not only are we desensitized to the suffering of others, but we also have come to love suffering. Debaters do not acknowledge suffering because we have been trained specifically to not care about others. A card about a suffering individual doesn’t matter unless it lists numbers and has big impacts or talks about nuclear war. Consequently, we seek out suffering just for the sake of turning it into a card. We read an article and get excited when we read about people dying. The first thing we think of when we hear about evidence that says more juveniles are raped in the neg world than they are in the aff world is "sweet, I found a turn to prison rape!"

Clearly, the effect debate has had on us is not a good one. What are we learning? To cut cards and outweigh? An activity that we all love should not make us bad people.

Section 3 is the alternative:

It is inevitable that debaters will use suffering as an impact because arguments for why we should prevent future suffering will rely on examples of past suffering. However, what Mitchell criticizes is when suffering is used at an impersonal level—i.e. beyond the walls of the academy as spectators. Thus, the alternative is to engage the resolution by running narratives. I reserve the right to clarify.

Narratives solve the issue of desensitization by focusing on individual stories. We identify and respond better to arguments concerning individual people than we do to arguments talking about the mass. Paul Slovic[[2]](#footnote-0) explains:

~~Our cognitive and perceptual systems seem to be designed to sensitize us to small changes in our environment, possibly at the expense of making us less able to detect and respond to large changes. As the psychophysical research indicates,~~ **constant increases in the magnitude of a stimulus typically evoke smaller and smaller changes in response. Applying this principle to the valuing of human life suggests that a form of psychophysical numbing may result from our inability to appreciate losses of life as they become larger** ~~(see Figure 4). The function in Figure 4 represents a value structure in which the importance of saving one life is great when it is the first, or only, life saved, but diminishes marginally as the total number of lives saved increases. Thus, psychologically, the importance of saving one life is diminished against the background of a larger threat — we will likely not “feel” much different, nor value the difference, between saving 87 lives and saving 88, if these prospects are presented to us separately.~~

End quote. Studies have proven this. Slovic 2 continues:

**The study consisted of three separate conditions: (1) identifiable victim, (2) statistical victims, and (3) identifiable victim with statistical information.** ~~The information provided for the identifiable and statistical conditions is shown in Figure 7~~. **Participants in each condition were told that "any money donated will go toward relieving the severe food crisis in Southern Africa and Ethiopia." The donations in fact went to Save the Children, but they were earmarked specifically for Rokia in Conditions 1 and 3 and not specifically earmarked in Condition 2.** ~~The average donations are presented in Figure 8.~~ **Donations in response to the identified individual, Rokia, were far greater than donations in response to the statistical portrayal of the food crisis.**

End quote. Narratives focus on individual stories, and thus are more likely to evoke an emotional response from us. This solves for the de-sensitization that Mitchell talks about because no longer is there a sense of detachment. Solving this desensitization caused by debate is more important than concerns about fairness and education. There is no point in winning debate rounds if we become bad people, and the whole point of being educated in the first place is so that we can have a positive influence on the world. Robert Rowland[[3]](#footnote-1) concludes:

**The** ~~second rhetorical~~ **function of narrative is to create a sense of identification between the audience and the narrator or characters in the narrative. Great novels such as Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* played a role in the civil rights movement because they helped create a sense of identification between white and black Americans.** ~~Lee's novel and many other stories showed the audience that the black characters in the books were people just like them. Similarly,~~ **narrative can allow us to see the world through the eyes of a Palestinian** ~~terrorist~~ **and understand what might drive him or her to terrorist acts. One of the most powerful functions of narrative is to generate in the reader/viewer/listener the understanding that "I'm like him or her."**

End quote. Thus, narratives help create a sense of identity which is key to solving for the desensitization currently caused by debate.

As an underview:

If I win the links and the harm section of the K, vote negative.

First, only voting down the affirmative will convince them that there methodology is wrong. The choices of what we choose to run in debate are driven by what positions win. This is empirically proven by the rise and decline of aprioris. Debaters ran aprioris as easy ways to win the round. Now, aprioris are considered unstrategic since the theory debate is always an "uphill battle." Doug Sigel[[4]](#footnote-2) furthers:

**Just as we punish criminals to deter crime, we should punish debaters who injure the debate process.** A ballot that says "I think you may have won the second DA--but I voted against you based on the illegitimacy of the conditional counterplans you ran" sends a strong message to the teams involved and other participants in the activity that there are high costs of abusive strategies. There does not seem to be merit to the negative reinforcement approach to debate. **The arguments and styles that are successful are copied; those that aren't are shunned. While the decision in one round can't be itself fundamentally change debate, a general trend can be initiated and/or reinforced by a decision.** The experience of this author has been that, at least in college debate, the threat of punishment now hangs over teams using strategies and styles that are generally regarded as illegitimate. **Deterrence seems especially applicable to the debate setting because the participants have control over their practices. We all practice judge analysis, trying to adapt to the inevitable likes and dislikes of even the most tabula rasa critic.**

Second, allowing the 1ar to stand up and read a narrative only encourages the aff to use consequentialist standards in the AC and to shift into reading a narrative in the 1ar. Such a strat makes it so that only 3 minutes of the NC are actually useful, giving the aff an incentive to engage in it. Only voting the aff down will convince them that running the types of AC's that they choose to run is bad. .

1. Gordon Mitchell 1998 (Upitt prof of Comm and coach) "Pedagogical possibilities for argumentative agency in academic debate" Argumentation & Advocacy; Fall98, Vol. 35 Issue 2, pg. Ebsco/ [↑](#footnote-ref--1)
2. Paul Slovic  
   "If I look at the mass I will never act": Psychic numbing and genocide

   Decision Research and University of Oregon  
   Judgment and Decision Making, vol. 2, no. 2, April 2007, pp. 79-95. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
3. Rowland, Robert C. (2005). “The Narrative Perspective.” Chapter Eight. In J.A. Kuypers (Ed.), The Art of Rhetorical Criticism. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. Page 134. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
4. [Doug Sigel 1984, “The Punishment Theory: Illegitimate Styles and Theories as Voting Issues,” Journal of the American Forensics Association, available online at http://groups.wfu.edu/debate/MiscSites/DRGArticles/DRGArtiarticlesIndex.htm.] [↑](#footnote-ref-2)