

by  
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[Based upon the article "An Introduction to the "Kritik" by William Bennett]

## Responses to a Kritik

1. Is this a thinking, rhetoric and/or language, or a value kritik?
2. How does our case produce this \_\_\_\_ kritik?
3. In offering this kritik, are you trying to exclude the power of *fiat* from this round?
4. Are you advocating Heidegger's approach that the way we think is more important than the end or goal of our thought?
5. What assumption within our case do you base your kritik upon?
6. Explain exactly what makes this kritik unique to our case.
7. Did this debate tournament invite you to debate this resolution?
8. By coming to this meet, did you not choose to debate this resolution?
9. Do you agree with William Shanahan, one of the defenders of kritiks statement "Without limits debate is impossible. The ground made available by the kritik is literally limitless"
10. Is there a reason for a paradigm judge to vote for a team that offers no policy?
11. Do kritiks supersede a *priori* status, or are they another a *priori* issue on an equal plane with topicality?
12. If a kritik does not explain why it is a voting issue how should the judge make the decision?
13. By running this kritik are you claiming it has voting issue status and yet you do not accept the traditional assumption of policy debate. Then are you not guilty of contradicting the premise of running a kritik?
14. Do you agree with Heidegger when he stated that kritiks are much more about encouraging us to ask questions and examine our assumptions than they are about providing answers?
15. Then how can you justify that a decision is bad or should be changed?
16. Would you not agree that Heidegger taught there is not certain harm that will result from a valid kritik because of their philosophical nature and lack of real world status that *fiat* argues?
17. Heidegger describes kritiks as dead as in nihilism, nothingness. Do you agree with this?
18. Do you oppose policy debate? Is this not what a kritik is doing?
19. Where is the burden of a kritik?

## Reasons to Reject a Kritik

1. This kritik is generic.
  - A. It does not specifically critique our case, but all cases in general.

B. Kritiks are too generic. Originality of thought and clash becomes less important. Policy implications, contemporary knowledge of current events and recent history are no longer rewarded as debaters search for the most esoteric and obscure philosophical references.

C. Solvency, disadvantages harm turns and causal link attacks provide for valid debate. This kritik does not do so.
2. This kritik is regressive
  - A. It is based on poor assumption.
  - B. The kritik is not based on any important flaw in the resolution or our position presented in our case.

C. The attack was not understandable both in intent and structure.

D. The opponents presented a weak or unproven value basis.

E. Thoughts presented do not improve the quality of debate.

F. There are no specific sources and research of the violation.

G. William Bennett states: "Kritiks discourage research on the topic, decrease the variety of cases and attacks, and substitute in their place an increased emphasis on deconstructing ideas and language."

H. Bennett also states: "The constructive and more encompassing nature of policy clash increases the discussion of multiple ideas and is more educationally worthwhile."
3. This kritik is inconsistent with other traditional negative issues.
  - A. Disadvantages and harm turns stem from the same premise.

B. A constructive kritik must show through logic and evidentiary requirements that the kritik should be used rather than other options.

C. Bennett states "the lack of any organization requirements and substructure standards for a kritik present the potential user with ... special challenges." Negative failed to meet these.

D. Policy debate and *fiat* should be the

paradigm for the debate.

E. This kritik is absurd.

F. This kritik should not be a "voter."

## 4. Standards to apply.

A. Kritiks are logically flawed.

B. Kritiks require that no alternative be identified and defended. This gives the negative an unfair advantage. They attempt to show flaws in logic without giving an alternative, but there is no reason to reject the plan when the alternative is unknown. How can a judge evaluate a plan without knowing what s/he is voting for if the plan is rejected.

C. Kritiks decrease research on the resolution area. Only a few kritiks could suffice to serve a debater throughout his or her entire competitive career.

D. Kritiks have no burden. It is an attempt to win without equal division of burdens and research efforts. They have no brink, no threshold, no impact, no uniqueness, no time frame, no empirical proof, - they just reject. They criticize without offering a clear alternative.

E. They destroy fair division of ground. Matthew Shors states: "In the end the affirmative must defend something and the negative can critique endorsement to death. Such one sided arguments discourage research and hard work."

F. Kritiks encourage trivializing debate as an activity. No longer is policy comparison and problem solution the focus.

G. This tournament is a policy debate tournament. The negative team has the right to attend kritik tournaments whose invitations and rules make it clear that kritiks are to be the focus of the competition.

H. Tournament competition clearly provide judges with paradigms that include policy decisions. Kritiks require no policy and do not apply to this tournament.

(Janice Caldwell coaches at Lindale High School (TX). This article is based upon "An Introduction to the Kritik" by William Bennett, April 1996 Rostrum Volume 70, Issue #8, pages 19-21 and 24-26.)