



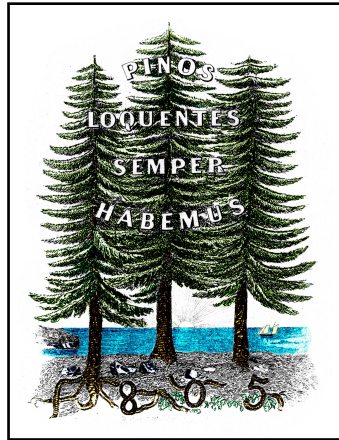
CHRONICLE

Affirmative

Daniel Brady '08, delivering the affirmative address, acknowledged that violence can have short term benefits. That violence, however, actually can produce good and prevent further violence, he argued, is an illusory concept. Like Miller, Brady called upon history and his personal experience with civil conflict in Sri Lanka to posit that violence only begets further violence and that peace is ephemeral. Further, he argued, one cannot truthfully state that violence can be justified, as no man can determine what

Resolution

Violence is always evil



SIGNIFICANT THEMES

- ⊗ Eros (Love) vs. Thanatos (Death)
- ⊗ Necessity of Violence
- ⊗ Absolutism vs. Relativism

Negative

Joshua Miller '08, presenting the negative opinion, argued for an essentially utilitarian approach to the question. While acknowledging that violence causes harm, he explained that the harm caused by violence can, on occasion, prevent greater harm coming to individuals and the world. Citing a number of historical examples, Miller argued that certain situations justify, even necessitate, violence. Violence, when justified for a good cause, is actually a positive good.

THE SOCIETY DEBATE

Several members questioned whether violence could be evil if no person could determine fully what constitutes right and wrong. Turning from a focus on violence, conversation led into a debate over relativism. Alicia Martinez '10 took a traditional relativist stance, stating that no single or absolute truth or morality existed and all stances were mere opinions. Arguing a semi-relativist position, Brady suggested that while there may be an absolute code of morality, human beings, being fallible and without perfect knowledge, cannot know what that code states.

Reacting to Brady's comment that all would agree the truth cannot be known, Miller, Timothy O'Brien, and John Cunningham rejected the relativist position and argued an absolute morality

does exist and, further, that men could know it. The three, however, split over the implications of absolutism on the debate over violence. Miller and O'Brien, arguing that good cannot come from evil, said that violence can be absolutely good. Cunningham, on the other hand, argued that human life is sacred and thus all assaults on it are evil.

In response to the debate over relativism, Ross Jacobs posed the question: "Are relativism and pacifism compatible?" Many of those previously advancing the relativist position argued that they certainly can.

A conclusion was not reached, but the fascinating debate gave rise to many interesting thoughts and ideas. A worthy disputation indeed.

