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CAD FORUM
TWENTY YEARS OF GAMING: ON THE INFLUENCE OF ALFRED C. SNIDER

Brian R. McGee, Editor

It was the end of the 1987 Spring Semester and my first of three years as a debater at Southern Illinois University. Jeff Bile, my coach and the person who taught me more than anyone else ever had (or has) about argumentation, suggested that my growth as a debater would soon come to an end unless I learned the body of theory that existed for academic debate. And so I dutifully trotted off to the library in those pre-Internet days and spent many hours with CEDA Yearbook and the Journal of the American Forensic Association. I read the work of Rowland and Pfau, Keeshan and Ulrich, Frank and Hunt, Biggers and Berube. But no essay captured my imagination as much as an article written by Alfred Snider on gaming. I was searching for a way to describe and make sense of my own experience as a debater, and the game metaphor did so in a way that no other has before or since that day in the stacks of SIU's Morris Library. To this day, my own published work on debate continues to rely heavily on this turning point in my intellectual development, and a quick review of the debate literature of the last 20 years suggests that my own reliance on Snider's work is hardly unusual.

In this forum, we consider the influence of Snider's germinal 1984 essay on gaming and academic debate. This influence is not uniformly celebrated, as David Frank's essay clearly demonstrates. Nor do the consequences of the gaming perspective entirely satisfy all members of the debate community, as suggested in various ways by the essays of Maxwell Schnurer, Ede Warner, and Steve Woods. While this forum will not answer definitively even such basic questions as the standing of gaming as a paradigm, it does illustrate the extent of gaming's influence on debate practice and the roles played by Snider's work in shaping the development of academic debate as we left the twentieth century and entered the twenty-first.

GAMEMASTER: IS IT YOU?

Alfred C. Snider

Embracing the goddess energy within yourselves
Will bring all of you to a new understanding and valuing of life,
A vision that inspires you to live and love on planet Earth.

Like a bright jewel buried in dark layers of soil and stone,
Earth radiates her brilliant beauty into the caverns of space and time.

Perhaps you are aware of those who watch over your home
And experience it as a place to visit and play with reality.
You are becoming aware of yourself as a gamemaster.

-Lost Tribe, "Gamemaster," Tranceport CD

Twenty years is not such a long time, comparatively. However, the anniversary of my original publications about gaming as a paradigm for academic debate does seem like an opportune moment to evaluate the basis and progress of academic debating as well as the paradigm I have written about for it. This is not to say that gaming has been a "hot button" issue for academic debate during the last two decades, or that its use and defense has been played out in debate rounds many times. The sheer invisibility of gaming has actually been one of its strengths. This paradigm was utilized (knowingly or unknowingly) by the majority of American debate teams and judges during this period. It has not been argued about inside of the debates themselves because it is not a strategic tool – it grants advantage to neither side in the debate. However, there are stirrings that debating in America has changed, that the old game is over, and that we need to "step outside of the box" of gaming as a paradigm for academic debate. The explosion of debate in new communities and in

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many, many nations also may strain the influence that the gaming concept has on this dynamic activity.

My purpose here is to review recent competitive American debate history, consider how gaming has operated within that framework, and address the relevance of gaming to a number of the so-called challenges facing modern academic debating in America and now beyond. The game of debate as a theoretical approach becomes merged with the reality of competitive academic debate in this essay. I write as a debate teacher, coach, and practitioner for over thirty years. I have trodden the dusty paths, driven the all-night vans, sought for lost luggage, struggled with language translations, engaged in the act of debate strategizing, expressed anguish because of the behavior of judges, watched countless students bloom, and more that I will not attempt to share. The "young rebel" of gaming is now the "elder coach" who is asked to write a twentieth anniversary essay for a leading journal. In such a situation I ask for your understanding, as I may be somewhat less than formal and fully "academic." I desire to be brief so as to leave space for my distinguished respondents.

Initial Misunderstandings

There were brief and tentative criticisms of gaming initially. Some said that debate was too important to be "just" a game. It did not occur to these persons that games could be important. Perhaps they had never seen the World Cup. Others indicated that the fantasy involved in the other paradigms (policy making and hypothesis testing were used as examples) was necessary for proper training and the integrity of the activity while failing to recognize the obvious limits of these fantasy roles as explanatory while neglecting the integral "gaming" features of the activity as practiced.

The most serious error in reacting to gaming has been mistaking decision rules for paradigms. A paradigm is a "Weltanschaung," or "world view" of a given individual. A "model of models," a paradigm organizes our behaviors within academic debate by giving metaphoric guidance (Snider, 1982, pp. 9-10). A decision rule is the "accounting system" of the game. This is a factual representation of some real world process at an acceptable level of detail for use in the context of the gestalt of the game. In debate, this would be thought of as issues of quantity/quality and/or outcome/process. In their advocacy for or against the scenario/topic being debated, teams may claim that their positions lead to a better quantity/quality or a better outcome/process (Snider, 1982, p. 154).

The gaming paradigm as spelled out properly locates these pre-gaming paradigms within the gaming context as decision rules. A debate taking place under an assumed paradigm of policy making will proceed to decision along certain decision pathways and formulas. The model of public policy making guides the decision in the debate without being explanatory enough to be a true paradigm. The point most often missed is that most so-called paradigms are assimilated by gaming and accounted for as decision rules (Snider, 1991). This error has continued.

Silent Adoption

The gaming paradigm was never a construct that was forced onto the actual procedures of debating. Rather, gaming serves as an explanatory paradigm that should be utilized because it fits debate as it is and helps us understand how the actuality of debate operates. Academic competitive debate was already a game before my articles appeared. My articles merely served to explain what debating had become. Thus, the "adoption" of gaming as a paradigm was mostly silent, as debaters, judges, and tournament directors continued to do what they had been doing already.

The Game Of Debate And Three Challenges

In the last twenty years new issues and new challenges have arisen. I will attempt to discuss some of these issues and then relate them to the gaming paradigm. I view these as important issues that need to be seriously considered in order for academic competitive debating to thrive in the years to come. Although not providing a clear prescription for these challenges, gaming does provide some insight. I invite my respondents in this issue to give their own learned options about these challenges.

One: Stepping Out Of The Box

I take this phrase from Ede Warner of the University of Louisville. In judging an elimination debate between Kansas and Vermont at CEDA Nationals Ede commented after the round that the debate was proceeding down predictable policy pathways when all of a sudden the Vermont team "stepped out of the box" and called for a decision based on the discourse and framework advocated by Kansas. He explained that the normal procedures of the game had been shifted away from a discussion of policy outcomes to a discussion of discourse and frameworks. This example heralds what has become a very hot issue in

modern competitive academic debate on policy topics: the call for alternatives to the traditional decision rule (see eDebate Listserv, 2002).

To explain what is meant by this traditional policy approach, it might be wise to quote one of its major advocates, Stefan Bauschard. This is how Bauschard defines his conception of what teams should do at his decidedly "within the box" Policy Debate Round Robin Tournament (Bauschard, 2002):

> …we define policy debate as a willingness of the affirmative to advance a specific traditional/fiated plan that they will advocate as being net-beneficial relative to the status quo or a specific alternative. Negatives are responsible for defending the status quo or specific alternative(s) in the form of a traditional counterplan as being net-beneficial relative to the affirmative plan. http://ndtceda.com/archives/200212/0185.html]

What happens when a team decides to "step out of the box?" There are an infinite number of alternatives, certainly, but several seem to dominate. The traditional decision rule of policy making is rejected and an alternative proposed. At times the team introducing a new decision rule will call for an evaluation of the discourse in the debate. Arguing that the imaginary policies to be adopted by fiat are less real than the discourse that proceeds from the mouths of the debaters, the team proposes that the judge evaluate the discourse for its appropriateness. For example, a team may have used offensive language (sexist, racist) or marginalizing language ("third world," or "underdeveloped") and the other team may call for the decision based on this objectionable discourse. In a slightly different approach, a team may provide a different form of "performance" (it might include narratives, drama, poetry, song, music, etc.) and call for the decision in the debate based on a comparison of their exciting and illuminating performance with the more pedestrian performance of the opposing team. In another approach one team might advocate a "real world" "project" that they are involved in, usually linked to the resolution, but that attempts to change the views of those in the debate as well as others in the debate community about some specific approach to an issue, perhaps using a different form of analysis such as engaging in a genealogy or a historical investigation. The team "stepping out of the box" calls for an affiliation by the judge with their "project" by arguing that it is a real political move and not just a way to win the debate. Of course, it is almost always still an attempt to win the debate.

The dance of argument going on inside the game may be different, but it is still inside the game. Introducing the decision rules of discourse, performance, or project to substitute for the definition supplied earlier does not stop all of these events from being competitive academic debates within the gaming construct. The ability to introduce new decision rules to reflect changing times and academic interests is a vast strength of academic debate as a game, because it is flexible and adaptable to the intellectual community expressing themselves through it. As one who loves to read old debate textbooks and hear about debate practices from forty or fifty years ago, I can assure you that I have no desire to return to those decision rules or even those from "when giants walked the earth" (read as "when I debated"). When old debaters come back and find things very much changed, I do not despair along with them since it makes me feel positive about the activity and its progress. These new ways to conceptualize the debate, and those yet to come, are welcome changes and signs of growth and vitality. However, any approach to debate can lead to a poorly crafted and unpleasant performance, especially when new thoughts are finding their way. The challenge is to theorize, utilize, and criticize these new approaches while recognizing that they are decision rules, and analyzing them as such may assist us in creating standards for evaluating "projects" and "performances" once they have been placed in the proper context for the debater and the judge.

The current critical move in American competitive policy debate exists along with traditional policy debate practices. Sometimes the debate will proceed along one path or the other, at other times the debate will involve a head on collision between these two approaches to debate, and at other times entirely new and different decision rules will be introduced. But, they will be decision rules, not paradigms. The game is still afoot. Despair not and feel free to support the kind of debate you feel is best while maintaining a respectful willingness to listen and consider alternatives.

Two: Debate As Process

Traditionally debate was seen as an excellent educational tool, and talented students were encouraged to use debate to hone their skills and prepare them for leadership. At least, that is always what I was told. In the 1990s that tune was to change just a bit. Instead of just for "some" of the "better" students, debate increasingly came to be seen by many as a way of giving previously silenced student populations a chance to develop and exercise their "voice." If debate skills were the critical entry skill to the higher levels of social

achievement, then certainly it could assist people everywhere in becoming more than they would otherwise. Some conceived of debate as a method for empowerent.

The urban debate leagues are an important example of debate outreach to new communities. These leagues were established by the Open Society Institute in cooperation with Emory University originally, and ultimately with major educational institutions and community groups in metropolitan areas all over America. The idea was to create debate teams in academically challenged schools. Not every school and not every city program has been a success, but fourteen cities, 221 high schools, and 40 middle schools later we have 12,000 competitive debaters and 700 trained teachers who are their own best testimony (NAUDL, 2002). [NAUDL Fact Sheet, November 2002]. The urban debate league movement has received the attention of CBS' Sixty Minutes and many major newspapers and magazines (Morris, 2002; Bahrampour, 2000; Keoun, 2000; Gherzi, 2002; Ervin, 2001; Ruenzel, 2002). Other leagues, in places like Massachusetts and Alabama, have started and flourished even without funding from the Open Society Institute. Programs based on the example of the urban debate leagues have begun in places like London [Tesco London Debate Programme of the English Speaking Union] and Santiago, Chile [Torneo Interscolar Academico Metrpopolitano of Universidad Diego Portales], taking debate directly and immediately to students in disadvantaged academic environments. The National Association of Urban Debate Leagues (http://www.urbandebate.org/) has now formally affiliated with the National Forensic League (http://debate.uvm.edu/nfl.html) thanks to the cooperation of NAUDL's Les Lynn and NFL's James Copeland.

Urban debate league advocates have seen the debate "process" as a method for empowerment. During this exercise in grafting debate onto current challenged educational systems another aspect of the debate "process" has manifested itself, the debate across the curriculum concept. Urban debate leagues working with school districts and principals have been the earliest advocates of debate across the curriculum (DAC). Urban debate league teachers have been the shock troops of testing the concept of using debate to teach just about anything. Their support and enthusiasm led to the publication by Maxwell Schnurer and me of a DAC book for teachers (Snider & Schnurer, 2002). This slim volume is currently being translated into Russian, Spanish, Mongolian, and Rumanian. Exciting developments in various school districts herald a rising use of debate as teaching tool for history, literature, culture, politics, social sciences, and others. The real progress of these efforts, however, takes place one classroom at a time as teachers look for new and exciting ways to teach

students about normal subjects in a way that is active, communicative, and develops critical thinking. The debate across the curriculum concept presents a further challenge to the original logic of debate (teach the gifted the super skills of leadership) as well as the original logic of urban debate league proponents (teach critical debate skills to students for whom it can make a huge difference) by arguing that if debate as a process is so valuable then it should be available to everyone and should be strongly integrated into normal classroom practice.

Debate, at is flexible best, provides a strong framework for the advancement of these goals, operating as a critical discourse game. Debates can be designed and arranged to pursue different sorts of goals in classrooms and communities. Debate appears not so much as a formalized disputation and communicative processes but rather as a flexible critical discourse game that attempts to attract and attune students and teachers precisely because it is critical and engaging, because it is participative and expresses ideas from the students, and because it is somewhat competitive and strongly socially engaging as a flexible game of intellect and expression.

One danger in abandoning a specific niche for debate is that if it is everywhere, then there do not need to be centers of focus for debate. If debate is in every class, this may make it more difficult to promote a class in debate. If something is everywhere, it is easier for us all of a sudden to find it nowhere.

How can gaming guide us? It is important to remember that the game of debate is at its best when it is adapted to the needs of the participants. When it is bogged down by restrictive formats that no longer make sense in new settings, its potential is often lost. We have seen how the changes around us have influenced the changes of approach in policy debate. It is not surprising that different situations call for different models of debate. In some situations debate occurs in youth clubs, not in schools. In others it is a class activity, or an extra curricular activity, or a formal sport of the mind. There are one person and six person “teams.” There are long and short debate formats. Some topics are spontaneous; some prepared before a tournament, and some a yearlong focus for an entire national debating community. The balance given to criteria such as public speaking, persuasion, research, strategy, level of knowledge, endurance, and other factors should be based on what those participating need and want. The public “freshers debate” I saw at the Oxford Union, the cloning debate I saw high in the mountains of Serbia, the final round of the first Korean

university national championship I witnessed, the debate between eleven-year-olds on whether pregnant girls should go to different schools I watched in a dirt floor school house in Chile while the rooster in the attached chicken coop crowed, the final round of Lincoln Douglas debate at the National Forensic League national tournament, and the debate held at a middle school about the pros and cons of joining a gang are very, very different, as they should be for so many different settings, audiences, and purposes. The critical discourse game brings its exciting elements to the task of education and empowerment, and it will not be seriously threatened by creating formats that seem appropriate for the situation at hand.

Three: Debate As Global

America has never had a monopoly on debating, although American debaters and coaches often act that way. The United Kingdom and many Commonwealth nations have a much longer history of debating as an educational and competitive activity. Many other nations had debate practices as an integral part of their intellectual traditions even if there were differences with British and American practice. Robert Branham, always a powerful and unique debate theorist, was one of the first to document debate traditions in other nations. (Branham, 1991) Just as he resurrected, for the American audience at least, the experience of Malcolm X learning to debate in prison, he did the same with the debate traditions of China, Japan, and India.

In the 1990s one important barrier to free debate practices came tumbling down – the barrier between Communist and western prosperous nations. Just as he had done through the sponsorship of urban debate leagues through the Open Society Institute, George Soros promoted his vision of "open societies" by sponsoring debate activities. These grants and organizational efforts gave rise to the International Debate Education Association (http://www.idebate.org), a membership organization designed to promote debating exchanges and debating in individual nations in a number of languages. English was always encouraged as a debating language because it is the world's most popular second language, and because when country A debates country B the most compatible language will be English. Now in its 6th year, IDEA is made up of 27 countries with over 60,000 secondary (high school) students, 10,000 University students and 13,000 teachers.

The English Speaking Union (http://www.esu.org/educate/centre) is an international charity based in London. Its Centre for Speech and Debate has promoted public speaking and debate activities in 51 branch nations. It coordinates much of British debating and is

strongly supportive of the two major international tournaments that reflect British debating conventions, the World Universities Debating Championship and the World Schools Debating Championship. These tournaments are held annually and move their locations round the world. They are well attended and extremely prestigious. Activities of the nglish Speaking Union related to debating have increased at the turn of the century under the leadership of Lord Watson of Richmond, Marc Whitmore, and Debbie Newman. Outreach activities continue to expand debating. Latin Americans are beginning to organize on their own in places like Chile, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Puerto Rico and others. They have held two international Spanish language debate championships, and Chile has won both titles. Meanwhile, China has agreed to host a ten-day debate institute for university students in August 2003 after several years of planning and development.

Debaters are debating in increasing numbers all over the world. However, the barriers of distance have kept them from debating on a more global basis. Occasional international tournaments do take place, but for the most part travel costs keep debaters from international competition. This tyranny of distance may be partially dissolved by the use of Internet technology. Streaming video could make it possible for teams to see and hear their opponents on the other side of the world at a very low cost.

On Tuesday, December 23, 1999, at 10:00 AM Eastern Time, the world's first web cast distance debate was held. The topic was, "The United States should immediately lift all economic sanctions on Cuba." Cornell was affirmative and was represented by Anapurna Singh and Jethro Hayman. Helen Morgan and Sarah Jane Snider represented Vermont. The debate started on time and took a little over 60 minutes.

The first international Internet video debate (see short video at http://debate.uvm.edu/debate.html) was between the English Speaking Union in London and the University of Vermont. The event took place on March 14, 2000 at 1 PM Eastern Time, 1800 hours Greenwich Mean Time. The Vermont event featured greetings from Senator Patrick Leahy, Congressman Bernard Sanders, and Vermont Vice Provost Jane Lawrence. The London event featured Lord Watson, the head of Anderson Consulting UK, the UK Minister for E, as well as many other notables. The topic was, "The dinosaurs never see it coming: an exploration of the promises and perils of advanced technology." The focus of the proposition was that rapidly advancing technology threatens to render the unadaptive extinct.

The English Speaking Union and the University of Vermont have since staged a number of separate events. In addition, the Debate Central website (http://debate.uvm.edu) has web cast the final rounds of the Cross Examination Debate Association nationals, the National Debate Tournament, and both policy and Lincoln Douglas divisions at the National Forensic League. Marist College has joined the list of schools using this inexpensive method to web cast debate events. The role of this technology transcends even the question of international debating, which it certainly facilitates. It offers the possibility of dissolving the distance that divides debaters everywhere. It offers the possibility of creating a global debate community where every citizen can be a debater, every computer can be a global podium, and it all happens with delays of less than 10 seconds.

Format rigidity is a threat to the future development of international debating. The explosion of international debating and the technological ability to dissolve distance creates new challenges similar to those in the other areas discussed in this essay. Debaters who are too comfortable in their narrow boxes may be unwilling to step out of them. Those who are too wedded to the conventions of American policy debate, British parliamentary debate, or IDEA's Karl Popper debate will not be able to take advantage of the tremendous opportunities revealed by the new situation. Debate can be thought of as our intellectual food, and there are a delightful variety of ways to serve debate just as there are to serve food. Just as Britain has more curry shops than fish and chip shops, just as Chinese cooking has permeated every part of the USA, we must learn to appreciate the different international flavors of debating. Debate formats can be altered to meet different participant goals, even as the essence of the critical discourse game remains.

Just as organizational divisions have caused some consternation in national debate communities, the same could be true of organizational divisions in the international debate community. It is important for the major organizations to cooperate as opposed to attempting to establish hegemony, either stylistic or competitive. The game of debate belongs to everyone and should continue to exist in wide varieties. Debaters and teachers in every nation should prepare themselves to participate in other formats and even other languages. This is not easy, nor is it convenient, and it can be downright risky, but it is something that needs to be done as a service to the greater debate community of the future and to the participants in these new and exciting experiences.

Gaming can assist us conceptually in addressing this challenge because it recognizes difference as valuable and encourages an open platform in terms of style. My original work

in gaming describes debate as a "frame game," in which we insert the content we want to address, fine tune the way in which it is enacted, enact the performance, evaluate the results, and then load and adjust again. This is the process we should be committed to. The bigoted and isolated "locker room talk" about certain debate traditions being "the only real debate" needs to be recognized for what it is.

Into The Future – The Next Twenty Years And Beyond

If one tries to be at all visionary it is dangerous to think that one can see very far ahead with much clarity. However, in order to get to a better place we need to direct ourselves towards it. Thus, with caution and misgivings, I offer some suggestions for those who are interested in this game of debate.

Broaden the Base

If debating has transformative power for individuals and societies, and I believe it does, then we make a serious error when we continue to serve it when it is an elite activity. I have nothing against the elite in general, but people who do not debate will not benefit from it. When asked my reaction to the six-person teams used in the Chilean university national championship, I said that the speeches should be longer and the number of debaters reduced to three. My host pointed out that this would cut by 50% the number of students benefiting from their debate experience. I constantly need to be reminded of this. It should no longer be a question of simply how high will our students rise, but how many will be lifted and the total distance covered.

Procedures over Rules

The game of debate operates very well as a relatively free wheeling communication event. Rules are required actions and systems, while procedures are generally accepted conventions (for a more complete discussion, see Snider, 1991). Twenty years ago I was convinced that academic debating advanced and evolved because of the predominance of procedures over rules. There will always be a finite number of rules, such as time limits, team compositions, topic, and others, but the game needs to be as open as possible. As ideas and consciousness change, as our vision of thee world and our place in it evolves, the game of debate is able to adapt, change, and provide benefits if it is not overly restricted by complex rules. Besides, the rule-circumvention skills of debaters are legendary.

Each one Teach one

One of my interests is expanding debating and creating a climate where new schools, nations, communities are invited into the debate. My experience both in and out of major forensic organizations demonstrates to me that too much reliance on organizations to accomplish our evangelical goals can be a serious problem. The global debate community must not shunt efforts to help new groups join the debate on to organizations that are under funded, understaffed, and at times populated more by resume builders than vigorous promoters of debating. Organizational efforts are extremely useful, of course, but they are only a small part of the total possibility. If "each one would teach one" we would have a vast expansion of debating even if the efforts failed most of the time. Each league, university, civic organization, school, or other group interested in debate can and should act on its own, not waiting for national or international organizations to do all of the work. Likewise, individual students, teachers, coaches, and trainers should not wait for the local or institutional organization to do the work to promote debate, because individual efforts and linkages can make all the difference. I have been asked how I have become involved with debating in many parts of the USA and the world. The answer is a relatively disappointing one for most people, as I was determined and creative. Keep opportunities to promote debate on your radar screen and the opportunities will arise. As you pursue them they will only multiply. I can think of several people who have proven how much their personal efforts and advocacy have meant to giving more students the opportunity to debate. We would be immensely smaller if any one of them had been deterred by an attitude that "someone else will do it."

Learn and Teach in Tandem

New communities, new cultures, various age groups all have a tremendous opportunity to teach us. It seems like we learn most of the useful things about debate from each other. As we attempt to promote and teach debating, it is important for us to learn from those we work with. If you open yourself to such discovery it will be there. For example, when I travel to a new country I always study its history in advance, and then try and determine what role debating, in some form, had played in that nation or culture. This allowed me to prepare to learn from my visit itself. When I began working with urban debate leagues I tried to clear my mind of what the media may have told me about inner city youth and open myself to new discovery. Those discoveries were revealing and at times disturbing. Every

exchange between thinking human beings, to be optimal for both sides, needs to be grounded in a willingness to understand and take into account the ideas of the other. Every debate teaching and training opportunity needs to also be a learning opportunity. It is not just the students who are educated by the game of debate, but the judges, coaches, teachers, trainers, and audience are also educated if they are willing. Be willing.

The Playing Fields of Earth

I have shamelessly given a huge number of exhortation speeches about the wonders of debating. Spare me your patience as I recall one of my lines. When Napoleon was defeated it was said that he had not been defeated by the British on the battlefield of Waterloo, but rather on the playing fields of Eton. The games, teamwork, and strategy taught to English schoolboys had made all the difference on the battlefield. I hope for a day when the information battlefield of the future will be commanded by critical, compassionate, and visionary individuals who will win the day not so much because their spontaneous actions in the board room, at the ballot box, in the marketplace, or before a legislature, but because of their training and experience on the debate playing fields of planet Earth.

So, go forward in all your beliefs and prove to me that I am not mistaken in mine. You are the gamemaster.

Imagine Earth restored to her real beauty,
Stately trees seem to brush the deep blue sky.
Clouds billow to form majestic peaks,
Songs of birds fill the air, creating symphony upon symphony.

The goddess is calling for the honoring of what she allows to be created
Through the core mystery of the blood.
Those who are on the planet are learning about love.

-Lost Tribe, “Gamemaster,” Tranceport CD

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THE PEDAGOGY AND POLITICS OF SOLIPSISM

David A. Frank

How could one not be moved by Alfred Snider's love for academic debate? Snider writes in his retrospective:

> I have trodden the dusty paths, driven the all-night vans, sought for lost luggage, struggled with language translations, engaged in the act of debate strategizing, expressed anguish because of the behavior of judges, watched countless students bloom, and more that I will not attempt to share. (Snider, 2003)

I do not question Snider's intentions or his devotion to academic debate. I too have "driven the all-night vans" and "sought for lost luggage." I continue to support academic debate, although now as an administrator. I am, however, a critic of Snider's gaming paradigm and believe it is the source of a fundamental misconception of the role academic debate ought to play in higher education. Snider's gaming paradigm sponsors a pedagogy and politics of solipsism that is strikingly conservative.

The Triumph of Conservatism

The University of Vermont's World Debate Institute's website declares Snider "one of the most widely published debate theorists in the world" and the "originator of gaming paradigm" (World Debate Institute, 2003).[1] Yet, Snider in his retrospective is more humble, noting that "academic competitive debate was already a game before my articles appeared. My articles merely served to explain what debating had become" (Snider, 2003). Either way, the dominant paradigm in academic debate is Snider's gaming paradigm, and it is a deeply entrenched outlook that Snider and students defend with religious zeal. Witness the manner in which Snider champions his game paradigm. In his exchange with Katsulas et. al., he does not retreat an inch or acknowledge the remote possibility that his paradigm might be problematic, and his retrospective is absent introspection on the flaws of gaming (Snider, 1987).

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[1] Snider is also listed as the "inventor" of the gaming paradigm in other settings. See: http://ndtceda.com/archives/200207/0002.html.

His pattern in responding to dissent is to demand that his critics read his work before they write. I have read his published work. Snider was kind enough to send me one long unpublished manuscript, his doctoral dissertation, three articles, and two convention papers. By itself, this is a remarkably slender foundation for a claim to paradigmatic dominance in academic debate. However, Snider is right that his version of gaming has been adopted, if not silently, then certainly without question by the vast majority of those currently in academic debate.

Some of us have actively and in print opposed the gaming paradigm on educational grounds. We have lost, and the gaming paradigm has left in its wake a version of academic debate that is disfranchised from its history and connection to the rhetoric and speech disciplines, a decline in the number of tenure-eligible faculty positions dedicated to academic debate, and a reputation for verbal violence, sexual harassment, and teaching tricks rather than careful habits of research and ethical argumentation.[2] Snider is a good judge, and he has treated my students well and with dignity. However, his gaming paradigm, steeped as it is in solipsism, leaves academic debate without a pedagogical or an ethical mooring, thus unleashing students to, in Snider's words, "use whatever paradigm they need to get the job done" (Snider, 1981). That job is to win debate rounds, at any cost.

The gaming paradigm, portrayed as rather innocuous and as cosmopolitan in Snider's writings, is very much the normative paradigm of debate. In his exchange with Katsulas et. al., Snider insisted that gaming is a "descriptive-internal" paradigm, which does not impose a model form the outside (Snider, 1987, p. 124). In his 2003 retrospective, his view of his paradigm is less humble as it is now "explanatory," producing an understanding of how debate does and should operate (Snider, 2003). Snider argues that the gaming paradigm is better than policymaking or other paradigms that force students into simulations of argumentative contexts outside the debate tournament (Snider, 1987). Snider has the

[2] For a critique of gaming and other issues in academic debate, see David A Frank (1993). For a rhetorically grounded vision of debate, see Bartanen and Frank (1993, 1994). For the view that debate should be a simulation designed to promote rhetorical scholarship, see Frank et al. (1984). For a view that debate should feature evidence, see Bartanen and Frank (1999). For evidence on the strained relationship between the disciplines of speech and forensics and the decline of tenure-related forensic positions, see Frank (1997a). On the verbal violence in academic debate, see Frank (1997b).

prerogative to make an argument that his rendition of gaming is better than other paradigms, but that moves his argument beyond the descriptive to the normative. Indeed, in his response to a panel of debate coaches, Snider confessed:

> But in truth I have always been and will probably always be a closet Gaming Paradigm advocate (perhaps more of a meta-paradigm). O Come out of the closet! Gaming is not a meta-paradigm, it is a real paradigm. The others are semi-paradigms . . . . (Snider, 1994)

The unquestioned embrace of the gaming paradigm marks the triumph of conservative thinking in the academic debate community as it has trumped other perspectives, and there is little serious interest in change, reform, or in innovation as a stroll in the hallways of the NDT or Heart of America or other national tournaments reveals. The crises in policy debate, brilliantly detailed by Rowland and Deatherage (1988), is a function of the gaming paradigm's severing of the relationship between the debate round and realities outside the debate round. Former debaters and friends of debate, including Rowland, David Zarefsky, and others are deeply troubled by the turn to gameplaying by academic debaters. If the pedagogical touchstones of Snider's view of gaming were sound, I would be less concerned with its dominance. A close examination of his writings reveals a constricted view of gaming that founders on a pedagogy of solipsism.

The Pedagogy of Solipsism

In his writings, Snider draws heavily from the field of simulation/gaming. He does so with selectivity, and his definition and implementation of the gaming does not reflect the scholarship in the field. Most scholars in this field yoke simulation and gaming. The consensus of scholars holds that simulation/gaming offers the possibility of creating a "structured representation of reality (simulation-game) to understand and change society (i.e. to relieve it of ills of underdevelopment, sickness, cultural conflict, racial discrimination, illiteracy and welfare)" (Law-Yone, 2000). Duke (1980), an authority cited frequently by Snider, pairs simulation and gaming and works for clients who face serious local and international problems, including railroad deregulation, geothermal energy, banking, nutrition, housing, etc. The ultimate objective, Duke (1980) notes, is for clients to use games as simulations of problem solving and that they apply the lessons learned in the simulation in the field. In his dissertation, Snider summarizes Duke's work, acknowledging that simulation/gaming depends on the use of what Snider (1982a) calls an "advanced

analogy" (p. 108). The analogy is between the simulation/game and contexts outside the simulation game, with the context of debate shedding light on the future and potential futures. Snider writes:

> Any regular witness to academic debates over the last five years would have to notice this process at work - - with students discussing the merits or demerits of economic growth, the population explosion, the mathematical probabilities of nuclear war in differing situations, and any number of examples. Academic debate is operating, within the gaming format, to allow students to explore these alternative futures. (Snider, 1982a, p. 109)

This issue is not, at this point, if students are learning in the Snider's gaming paradigm, an issue I will consider below, but in his adherence to the advanced analogy. Five years after his dissertation, Snider abandons the advanced analogy, jettisons simulations and writes:

> The game of debate I have outlined [citations omitted] is a freewheeling game, and not a simulation of some other advocacy situation. Baseball, poker, and television shows are examples of games that are decidedly not simulation games. (Snider, 1987, p. 125)

The deep analogy is now between academic debate and the games of baseball, poker, and television shows.

Snider's solipsism is best on display in his 1982 convention paper:

> Since debate takes place purely in the realm of symbols, it would seem fruitless to discuss the difference between what IS 'really happening" and 'what is happening in the debate only.' Rather, the two seem to be together – what is really happening IS what is happening in the debate. (Snider, 1982b, p. 16)

I am uncomfortable when talk of purity is in the air, and the capitalized IS doesn't inflate the strength of the argument. Regardless, Snider sets forth a view of debate that excludes realities outside the debate round, producing a strikingly impoverished view of the activity.

Stripped of its connection to simulations and the possibility of audiences outside the activity, the pedagogical assumptions under girding Snider's version of the gaming paradigm are revealed as barren. Initially, Snider equivocates on the educational objectives the game of academic debate ought to achieve. At the end of reading his written work, I can't detect a coherent pedagogy as the solipsism enveloping his paradigm produces this

tautological justification for debate: the game of debate is good because it is a game of debate. In his *National Forensic Journal* contribution to the editor's forum, Snider draws from a 1955 Karl Wallace article to suggest that the "only prescriptive standard of ethics in the game should be HONESTY" (Snider, 1984, p. 121). Again, if one can persevere through the capital letters at the end of the sentence to the end of the article, one is left with the conclusion that Snider truly does need Wallace and his Aristotelian ethic, imposed as it is from outside the debate round, to secure the integrity of debate. The significance of this argument is demonstrated below.

Even if Snider had specific and consistent educational objectives, he could not establish them as according to his version of gaming academic debate is designed for the enjoyment of the players, and the judge exists to operate the game, becoming part of the scenery. In the quotation from his retrospective I use in the introduction he reports expressing "anguish because of the behavior of judges" but does not seem distressed by the behavior of students. Indeed, the players rule in the Snider gaming paradigm. In his *New Debate*, which is an earlier version of his doctoral dissertation, Snider writes:

> In most theoretical respects, and in many aspects related to academic debate, the students are far in front of the teachers. While respected forensic intellects argue about appropriate paradigms, debaters don't waste their valuable time on such pursuits. They use whatever paradigm they need to get the job done. (Snider, 1981, p. IV:1).

This is an astonishing set of statements. First, there is the obvious performative contradiction involved in Snider's subsequent claim that gaming "is a real paradigm. The others are semi-paradigms . . . (Snider, 1994). Snider argues that "students will utilize whatever paradigm they feel they need for a specific situation and a specific judge, because they know it's all a game and they need to make the proper play in order to win." Either paradigms are real, semi-real, and important, or gaming is useful only to the degree that it can help students win debates. If the latter is true, and if Wallace's ethic of honesty stands in the way of victory, it will be trampled and ignored. Second, Snider inverts the student-teacher relationship. If we accept Snider's claim that "in most theoretical respects and in many aspects related to academic debate, the students are far in front of the teachers" what is the rationale for paying forensic educators, or for listening to the opinion of a coach, or for vesting much faith in "one of the most widely published debate theorists in the world"? If Snider is right that students are far ahead of their teachers as theorists, wouldn't they be

better served if they judged themselves? Students have taken over the activity, and in search of debate victories, at any and all cost, they have little reason to be concerned about the educational consequences of the gaming paradigm.

Academic debate should cultivate contrarian thinking. Debate educators and their students should, by habit, question preconceived notions. Here, Snider is unable to imagine the plausibility of a case against simulations/gaming as a pedagogical tool.[3] The empirical literature is a best mixed. (Randel et al., 1992). Educational games have not been found to be demonstrably superior to more traditional pedagogical approaches. While I believe carefully articulated simulations and games can be educational, I do not see evidence that games are intrinsically educational or that academic debate is an unmitigated good.

Snider rightly insists that critics of his gaming paradigm should read before they write. Yet, this dictate does not apply to him as in his retrospective he writes, without footnotes, "Some said that debate was too important to be 'just' a game. It did not occur to these persons that games could be important. Perhaps they had never seen the World Cup" (Snider, 2003). Who are these "some," and where are the citations to the published and unpublished criticisms of gaming? Who has said that games are not important? What does Snider mean when he refers to the World Cup? He seems to think it ends the discussion. Without explanation, I am left to my own devices, and I draw the opposite conclusion than the one Snider anticipates. The World Cup is a game, and to some it is important and is a significant event. Yet, it is a game that has spawned racism, sexism, xenophobia, and violence. I will grant Snider his unpacked claim that the World Cup is important, but consider how it has expressed its importance in Europe:

> For the past several years, deadly violence in the stadiums, galloping corruption in a growing number of countries (Brazil, Russia, China), growing use of illegal drugs (in ltaly and elsewhere), the fixing of matches, and, above all, the regular shenanigans of hooligans all over the world, particularly in Europe, finally revealed the true face of the soccer empire: a multinational with false consciousness, a degrading populist enterprise, an ideological justification for social violence against the disinherited. (Brohm & Perelman, 2002)

[3] Snider's footnotes are replete with newspaper accounts that celebrate academic debate. His research ignores other reports in the press that represent the dark side of debate. See McGough (1988).

The French, who won the World Cup in 1998, illustrate the importance of the World Cup:

> The resurgence of interest in soccer has gone hand in hand with the rise of the National Front, which has managed to attract young voters by recycling the nationalist ideology of the 1998 victory: warring spirit, intensified chauvinist propaganda, the cult of the uniform (all in blue, all behind the chief or the totem), order and discipline, national populist aggregation. Thus, soccer has become a source of support for the National Front, as the National Front relies on real soccer values to grow: the myth of the superman, the ideology of sport war, the justification of physical force, the twilight aesthetics of the gesture and of the domain of sport, fanaticism. (Brohm & Perelman, 2002, p. 192)

As important is the influence of gaming on higher education in America. I will not rehearse the well-known criticism that higher education has been co-opted by an "arms race" in intercollegiate athletics and that undergraduates are pacified, in Murray Sperber's (2000) language, with the circus of intercollegiate athletics and beer. We do not need more games in higher education, and we suffer politically when we conflate games with academic debate.

The Politics of Solipsism

David Zarefsky (1994), an authority cited by Snider, observed a few years ago that:

> The area of our field which most directly bears on public affairs, the study of argumentation and debate, we too often have treated as an intellectual backwater of programs staffed by paraprofessionals and undeserving of our support. And our colleagues in this area have defined their own professional concerns with such insularity that they deprive the rest of us their insight into the conduct of public controversy.

The gaming paradigm explains, in part, how it has come to pass that academic debate has become provincial in its vision and why forensic educators do not earn the respect they deserve. Within the debate culture, many agree with Snider that the activity is and should be run by students; stories of mistreatment of judges are common. The source of this mistreatment, I believe, is that students share Snider's anguish about the quality of the judging, believing that they, the students, are far superior in their understanding of debate theory and practice. Students are known to berate judges for their "stupidity and ignorance."

Outside the debate culture, forensic educators are viewed as coaches rather than scholars. The game paradigm, with its premium on winning, joins academic debate with intercollegiate athletics, as trophies and debate victories rather than evidence of learning and scholarship, become the primary justifications for the activity. The discipline of speech and rhetoric, which hosts the vast majority of forensic programs, has become increasingly disaffected from academic debate, leading to a decrease in tenure-eligible faculty positions dedicated to forensics.

I received Snider's retrospective on the day I had a meeting with my Provost to request a budget increase for our forensic program. Imagine if I had used Snider's gaming paradigm as a rationale for the increase. In so doing, I would have celebrated my role as a "gamemaster," citing Lost Tribe as my inspiration. I would have noted that academic debate allows students to "Embrace the goddess energy." When pressed, I would deny the link between debate and realities outside the debate round, suggesting that academic debate IS what it is, that it is like poker, baseball, television shows, and important like the World Cup. My role, I would say, is to follow behind my students, who forge far ahead of me in their theoretical insights and command of debate.

I did not use Snider's gaming paradigm as a rationale. Academic debate, I argued, is a form of rhetorical scholarship, preparing students to become informed advocates. Debate is a simulation in which students learn to solve societal problems with reason. We expect our students to do primary research, under the guidance of educators. Students learn from expert critics who are well versed in the study of argument. Students learn the science and art of adjusting arguments to audiences and audiences to arguments. The Provost was receptive to my arguments.

I share with Snider the desire to spread the benefits of debate, but I cringe when I imagine students in the inner cities and other countries learning the habits of research, speaking, and argument on display at our major academic debate tournaments. I will seek out evidence to challenge my perception. I do note Brent Farrand's concern about Urban debate leagues:

> We need to ask whether a great deal of the "heady" argumentation flowing from debate theorists and accomplished lab leaders has produced deep learning or shallow knowledge. Speed does not disturb our new coaches. That is something which can be learned. What is most disturbing is the cascade of factual errors and conceptual

> inconsistencies which pass unchallenged as good coin when repeated in the script of sophisticated structure and erudite terminology. That should not be learned. (n.d.).

Another supporter of debate outreach programs offers this caution as well:

> When weaned on an exclusive diet of tournament contest round competition, debaters tend to develop a spectator mentality regarding political affairs. From this vantage point, the political landscape resembles a whir witnessed through the windows of a speeding train. There is a risk that UDL debaters brought up through such a pedagogical program will be steered away from opportunities to develop and apply their argumentative skills in organic projects of democratic empowerment that are focused on pressing local issues in their communities. (Mitchell, 1998)

This caution is well warranted if Snider's gaming paradigm is exported to other debating contexts. Snider's gaming paradigm, a free floating game, similar to poker, baseball, and television, becomes a spectator sport of unchecked facts and equivocating logic. Debate in these contexts, which in many tournaments can strike one as the verbal version of the World Cup, may turn out to undermine attempts at problem solving.

Conclusion

Alfred Snider and Maxwell Schnurer's (2002) new book, *Many Sides: Debate Across the Curriculum*, is a basic and good introduction to debate. The book captures the importance of debate as a civic activity, illustrating how citizens can benefit from robust argumentation. Chapter one, titled "Introduction to Debate as Educational Method," is a splendid, although indirect, refutation of Snider's gaming paradigm. "There is a crisis of citizenship," write Snider and Schnurer (2002), "as well as education. This [book] believes that using debate as a classroom technique is valuable in addressing these issues and how citizens deal with them" (p. 17). I am at home with their book, and while it does not pay tribute to the rhetorical tradition that gave birth to academic debate, it certainly does recognize the civic foundation of American argumentation.

Snider was at his best when mining the simulation/gaming literature for insights into how academic debate might produce better educational results. Unfortunately, he became a true believer, the "inventor" and "originator" of the gaming paradigm. He ended up expanding a pedagogical technique into ideology, holding that his version of gaming was the "real" paradigm among semi paradigms. The Snider of *Many Sides* is the one I prefer, and I am hopeful that it reflects his turn away from games and to the classroom in his thinking.

There are realities outside of debate, and in the spirit of Duke and other scholars of simulation/gaming, our efforts should be to design pedagogical exercises that will give students the habits of mind and argument to solve the problems through and with argumentation.

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THE HUNTER GETS CAPTURED BY THE GAME: REPLY TO DAVID FRANK

Alfred C. Snider

What's this old world coming to
Things just ain't the same
Any time the hunter gets captured by the game

- Smokey Robinson & the Marvelettes, "The hunter gets captured by the game"

There is so much I disagree with in Frank's essay that I will have to be brief and direct in my response. I am reminded that it takes longer to identify a fallacy than to commit one.

First, Frank does not engage in a response, but rather frames a complaint. The logic displayed reminds me of a weak disadvantage one might hear in a debate (gaming is the dominant paradigm, there are serious problems in debate, and thus gaming is to blame). He pictures debate as isolated and solipsistic. This totally ignores the points I made about taking the game of debate to new audiences reaching out beyond the "elite" and "scholarly" as well as beyond the realm of rhetoricians, beyond the ivory tower, and beyond the realm of speech communication, through outreach, public debating, and debate across the curriculum.

Second, debate across the curriculum is the answer to many of the questions he asks. His demand for pedagogy is completely answered in my advocacy of taking the game of debate into every classroom, molding it to the needs of that classroom, and using it to activate learning in a new way. He complements the book I have written with Maxwell Schnurer, but does not realize how this answers his demand for a clear pedagogy. The game of debate is not a solipsistic endeavor, but a very

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empathic one. It is flexible enough to look at the needs of the situation and adapt to them. Debate as a method for studying a variety of subjects is not new, but Schnurer and I are the first to really outline the debate across the curriculum concept in detail. It is no coincidence that my vision of debate as a flexible learning game led me to propose to Schnurer that we write that book.

Third, while it is something of a compliment in some ways, I simply cannot be responsible for everything that takes place in modern debate. The syllogism seems far too simplistic. I am sure Frank would reject a similar syllogism about rhetoric (Frank is a rhetorician, rhetorical means were used to launch fascism, fascism is bad, rhetoric is bad, Frank is bad). Both arguments have the same weaknesses – alternate causalities, lack of demonstration of direct causal effects, and the understanding that any tool can be misused, among many others. To say that debate is in a sorry state and then blame my ideas is easy but inaccurate.

Fourth, Frank's points seem to represent the perspective of traditional rhetorical study and the Neo-Aristotelian scholar. Using the ideas of Aristotle in The Rhetoric, built upon by other classical authors, debate should be made to fit that mold and repeat its formulae. I have extensively criticized those who would make debate fit their "model" of discourse, whether it is policymaking, hypothesis testing, or Neo-Aristotelianism. All of these criticisms apply to Frank's efforts. He teaches rhetoric in a university classroom, and thus wants debate to follow that model in order to support what he feels is important. To me, this seems extremely solipsistic. He teaches traditional rhetoric and thus wants debate to mirror that as much as possible. Frank demands pedagogy, and he provides a very narrow one. He demands a relationship to established departments, and then identifies his as the only home suited for debate. It is up to the reader to decide who is more focused on the "self" if we are at all concerned about his charge of solipsism.

Fifth, Frank charges that gaming is trying to ignore the practice and teaching of argumentation. I disagree. Argumentation is all-pervasive in our lives and is totally at the forefront in almost any debate. One wonders what he means by "argumentation," and my assumption is that he means the classical approach. He complains that argumentation and debate have become intellectual backwaters because "gaming" has divorced it from its natural home, thus depriving it of its

support. Every student in every debate learns something about argumentation, even if it is not in the context of understanding the improperly distributed middle term of the syllogism. Rhetoric faces the same dilemma as education, as they are both reflexive concepts; they are methods without specific content (Schwartzman, 1997, p. 9). They are not fields of discrete knowledge in and of themselves and have to seek metaphors to give them meaning. Schwartzman argues that the metaphor of the game is the best way to conceive of the educational endeavor. The perception of both education and rhetoric from the perspective of a "game" gives us new and exciting possibilities for advancing both fields.

Sixth, I respectfully disagree with Frank's assessment of the current state of educational debating in our world. While not specifically mentioned, Frank seems to focus on the ills of modern American policy debate. This ignores a critical point made in my original essay, that the game of debating is now jumping format boundaries with ease, with parliamentary debate, Lincoln-Douglas debate, Karl Popper debate, public debate, Ted Turner debate, debate across the curriculum, and many others. While I have only some hard data to support this, I nevertheless strongly believe that there is more educational debating going on now than at any time in human history. A huge variety of debate formats, a broad diversity of homes for educational debate (colleges, schools, clubs, communities), debating by groups not formerly involved (urban students, middle school students, home schooled students), and an international explosion of debate activity make this seem fairly obvious. The International Debate Education Association has over 60,000 students and 12,000 teachers in 27 member countries worldwide. (http://idebate.org/info/description.asp). The National Association of Urban Debate Leagues supports activities in 221 urban public high schools and 40 middle schools. Since 1997, more than 12,000 urban public school students have competed, and more than 700 urban educators have received professional development (http://urbandebate.org/factsheet). Declines in high school and college policy debate have been overcompensated for by the growth of parliamentary, Lincoln-Douglas, Ted Turner, and public debate formats. For the last two years I have been in charge of tabulation and pairing at the National Forensic League national tournament, and it is clear that a huge amount of debate

is taking place. This diversity of formats, participants, and venues proves my point--that the flexible game of debate can move beyond the supposed "solipsistic self" to adapt to different needs and different populations far better than a Neo-Aristotelian speech communication based activity could. As Schwartzman (1997) has indicated, games involve a proper balance between student autonomy and control necessary for education. If games are to be useful the rules and procedures must be flexible, and student voices must be considered on establishing those guidelines. Many countries do not have speech communications as a field of study, so the flexible game of debate can find a home, whereas the narrow vision Frank offers cannot. I am glad that the current model for debating is the flexible educational game, not the limited version offered by Frank.

Finally, there is the problem of "overtagging." This is a term used in policy debate when someone makes a huge and sweeping claim and then supports it with a quotation that is far weaker in its support for such a claim. Footnotes 2, and 3 and the reference to Randel *et al.* on page 36 are problems in this regard.

David Frank's hunt to link gaming to all of the problems of debate, as well as xenophobia and other horrific buzzwords, has disclosed that the flexible gaming approach to educational debate is either an actual or potential solution to these challenges. The hunter can get captured by the game.

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GAMING AS CONTROL: WILL TO POWER, THE PRISON OF DEBATE AND GAME CALLED POTLATCH

Maxwell Schnurer

> *There are two types of prisons some say. One where you're locked up and everything is outside, and another where you're outside, and everything is locked away.*
>
> - The Broadways "Upton"

Debate paradigms are boundaries drawn to include and exclude certain types of behavior. At their most mundane, debate paradigms establish the "rules" that encircle the activity of debating. Because paradigms become hinging points for understanding how debate works, advocates for various paradigms don't simply interpret debate, but position some activities as debate, and others as not-debate. Alfred "Tuna" Snider's gaming paradigm was an important shift because it positioned debate as a "big tent" where all other paradigms could be understood (e.g., Snider, 1982).

Snider's gaming provided a cogent explanation of how debate worked. Specifically, he articulated a meta-theory that included all other paradigms and provided space for most changes. In fact, gaming has been a vital tool in the defense of culture changers. In the 1980s debaters used gaming to defend speaking quickly in debates. Many of the argumentation techniques (including using plans in traditional CEDA debate) were framed within gaming (Snider, 1984). Gaming gave us a clear explanation of the paradigm of debate, and helped to encourage change within the debate community.

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Despite the positive impact of Snider's work on the debate community, this essay articulates a criticism of gaming. While innovative and transformative, gaming is also another form of boundary drawing, one whose explanatory value comes with a price. Criticism of Snider's work only returns us to the central question of what kind of framework is valuable for debate. In this essay I turn to a particular game called the potlatch, a game that shatters all previous structures.

While gaming is positive and valuable for participants in debate circles, it encourages us to turn our attention and love back to the circle of debate. This essay seeks to agitate the gamers, and push them to look beyond the game and consider breaking even the most solid of rules.

Snider: Gaming as Emancipatory

Snider's writings on Gaming were a significant move forward in the dialogue about debate paradigms. Previous paradigms had been blatant attempts to keep barbarians away from the sacred space of debate, or were transparent efforts to justify competitive inequity. Gaming was revolutionary because it followed the clear lines of Thomas Kuhn – focusing on theories as valuable because they *explain* our world (Snider 1984, 1982). Unlike policy-making, or hypothesis testing, Gaming didn't advocate for a position on paradigms; it explained all the other paradigms as gamers arguing to change rules for competitive advantages. Along the way, as Snider points out in his essay in this collection, gaming helps to understand and encourage change within the debate community.

Reality Check: Gaming as Control

Despite Snider's intentions to explain why paradigms worked in debate, the actual value of gaming is questionable. Paradigms were potent because they included and excluded – Snider's version of the world theoretically, included everyone. One must wonder what the explicatory value of gaming really is, if it tells us that debate is "us"? The answer of course, is that gaming did much more than just explain paradigms. It also argued for a vision of debate, one that has become increasingly popular among college policy debaters.

Snider's big-tent vision of debate is a relatively recent turn in the gaming

literature. Early versions of gaming were vigorous defenses of "new debate" complete with fast-talking and innovative arguments (Snider, 1984). Gaming was the paradigm for debaters-first advocates. Because gaming framed everything in terms of competition, the quest for new tactics, strategies, arguments, and literature were obvious outgrowths of competitors at work. Gaming was the paradigm of change in debate, because it didn't stake out a model, it modeled the stakes.

In chapter five of his dissertation, titled "Gaming and the 'Excesses' of the 'New' Debate," Snider quotes argumentation theorist Wayne Brockriede, who juxtaposes a college debater with an activist "outside the classroom building" who is debating on a microphone and advocates seizing the administration building. Snider's final word on the question of praxis is "debate need not imitate all it sees in the 'real world,' it merely has to be part of that reality in and of itself" (Snider, 1984, p. 216). Snider's early work was a vigorous defense of non-applied communication work. He argued firmly and correctly, that debate oratory need not be modeled on "real life" communication needs. Speaking quickly and using jargon were defendable practices under a paradigm of gaming.

Juxtapose these claims with Snider's 2003 advocacy of gaming. In this essay, Snider describes a token multicultural buffet as one of the benefits of gaming. "Debate can be thought of as our intellectual food, and there are a delightful variety of ways to serve debate just as there are to serve food." Snider's diverse vision includes all of the formats of debate in vigorous dialogue – but not much revolutionary potential. This prose is emblematic of the *We Are the World* approach that encourages well-intentioned surface level change.[1]

Snider's new gaming advocacy is a laundry list of positive changes in the policy debate community. Snider positions himself and his theoretical work in thearms of debaters using critical theory in debate arguments, Urban Debate

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[1] It is important to recognize that Snider himself has been at the vanguards of many changes in debate. He has passionately advocated for the inclusion of many in policy debate, advocated for cultural change, and has been a strong leader in the debate community. My criticisms here are of gaming, not of Snider.

Leagues, debate across the curriculum, and international debate. These are all wonderful changes in debate, but we must ask how much impact gaming has had on their development? The answer is that Snider has been central in most of these struggles, and gaming has been touted as part of these struggles, but gaming itself has not created significant change. But let us not mistake Snider's involvement with the value of his theory in leveraging change. Let us focus our attention explicitly on the importance of gaming in these changes.

The big question is: does gaming contribute to these revolutionary format changes? I will answer no. Rather, I would like to position gaming as a controlling force. Gaming is a challenging, innovative, and adaptable theory but, fundamentally, a theory of control. Gaming works as an answer to the question of what debates do. But while we can answer that we play a game (albeit a serious and complex one), we also say something about the players and why we play the game. Gaming became a tool for control – convincing debaters that energies of criticism should be reinvested into the debate community. The very parameters of Snider's goals, to encourage more participants in debate, belie a rigged question. We are intended to succeed through gaming to bring a few other voices into debate. But like the plus-one activist struggle that simply seeks representation, this approach is doomed to failure.

We should not be surprised that the traditional agents of social control have a brilliant new theory that encourages limited change. Gaming in fact operates to metastasize the crisis-politics of modern policy debate, covering over the rotting corpse with a sweet perfume. For example, gaming minimizes and cripples the increasing tension over activist-oriented arguments in debate rounds. Gaming encourages such argument innovation not for the world community but for the debate community, teaching students to passionately plead for change to an empty room. How can a theory understand the desire of debaters to crack open the debate methods and introduce something "outside" of debate as Snider points to in his most recent gaming essay? The answer is that it can't. Debate as a model can only create more debate, and so long as our goal for debate is more debate, then we will never emerge to challenge larger forces of control.

Worse than being satisfied with shouting at walls, approaching debate from the perspective of games encourages a god-complex that teaches debaters that saying something poignant in a debate round translates into something larger in the world. Christopher Douglas, a professor of English at Furman University, explores how games teach us to adore the replay: "This is the experience structured into the gaming process—the multiple tries at the same space-time moment. Like Superman after Lois Lane dies, we can in a sense turn back the clock and replay the challenge, to a better end" (2002, p. 7). What kind of academic activity encourages students to fantasize about making change without considering for the slightest bit how to bring that change about?

Douglas positions this impulse alongside the Sisyphean burden of trying to make the world into a structured, controlled, sterile environment. Sisyphus and the reset button on a videogame console share a common ancestor with the debate model that has thirty debate teams advocating different policies in separate rooms at exactly the same time. All of these examples showcase humans desperately attempting to construct meaning out of a confusing world, where the human *will to power* forces the world to fit a structure. Douglas reminds us that games help to structure an oft-confusing world, imbuing the person imagining with god-like powers (McGuire, 1980; Nietzsche 1966):

> Games therefore do not threaten film's status so much as they threaten religion, because they perform the same existentially soothing task as religion. They proffer a world of meaning, in which we not only have a task to perform, but a world that is made with us in mind. And indeed, the game world is made with us, or at least our avatar in mind. (Douglas, 2002, p. 9)

Gaming draws forth a natural impulse of humans – to make the world in our image. But debate and videogames contain the same fantastic lure that encourages people to pore their energies into debate. Fiat and utopian flights of fancy are both seductions of our will to power, encouraging us to commit to becoming better debaters.

This process of self-important distraction has its model in the theories of the hyper-real posited by Jean Baudrillard. He argues that modern economies are

geared to sell humans mass produced products, but whose advertising attempts to convince people that they have an authentic experience with the product.

Economic structures make products that are more-than real – hyperreal in order to sell their products. The hyperreal creates games and fantasylands that are far richer and pleasurable than real life. One example of the hyperreal is Epcott center at Disneyland, which reduces foreign cultures to their most base natures – ensuring that everything is uniform, bland, and suitably "ethnic."

While one never need worry about eating food that is "too strange" in the Epcott lands, other negatives emerge in the world of the hyperreal. Humans who desire order and structure to our worlds often come to prefer the hyperreal to the real. The hyperreal has a world with all of the attractions of our own, but with none of the depressing realities of our own world. The hyperreal doesn't have credit card bills or racism. The hyperreal is filled with beautiful people (who all want to have sex with you). The hyperreal is a hot seduction pulling our vision and hearing away form our own lives.

Describing Snider's gaming as a dangerous distraction that pulls us away from our communities and our lives is a bit simplistic. Rather, gaming greases the wheels for powers of control to remain in control. Douglas articulates some of the specific ways games solidify structures of power.

> In board games or computer games, however, players actually do start out in relative equality (although there are some chance elements as well, depending on the game), whereas in real life, so many characteristic of one's life are already determined before birth, including social and economic standing, political freedom, skin color, gender, etc. What games accomplish is the instilling of the ideology of equality, which postulates that we are born equal and that differences emerge later on; the primary different to be explained away in this way is that of economic disparity, and games help explain that difference as the result of, in America, hard work and effort vs. laziness. Thus gaming helps inculcate the ideology that covers over the fact that, with the exception of the information technology bubble, most of those who are wealthy in the United States were born that way. Beyond this narrow ideological function, the game helps create subjects that accept the inevitability of rules as things that are given and must be "played" within—

> or else there is no game. This process is not total or ever complete, as the current gaming discourse complaining about the rules shows; here, player critique a games rules in view of a conventionalized notion of how "reality" works, or, less often, how a game's playability is compromised by rules that are too "realistic (Douglas, 2002, p. 24).

Viewing debate as a game may have the opposite effect that Snider desires. Gaming teaches participants to play by the rules and even when challenging the game, to do that within the games structures. Debaters who are moved by poetry are encouraged to bring that poetry back to the debate realm – not to become poets.[2]

There are certainly debate-activists who bring their debate skills to bear on the political community. These debaters seamlessly slide between academic hyperbole in the First Affirmative Constructive and talking to homeless folks at a Food Not Bombs meal. But these folks are few and far between. Most who hear the call to conscience turn their backs on the call and justify their (in) actions by valorizing debate.[3]

Let me be clear that the desire of individuals to make the world is not the enemy. It is a positive drive that encourages debaters to fiat worlds into existence or hypothesizes that the world would be good if George Bush were before the International Criminal Court on charges of crimes against humanity. This drive to create a better world *is* the will to power. The big question is, what we do with that will to power? Recognizing that there are many complex problems in the world that require smart articulate people to solve them, we can appreciate the

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[2] There are some debaters who have become exceptionally good at meshing poetry with competitive debate. I would point out Nader Hadad from Cal State Long Beach and Lana Langsweirdt from the University of Vermont as debaters who have both become powerful poets and good debaters (who use poetry in their rounds).

[3] For more on this see Gordon Mitchell's (1998) article on the pedagogy of public debates. He outlines a number of debate initiatives that have used public debate outside of the policy debate realm.

potential value of will to power (McGuire). In the debate context, will to power becomes reified in a hyper-real role-playing exercise.

Debate can be an amazing experience where students learn about complex ideas and then take those ideas into their own lives and communities. Debate can be a method for learning that people have their own voices in a world drowning with mediated/televised slime-balls. Debate can encourage intellectual growth and cause epiphanies. Debate encourages solidarity and teaches people to struggle together. Debate is primed to be a blast furnace for the will to power and take it to the furthest level of revolutionary potential. The only limitation is our own. If we frame debate to limit the revolutionary potential of the participants, then we do a disservice not only to our students, but also to the world.

Nietzschean will to power is a drive for self-overcoming, transforming fuel for personal and collective change.[4] Will to power exists in all of us as a lunging to escape our current world and create another beyond the moral structure and hierarchy of this world. This desire to create a better world is admirable and is at the root of social change. My criticism of gaming is that this energy is sublimated into a fantasy world rather than being brought to the larger world. But perhaps there is a kind of game that might elicit something of what I desire . . . from within debate.

The Real Game: Potlatch

As pointed out in the last section, the stakes for the game of debate are high. The method of debate contains the possibility for revolutionary insight and revolutionary praxis. The question is how to understand an activity without systematizing and controlling the potential of debate. What we really must do is let free the will to power within debaters. In this sense, we can use gaming as the topoi to launch our conversation to a debate game that might encourage revolution.

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[4] Gilles Deleuze writes about Nietzsche's unique take on the will to power. "The will to power alone is the one that wills, it does not lend itself be delegated or alienated to another subject, even to force. (49).

But what does will to power look like? How do we encourage it? Lets get a feeling from George Bataille, who orients the Nietzschean impulse of will to power alongside a quote from Nietzsche himself:

> Through the shutters into my window comes an infinite wind, carrying with it unleashed struggles, raging disasters of the ages. And don't I too carry within me a blood rage, a blindness satisfied by the hunger to mete out blows? How I would enjoy being a pure snarl of hatred, demanding death: the upshot being no prettier than two dogs going at it tooth and nail! Though I am tired and feverish..."Now the air all around is alive with the heat, earth breathing a fiery breath. Now everyone walks naked, the good and bad, side by side. And for those in love with knowledge, it's a celebration." (*The Will to Power*) (4)

Will to power can be the outgrowth of debate that challenges existing structures. Bataille and Nietzsche desire a wild emancipation from traditional structures, far beyond conventional morality. Coupling Nietzsche's theorizing with the practice of debate something new can emerge, but only if we free ourselves from the shackles of conventional debate, including gaming. How to break these chains? How do we get beyond that which has brought us so far? To help, I want to turn to Guy Debord and the Situationists.

Guy Debord was a French revolutionary whose political theorizing and activism culminated in the creation first of the Letterist International and later in the establishment of the Situationist International. The Letterists/Situationists were revolutionary philosophers who believed that the situations of the modern world were increasingly controlled by mediated/corporate experience. They viewed traditional politics in all of its reformist formats as a waste of time. Through a variety of situations (manipulated by the situationists) it was possible to create revolutionary meaning. They used a variety of tactics in order to elicit revolutionary change. Some of their methods, like detournement, have become common post-modern critical theory concepts.[5]

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[5] Detournement is most well known from the Canadian magazine Adbusters, who re-popularized Debord's work in the 1990s doing mock-ups of popular advertisements.

I focus our attention on the Situationists because they succeeded in creating a revolution. Situationist propaganda and theorizing were at the heart of the Parisian rebellion of May of 1968. This was the most powerful expression of malaise against the increasingly wealthy industrial western world. The riots in Paris, which upended cars and collectives emerged in downtown, became a model for revolutions in the industrialized north. Debord was seen as an intellectual architect of the uprising of students and workers. Situationists/Letterists were increasingly capable of articulate criticisms of the nature of the spectacle. These were often told through journals, graffiti, and posters (Dark Star Collective, 2001; Debord, 1995; Jappe, 1992; Hussey, 2001).

One of the most important Situationist tactics was articulated in the potlatch. The potlatch was a practice modeled on American indigenous communities of increasingly committed giving. In the potlatch, indigenous would give everything they had to each other, ever increasing the stakes of the gifts until the gifts were so outlandish the offers exposed the foolish nature of ownership. Potlatch became so important to these revolutionaries that they named their first journal potlatch because the writings held within the journal would hopefully be given on and on in an ever increasing spiral. Potlatch became an extended metaphor for the Situationists/Letterists, indicating all the possible spaces where revolution could emerge without capitalist economies. Every non-capitalist moment eked out of the day was articulated as a potlatch. Every relationship that emerged along side revolutionary dialogue became a potlatch. In a recent biography of Debord and the situationists, the author Hussey describes the Potlatch.

> Potlatch... is the highest form of game. It is also the living moment of poetry, a moment which breaks down or reverses conventional chronological patterns. Most significantly, the object or gift which the Letterist International gave functioned symbolically between the giver, the International Letterists, and the receiver. The relationship between the two constitutes a third term – the gift is also a catalyst of the future in the form of a crystallization of desire. ‘Don’t collect Potlatch!’ ran a line at the end of the journals second year. “Time is working against you!” (Hussey, 2001, p. 89)

For the Situationists, the potlatch was the ultimate resistance to traditional economies. Originally a concept theorized by George Battaille, the potlatch was seen as a method to criticize the acquisition/showcase methods of modern capitalist economies. Because the potlatch could never be returned, it highlighted the foolishness of the modern economy and state. Through sacrifice and destruction, the act of giving overwhelms the possible response. Eventually, the social requirements of the potlatch necessitate that every society member give away everything they could ever have.

Yet we should not move too far from the fundamental truth of the potlatch: it is in fact a game. Indigenous nations would choose to exchange gifts in the potlatch as a form of entertainment. But let us not understate the importance of games. This game was made illegal because it was so dangerous to colonial economies. The Potlatch was recognized as threatening the burgeoning trading economy that was central to westward expansion. The potlatch was the most dangerous idea that indigenous nations could forward against the white/capitalist drive.[6]

The act of giving too much was the threat. This move disturbed the intense drive for acquisition. Why fight to trade beaver pelt, when at the next potlatch

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[6] In my theorizing about this essay, I contemplated including a reference to Ernest Callenbach's novel Ecotopia. In this novel, Callenbach's protagonist enters a closed off zone of ecologically sustainable territories in the Pacific Northwest of the former-USA. One of the most hotly contested differences between the protagonist and the Ecotopians is a game. The Ecotopians use ritual physical combat to explore the visceral experience that is part of humans. Young men will gather and fight each other with spears. It seems as though there is a good comparison between my proposal of the potlatch and Callenbach's war games. Both are visceral games that are intended to alter the state of the participants. In Ecotopia, the war game is the turning point of the book, where the protagonist, torn between two worlds appreciates the Ecotopian world and begins to consider living in Ecotopia. I would hope that my reference to the potlatch would have a similar affect.

your neighbor might give you all her possessions? Potlatch was threatening because it made competition meaningless.

Non-competitive social structure was only one threat from the Potlatch. Situationist biographer Jappe discovers an obscure quotation by Debord on the Potlatch (Debord himself was remarkably close-lipped about the meaning of Potlatch): "Debord refers explicitly to the Indian custom of Potlatch and announces that 'the non-saleable goods that a free bulletin such as this is able to distribute are novel desires and problems; and only the further elaboration of these by others can constitute the corresponding return gift'" (148). What was exchanged in Debord's vision was not necessarily goods but rather ideas.[7]

Debate is the ultimate potlatch, demanding that we offer up something inside of ourselves without asking for something in return. Debate provides a few minutes carved out of lives that are otherwise consumed by pop-up ads, or email. When I think about the moments that I treasure in my life, few of them are moments of consumption. I don't remember when I bought my television, but I remember with painful longing the last bicycle ride I took with friends.

Alongside the memories of moments with friends and in nature, I treasure a collection of moments in debate. Moments when I first learned about ideas, late nights in the squad room, the friendships that emerged, and watching my debaters grow and develop. The parts of the potlatch where humans draw out moments of freedom with each other are increasingly the only thing that keeps me interested in debate. Debord and the Situationists wanted people to take their initial offerings of the Potlatch and move them along into their own lives. We can do the same thing with debate. Almost all of us have debate memories that are deeply infused with the Potlatch-ethic. All it takes is for us to seek out and celebrate those moments, and our community will change. But these moments of time have to be

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[7] Debord was a committed life-long abuser of drugs and alcohol, and he certainly would have appreciated gifts of these sorts.

grappled away from the industrial-capitalist state with great gusto. We must be brave to crack open debate.[8]

In our own lives, we should strive to bring about the kinds of realizations that elicit revolutionary transformation. Snider's gaming does not bring us forward in direct revolutionary thinking. Rather, it encourages revolutionary thought and then focuses its power into the system of debate. The solution for Snider is not to continue looking for a way to explain and systematize debate but, rather, to embrace the confluence of potential meaning in debate and lunge forward. Debate should be about taking risks and creating new meaning out of our desires.

We should never sublimate our feral interests and instead should seek the highest level of meaning. Let us push gaming further. Let us find games that fulfill our revolutionary potential, take whatever moments we can for ourselves and try to push for as much change as we possibly can. In this case, perhaps it is not the game, but the players who have not yet made their move.

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[8] We might wonder what people look like, living in a world defined by potlatch. Hussey quotes George Clutesi, who observed the last Vancouver Potlatch, as saying: "They lived from one day to the next, they accepted all things as they came. They spoke slowly, they took much time before uttering , before replying, before expressing an opinion" (Hussey, 2001, p. 86). The Potlatch elicited entire new ways of being, a fundamental transformation of ontology.

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PARIS NOCTURNE: REPLY TO SCHNURER

Alfred C. Snider

First, Schnurer offers what appears to me to be a major contradiction. He savages the game concept. He then introduces us to the game of "Potlatch," and sings its praises as a way to tear down consumerist society and as a model for inspiring exchange of ideas. He finishes with an exhortation to "find games that fulfill our revolutionary potential, take whatever moments we can for ourselves to try and push for as much change as we possibly can." How "Potlatch" avoids his earlier criticisms or how his search for "game to fulfill our revolutionary potential" can avoid them is not explained. He simply cannot have it both ways absent a substantial explanation of how this contradiction is bridged.

Second, I believe that Schnurer misunderstands the concept of "paradigm" as used in these discussions. He states that debate "paradigms are boundaries drawn to include and exclude certain types of behavior. At their most mundane, debate paradigms establish the 'rules' that encircle the activity of debating." He offers no supporting documentation for this claim. Thomas Kuhn (1962, p. viii) has noted that paradigms set the stage for discussions, but are not controlling, in that they are "sufficiently open-ended to leave all sorts of problems for the redefined practitioners to solve." I have found the work of Masterman (1970, p. 68) to be very useful. She notes that there are three sorts of paradigms, being philosophical, sociological, and construct paradigms. A debate paradigm would seem to be a construct paradigm. The construct paradigm is an instrument or tool for learning. The focus is what a paradigm can do to guide our actions (p. 71). A construct paradigm is a "way of seeing" and helps guide us in how we understand a given situation or organize a set of data. She sees the Kuhnian construct paradigm as a starting point or "research vehicle" (p. 78). It is a beginning for theory, an analogy we can employ in understanding a process such as academic debate. It is not an

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iron set of rules, but a perspective. A paradigm is a beginning for theory, an analogy we can employ in understanding a process such as academic debate. These understandings are quite different from those of Schnurer.

Third, Schnurer seems to glorify the flaunting and breaking of rules. He wants to "agitate the gamers, and push them to look beyond the game and consider breaking even the most solid rules." He longs for a world and a debate activity more like the revolution in Paris of May 1968 than a standard debate tournament.

It is clear that in debate the "rules" (about which there can be no argument) are few, including the time limits, the wording of the topic, and the identity of the speakers. Which of these rules would he have us throw aside? All of the rest resides in the world of "procedures," common practices that are still open for debate and disputation.

The "rules" of debate are not so constricting, and the relevance of procedures (common understandings that can be challenged at any time, such as the role of the topic in the debate) teaches students to question major guidelines, not to obey them blindly. I would defend a game with limited rules and debatable procedures, not an activity in which all rules should be boldly disregarded and violated. Just as Schnurer probably has limits to what is acceptable in his classroom, there should be some limits in a debate.

Fourth, Schnurer seems fascinated by the strategies and approaches of the Situationists embodied in the "revolution" that took place in Paris in May 1968. I find this to be an entertaining and romantic vision, but not necessarily a valid one. If Paris in May 1968 is his "paradigm" for revolutionary potential in debate, I am not a supporter.

This sort of revolution is neither "real" nor productive and is guilty of many of the same errors that Schnurer attaches to "debating" as opposed to "acting." Dirk Jan van Baar (1998) wrote:

> May, 1968 was not a "real" revolution. The students "played" revolution. It was the last attempt of Paris to justify itself as the 'revolutionary centre' of the world. But the French were lagging behind, the 'counter-culture' commercialized and globalized, and were not really interested in leftist ideology. Playing the revolution was *fun*, not serious stuff. The generation

> of 1968 contributed — contrary to its own aims — to the further Americanization of Europe (France). Today's revolutions that really matter — such as the imaginative revolutions in Information Technology — are more *virtual* , and can do without Paris.

It is not the "riots in Paris, with upended cars" that have the most real impact for change, but the "virtual" revolutions that take place inside the minds of individuals, something that happens regularly through debate participation.

Fifth, Schnurer ignores the realities that can emerge from what we do here on the "playing fields of earth." It seems clear to me that real social change comes from skilled, thoughtful, and practiced human agents. Student debaters do not hover endlessly in the game of debate. They graduate and move on to lives and careers outside of the game. Yet, they take with them the skills they have learned. By demanding that the game of debate also become direct action, Schnurer denies them the training in a safe place that can facilitate later success.

Sixth, "Potlatch" may have more in common with the game of debate than Schnurer realizes. The game of debate is a process by which participants offer their lofty ideas, goals, and proposals for exchange and mutual analysis. Borrowing the rhetoric of Hussey used by Schnurer, academic debate is also a "living moment of poetry" that "breaks down and reverses conventional chronological patterns." Academic debate offers arguments as "gifts," often lofty and sometimes utopian. These gifts can easily be seen as a "catalyst of the future in the form of a crystallization of desire." The rhetoric of Debord also makes this point, that the game "is able to distribute" our "novel desires and problems" and creates a process where "only the further elaboration of these by others can constitute the corresponding return gift." Both Hussey and Debord are describing "Potlatch," but it seems to me to be very much like the game of debate I have been describing for over twenty years.

Maxwell Schnurer is a gifted, insightful, and inspiring debate professional. His thesis, however, that gaming as a concept strips debating of its revolutionary potential, is incomplete. The game of debate is a training ground for future action for social change, first and foremost. His vision of a revolutionary debate where all rules are gleefully violated in a forensic reenactment of Paris in May, 1968

would damage the ultimate potential debate training has for real citizenship, social evolution and change. We need trained and tested actions and decisions, not spontaneous revolution.

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GO HOMERS, MAKEOVERS OR TAKEOVERS? A PRIVILEGE ANALYSIS OF DEBATE AS A GAMING SIMULATION

Ede Warner, Jr.

> *The Rules may be colorblind, but people are not. The question remains, therefore, whether the law can truly exist apart from the color-conscious society in which it exists, as a skeleton devoid of flesh, the reflection of a particular citizenry's arranged complexity of relations.*
>
> - Patricia J. Williams, *The Alchemy of Race and Rights*, (1991, p. 120)

As part of a radical debate approach that has spent the last three years calling into question the current types of debate training required to successfully compete in intercollegiate policy debate by challenging methods of presentation and what constitutes knowledge, I embrace fully Snider's (1987) vision of debate as game simulation. He accurately describes a "descriptive-internal" paradigm that should recognize debaters are in fact, contestants involved in a competition and not agents of a government agency in an effort to simulate plan adoption. This more realistic starting point for a competitive debate framework minimizes complex theories of speculation about what magical powers debaters need to have a "fair debate" while putting the game's procedures up for negotiation and possible challenge.

However, contrary to Snider's claim in the current essay that the broader debate community has silently adopted his gaming simulation, most policy debate communities have yet to fully embrace the type of game that Snider's vision argues

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is the most "thoughtful," the simulation that is more procedural than rule-driven. Although most would readily concede that they are "playing a game," high school and college debaters treat many "procedural" concerns functionally as rigid rules that become entry barriers to successful participation. In fact, they become hostile when many of those "procedures" are called into question. As the Williams quote in the introduction should suggest, I believe that the debate as game discussion is analogous to and reminiscent of discussions over the ideal of color-blindness versus the reality of color-consciousness, Snider's early articulation of the gaming simulation ideal does not reflect current debate practice. Why? I will argue that privilege continues to manifest itself in the creation and maintenance of policy debate communities in ways that hinder the enactment of the more "thoughtful" game simulation envisioned by Snider.

Procedural Perspectives

Snider (1987, p. 123) discusses the difference between procedures and rules in development of his game simulation theory: A "rule is a guideline that is not open to change during the game itself," while a procedure is. While time limits and speech order are rules according to Snider, theoretical arguments—like topicality and counterplan theory—would qualify as procedures. Certainly accurate with this delineation, Snider remains general in his discussion of the types of various procedures and how they function in the context of the game. There are in fact, two categories of procedures with one being more accepted as a competitive starting point than the other. The theory-driven procedures Snider acknowledges are *substantive* procedures that directly affect the strategic and content development of the game and have generally been subject to debate.

A second series of procedures exist that have generally avoided much, if any, debate, negotiation or challenge. A *stylistic* procedure would include: rate of delivery, note-taking techniques, what qualifies as evidence, and other technical presentation issues. The current specialized style of CEDA and NDT debate is so entrenched in one narrow set of stylistic procedures that historically, as other debate organizations have been created to challenge those conventions, they have repeatedly evolved back toward these format-specific, competitively generated

norms. Most of these procedures are grounded in the notion that, if I make "more" arguments than my opponent, I have a better chance of winning.

While there is little, if any, empirical data as to *why* stylistic procedures usually go unchallenged, a relatively simple hypothesis seems justified: those attracted to the game like the style by which the game is played. Debate about substantive procedures occurs constantly and creates a substantial amount of theoretical discussion in and outside of the game. Generally stylistic procedures are usually perceived with the sole interest in promoting a style that maximizes strategic utility in terms of substance. The decision to participate in national-circuit high school and intercollegiate policy debate *presumes* certain stylistic choices as an entry barrier to the game. In other words these procedures are perceived as format rules, even if that is not technically the case. In fact, given the lack of development of a theoretical foundation to challenge stylistic procedures it is unlikely that stylistic procedures will ever be more than a fait accompli, a given condition of participation in the game.

When Privilege Meets Procedure

McIntosh (1988) speaks to the notion of both male and white privilege as an invisible knapsack carrying benefits and advantages that those without the extra luggage fail to receive. In particular, privilege has historically been part of the game of debate and still haunts any and all efforts at diversity, especially in intercollegiate policy debate. Do I exaggerate? Have you counted the number of Latino/Latina participants in non-Urban Debate League settings lately? How many women are judging late elimination rounds in national policy college tournaments? How many African Americans hold coaching positions, especially with terminal degrees? Historically, what is the gender and racial composition of high school and college debate topic committees? Why on a topic of race *and* gender civil rights, less than 10% of the affirmative cases were about race? What is the diversity of interscholastic high school policy debate outside of the Urban Debate Leagues? Are the new populations of urban students represented equally in elimination rounds compared to preliminary rounds of non-urban debate league

tournaments? The statistics are commonplace enough that I will not recite them here, although there is always someone willing to use the a-typical example to disprove or mitigate the broader claims. The reality is that policy debate, especially at nationally competitive levels in high school and college, still disproportionately represent the domain of the white, economically privileged suburban male. That lack of diversity includes the coaching and judging ranks—generally the two groups that control procedure development—since winning ballots on procedural arguments is what dictates community procedural acceptance. If the judging community overwhelmingly votes against an affirmative case on topicality, few teams would continue to run that affirmative. Teams will adapt to the topicality argument in some way, look for creative solutions to procedural problems--like arguing that there is something more important than topicality (they create new areas of procedure contestation)—or sacrifice competitive success in lieu of keeping their voice on an issue of importance to them.

More often than not, talk about privilege in debate is relegated mostly to economic and occasionally gender- or race-based discussions. Refocused recruiting efforts and accomplishments like Urban Debate Leagues and Women's Caucuses at tournaments are addressing more overt concerns in an effort to create more equal playing fields, yet tremendous inequities remain that require explanation. Over twenty years of various diversity efforts, especially in CEDA, have failed to substantially change the racial, gender, social and economic composition of interscholastic policy debate at its highest levels. The reason is simple: privilege extends much further than just acknowledging overt and obvious disparities. Privilege creeps into more subtle, covert spaces, like the essence of why and how people "play the game," recognizing that the rules and procedures are created by those carrying that privilege. Snider argues that the greatness of debate as a game is in his belief that it is short on inflexible rules and long on debatable procedures. However, if procedures are *functionally* not debatable and begin to look more like participation requirements than starting points of discussion, the quality of the game, is "not as successful and well-designed" (Snider, 1987, p. 123). Privilege envelopes both substantive and stylistic procedures, increasing the likelihood that supposedly debatable conventions become rigid norms, preventing

achievement of a "more thoughtful" game and creating entrance barriers to successful participation.

Here's how. Snider (1987) says that evaluation of a "winning" procedural argument occurs through the lenses of determining which procedures best facilitate achieving the goals of the debate activity. Snider offers three such goals: 1) education of the participants; 2) discussion of important issues in the resolution; and 3) creation of a fair contest. He concedes that some may be missing. Of course, interested participants with lesser privilege might select different goals as more important, such as having a voice to discuss the topic through the perspective of their social concerns, even if this perspective doesn't fit nicely with some of the other goals. More often than not, the creation of a "fair contest" is given an absolute priority relative to other goals and justifies ignoring attempts to achieve other game objectives.

At least one implicit goal deserves mention: incorporation of the cultural and social values of the participants. It makes sense that the like-minded values of the largest participating class will dominant procedural and rule development of a game simulation. Cultural and social values may appear to have little or no relationship to the first three goals of debate. But in fact, the cultural and social values will in many ways dictate the meaning of Snider's goals. What types of education do the participants' value? Who decides what the important issues are—the participants? The communities most directly related to the topic? Do cultural and social values privilege any notions of "fairness"? Cultural and social background surely impacts each of these areas tremendously. If there are cultural or social disagreements over what constitutes "education," what "issues" are important, or what is "fair," then privilege plays a much larger role in game development than has been acknowledged to date.

For example, the specialized jargon necessary to compete is a stylistic entry barrier that gets driven in no small part by privilege. My position is *not* that it is inappropriate to have jargon as a tool to facilitate understanding of particular argument concepts, but rather, that the argumentation theory should be driven by the argument made, not the other way around. Which of Snider's goals does jargon

fit into and why? I would argue that jargon is not necessary to achieve any of the three goals. A product of the social and cultural values of the participants, one can ask the rhetorical question, "Can a participant understand permutation theory without using the language choice, `permutation'?" If the answer is yes, then allowing debaters to use jargon to substitute for the actual argument creates an entrance barrier that may not be necessary and privileges a culture more likely to utilize this language style. If the answer is no, the question becomes why isn't this a rule?

The truth is that the acceptance of jargon-laded speech in delivery exists for one primary reason: to increase efficiency in argument presentation in order to make more arguments in the allotted time to increase the likelihood of winning. This is another condition that it would seem should be debatable and not generally assumed to function as a rule. If participants, especially educators, consistently substitute jargon for the actual argument, what initially appeared to be a procedure has now become functionally a rule and consequently an entrance barrier. Had the argument simply been made, non-participants could follow, even debate, the argument even if they could not recognize its theoretical significance, and the likelihood that practical learning by application of the theory is enhanced.

Other stylistic procedures are directly tied to privilege. For example, the method of presentation is another area operating closer to a rule than procedure. CEDA/NDT debates do not begin with a discussion of how information and arguments are going to be presented. In fact, again there exists a series of accepted and even mandatory practices. Contrary to popular belief within the community, none of these practices, from speaking fast to relying on a very specific form of introducing evidence to flowing, have been proven to better meet Snider's goals more than other stylistic practices. A slower debate that relies on non-traditional forms of argument and focuses on rhetorical savvy as opposed to flow-centered constructions of argument can equally meet those goals. Many of the debates I have judged since I stopped flowing are a living testament to this idea, as are many debates in which University of Louisville debaters have engaged. Delivery style has been another relatively rigid convention prior to the Louisville sustained collective commitment to challenge delivery procedures.

Procedures for topic selection as well as arguments made in debates are certainly grounded in privilege. The types of topics that are more likely to interest a student are relative to one's experiences and lot in life. Participants actively involved in a particular social-justice struggle that directly affect them are probably less likely to find interest in a game simulation of lesser direct relevance to their lives. The issues most directly relevant to the wealthy participant who has nepotistic connections in Washington and who has Congressional aspirations after leaving law school are often going to be fundamentally different from those whose direct government relationship is staying out of harms way where the local police are concerned or the student whose father is on death row and whose mother is struggling to make ends meet. What is perceived as relevant is relative, and often the population selecting topics has a homogenous privilege that prefers areas of interest less important to those without similar privilege. None of this proves that less privileged populations are incapable of debating these topics, just that they are likely less interested. Urban Debate League populations may challenge this belief, but evidence of substantial retention must be demonstrated, not just introductory participation.

And even if there are high levels of Urban Debate League retention in intercollegiate debate, this would not provide evidence concerning whether more relevant topics and the ability to make one's identity relevant to the topic being debated could increase participation and competitive success of non-privileged groups even more. The anecdotal evidence from the University of Louisville project suggests it might.[1] Even when more relevant topic areas for those with less privilege are selected, they are usually written in ways that lose the most timely relevance and importance for those from those communities in an effort to preserve substantive procedure competitiveness. Past discussions on the development of the Africa and Native American topics offer examples where concerns for debatable

[1] The University of Louisville mission is to recruit and retain debaters from underrepresented populations lacking national circuit high school debate experience. Our retention rates have been near 70% annually and 40% have debated through graduation since 2000.

"ground" and avoiding the wrong plan-inclusive counterplans create a topic that steers far from the literature base and issues most relevant to those directly impacted by the topic, or the goal of debating the "important issues." The few Native Americans living on reservations who discussed this topic with members of the debate community almost uniformly said that an "increase in federal control" was not an issue that had relevance to them, and many found most of the cases on the topic offensive, as well as ignoring the timely issues they faced.

Another hindrance to Snider's vision of gaming simulation is that the policy debate community's substantive procedures differ drastically from Snider's more realistic perspective as outlined in earlier work (e.g., Snider, 1987). If the gaming model does not rely on fantastical conceptions like fiat but, rather, starts with the recognition that we are a student-driven game competing on the merits of a particular topic, this model simply is not an accurate description of how the game currently operates. Rhetorical claims like "we will stop nuclear war" or "we will end famine in Africa" are examples of fiat-based advocacy, or the assumption that the state is actually acting for the purpose of creating a fair division of ground for both teams. One test of comparison might be the public audience debate. Conventional notions of fiat do not exist, yet "fair" debates with sufficient "ground" happen all the time.

Although many teams are beginning to reject this notion of fiat and arguing for the importance of the discourse being utilized, one might think these competitive frameworks are closer to the spirit of the gaming simulation. But they too often fall into the trap of making claims like, "our rhetoric is a demand on the state," usually without a willingness to address the obvious question: how effective can a demand on the state be if the state fails to hear it? In either case, the continued desire to call for the ballot for actions that will not occur as a result of the actual signing of the ballot only fuels the fantastical speculation Snider argues against in earlier work. Again privilege seems to play a role in these manifestations as those without privilege are probably less inclined to role play, especially if involved in social justice struggles and interested in speaking to those issues.

Implications of Privilege on Procedure: Go Homers and Makeovers

In rap music, the element of sampling takes old artifacts and "remixes" them to make something new. Given this emerging framework, let's remix the opening statement from Williams:

> The ~~Rules~~ "procedures" may be ~~color~~ "privilege"-blind, but people are not. The question remains, therefore, whether the ~~law~~ "game" can truly exist apart from the ~~color~~ "privilege"-conscious society in which it exists, as a skeleton devoid of flesh, the reflection of a particular citizenry's arranged complexity of relations.

The bottom line is that privilege gets in the way of a truly open and fair game simulation model of debate, creating specific types of domination practices that force exclusion from the debate activity while demanding assimilation of those who stay, preventing Snider's idealized view of debate.

Exclusionary Practices – The Go Homer

> To make matters worse, many of the guardians of our legal and political culture are busy retarding real racial progress by invoking the same principles of justice and equality for which blacks heroically fought and often died. One of the bitter ironies of this situation is that many of the former opponents of racial equality are now charged with dispensing racial justice in local, state, and federal governments. The fox who once terrorized the chicken coop is now expected to be fair to the chickens—to know best what they need, and to determine what measures are just in their pursuit of equality with the foxes.
>
> - Michael Eric Dyson, *Race Rules*, 2002

Hobbs et al. (2001) suggest that the traditional method of policy debate delivery is an attempt to dominate the opposition by overwhelming and intimidating the opponent. While this is certainly less true when the decision to debate in a certain style is consensual between participants, judges, and the audience, the resolution of procedural differences about style often end in a judge telling students unwilling to participate in more traditional CEDA/NDT style that

they have been "out-teched" or that they should look to a different activity if they are uninterested in learning the more traditional style. Some common arguments made against those interested in challenging stylistic conventions ring true to Dyson's characterization of the fox—"Your different style can co-exist in this format with ours" or "You're excluding us if we can't talk fast" or "Go do Parli" or "You can do it if you try" are common choruses that Louisville debaters hear regularly. Judges saying "I don't know how else to decide the debate" absent my traditional conventions, although these same critics participate in other forums for argument like public or classroom debates all the time and can figure out fair methods of evaluation.

The fact that the more traditional styles dominate becomes a mask to justify telling those interested in other styles that there is no place for them within the activity unless they stylistically assimilate. The retention moment of truth for any national circuit or intercollegiate policy debater is when they see their first debate in the traditional style. Some coaches attempt to hide this from students for months and others show them immediately to not waste anyone's time. I personally remember countless hours with novices trying to persuade them that they too, could debate this style of debate, as have all coaches dealing with novice students in this game. The majority of them leave, *no matter what anyone says*. Moreover, we have not begun to examine the exclusionary nature of all of this on any audience that might be present, whether parents, an interested student, an administrator, someone being quoted in the debate or someone with direct linkages to the topic. The reality is that most that are unable or unwilling to learn the traditional style and quickly leave as well.

Assimilate or Die— The Makeover

Shaniqua, an African American Lesbian high school student—an amazing critical thinker and public speaker—is more than willing to speak her mind about who she is and how society views her. However she also has a speech impediment that causes her to speak slowly, although convincingly, and she has some difficulty reading. After finding extreme success in local high school debate, she embarks on a hopeful career into the land of CEDA/NDT. Her lack of success is met with

recurring constructive criticism about the need to answer more of the opponents' arguments and the need to "read more cards," even though "most" judges are "sensitive" to her obvious learning disabilities.

Shaniqua finds the need to present information in these ways unrelated to the qualities of superior debating, unpersuasive, uninteresting and uncomfortable—but since she is on a debate scholarship she forges ahead without much competitive success. She unenthusiastically works at reading cards faster, becoming more efficient, and looking for smaller strategies on the topic that fail to allow any discussion of who she is or what society thinks of her. She feels that these debate preparation efforts tradeoff poorly with her academic struggles to survive. After four difficult years and eventually becoming a debater that makes it to a fifty percent record with a marginal improvement in reading comprehension (unclear if that is solely due to debate), she leaves the game frustrated and bitter that her record fails to demonstrate her ability as a debater as well as feeling that her participation was more of a job than an activity. She blames part of her lack of success on her racial and sexual identity. At the same time, many within the community proclaim her story "a success." Success for whom? Did the debate community "miss" a diversity educational opportunity from Shaniqua's participation? If so, why? What explains her success in college relative to high school? Was Shaniqua's lack of success justified; in other words, would a game that truly allowed for stylistic procedural variations allow her such a mediocre amount of competitive success? Do her claims of discrimination have any merit? Would those claims exist had she been more successful?

The game has a tendency to stylistically force a one-size-fits-all mentality and, in doing so, often destroys the relevance of identity to participation in the game because the technical nature generally requires more "cards" and less "you." Obviously, the "critical turn" Snider identifies has changed this to some extent and perhaps that is why he argues that the gaming simulation benefits those making that turn. My concern is the "critical" turn of philosophical gaming may affect substantive procedures but does little, if anything, to address stylistic conventions and may create a mask of "openness" about diversity in intercollegiate debate that in actuality, fails to truly exist.

After growing up in a predominately white educational environment as an honors student, but living in a social and cultural African American environment, I was truly "integrated." But when I left for college in an all-white campus community in an all-white city to participate in an all-white debate community, my only hope to survive was via assimilation, as do most when they are the one or the few. I never talked about race once in a debate in eight years of high school and college competition. When I returned home, my friends and family often asked, "What happened to you?" They recognized the cultural assimilation that had occurred. Debaters wanting nationally competitive success still have little choice but to check their culture and identity at the door, despite calls to the contrary. If education of the participants is truly a goal, wouldn't my ability to discuss the topic from my perspective as one of the only Black male participants in the early eighties offer more for both myself and other participants than what I offered the community by leaving my cultural and social identity in Indiana and creating as much of a color-blind situation as possible in my college debate career? As is, the only meaning of my debate career was with regards to my personal educational development (critical thinking, research, etc.), whereas different choices would have created an educational possibility for everyone that debated or judged me (opportunities to have a "conversation on race[2]" in an academic setting).

Moving towards Snider's Vision: The Takeover

> The ideal of a color-blind society is a pale imitation of a greater, grander ideal: of living in a society where our color won't be denigrated, where our skin will be neither a badge for undue privilege nor a sign of social stigma. Because skin, race, and color have in the past been the basis for social inequality, they must play a role in righting the social wrongs on which our society has been built. We can't afford to be blind to color when extreme color consciousness continues to mold the fabric and form of our nation's history. Color consciousness is why black churches continue to burn. Color

[2] One of the goals of the Clinton administration that many would say was never achieved.

> consciousness is why Supreme Court justices bent over backward to repress the memory and present manifestation of racial inequality.
>
> Michael Eric Dyson
> *Race Rules*, 2002

The "obvious" solution is to bring more diversity to the game which would increase the likelihood of challenging all procedures. However, this becomes a circular nightmare given that diverse populations will fail if the procedures are really rules and can't be functionally challenged. So those populations choose to leave or to assimilate, neither furthering the diversity agenda CEDA (and NDT to some extent) badly desire. So, just waiting for Urban Debate Leaguers to get to college and hail their "tokenistic"[3] approaches to diversity are doomed because they fail to challenge the structural conundrum created by debate privilege.

A more effective solution requires committed participation of each judge, coach, and debater and is grounded in the recognition that privilege consciousness must occur if the community is to achieve the true vision of the Gamemaster. Acknowledging different corners and crevices of the activity where privilege is still maintained and, simultaneously, creating spaces for discussions of identity and stylistic choice are crucial, if steps towards true diversity and integration at all levels of the activity are to be taken. The game must begin with the assumption that different individuals bring different educational strengths to it, and the format must allow debates that fight for different styles and identity constructions offering different methods to access questions of policy. The current essence of the game—the quantity and type of the topic-related argument—has to take the backseat, relegating questions of all procedures open to task and interpretation as an apriori consideration before discussing the topical substance. After we have achieve common procedural agreement, only then can we fairly evaluate Shaniqua's arguments on an equal playing field.

For example, we could focus on reaching consensus on stylistic procedures prior to a contest. At a minimum, we could discuss codes that go on schematics to

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[3] Add a few members of underrepresented groups and stir.

identify a team's preferred style. If teams, judge(s), and perhaps audience agree, we move to substance. If not, the debate becomes a defense of one's stylistic choices and can in fact, include an argument for why a particular style is best-suited for discussing the substantive topic. Another possibility is that debaters need to be willing to fight for their stylistic choices as well as their substantive ones. Judges need to be willing to facilitate "stepping out of the box" in real and meaningful ways, including willingness to take into consideration stylistic differences without utilizing *their* privileged training to resolve that disagreement, which is always one sided in these instances. What about an effort to preserve fair stylistic ground to the same standards a judge might hold a new affirmative framework for argument? Coaches need to work with students to develop strategies that maximize their strengths and minimize their weaknesses instead of always assuming that assimilation into dominant styles and trends is somehow always in the best interest of the debater.

Finally, we need to recognize that getting the most out of a diverse debate community is finding alternative ways of valuing that community. In other words, we must not be afraid to reward Shaniqua's value as an African American Lesbian or Juan's position as an "English as a 2nd language participant." That does not mean a judge should vote for them because of who they are, but this approach discourages the community from voting against them because we default to a "one size-fits-all mentality" with regards to how Shaniqua or Juan must compete. If Shaniqua relies on visual aids to make an eloquent argument or Juan speaks in Spanish, we must find ways to accommodate different styles to get at what should be the ultimate goal: who makes the *best* argument. Utilization of the dominant style of debating can erase their ability to participate if it destroys their ability to win. Judges utilizing "affirmative action" to require a minimum level of communicative interaction without stylistic domination seems appropriate. In other words, not voting on the dropped argument because one team attempted to overwhelm the other might be a possibility. Another possibility would be not defaulting to the one style you are accustomed to when style is functionally contested. Obviously, considerations like how many arguments are too many must

be assessed. But is that really any different than what is done now with a typical judging philosophy?

The "Takeover" occurs when Shaniqua finds similar ways to utilize her strengths in regional high school debate at national circuit or intercollegiate levels. When Shaniqua is able to educate "us" about the topic through her unique perspectives, then and only then does debate training become the "two-way" street that Friere says is solely missing from education, avoiding more failed efforts at malefic generosity. When national circuit debaters lose to Shaniqua on questions of stylistic procedures as often as they are victorious over her because they utilize traditional forms of stylistic domination, then and only then, can debate say that all procedures are up for negotiation and challenge. When debate encourages using the format to find one's voice, then and only then will it create a potentially wonderful interaction facilitating an empowering debate "takeover." When we stop telling interested participants to "go homer" and not forcing them into a substantive and stylistic debate makeover to look like participants who already play the game, then and only then will policy debate truly find the inclusiveness it claims to already have. When Shaniqua has competitive success on levels akin to her high school career, then and only then can Shaniqua leave feeling as good about college or national circuit high school debate as she did when she left the local high school career. When diversity is reflected at all levels of the activity, then and only then will the Takeover become complete. Then and only then can debate become one with and embody the true spirit of the Gamemaster.

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SMALL AXE: REPLY TO WARNER

Alfred C. Snider

Warner and I agree that debate should be for everyone. The game of debate should be flexible enough to accommodate those who wish to participate in it. This is different from saying that all formats of debate should be for all people. If that were true then we would probably have only one format, universally applied. Warner's comments are largely directed at American college policy debating, and that is the focus to which I will respond.

First, there is exclusion, but things are changing and can change more. There is more diversity in American college debate now than when Warner was a debater, although still not enough. Progress has been steady but slow – far too slow. As progress is made the questions of why American policy debate should be a province of white, male, upper class, heterosexual individuals are raised more and more. Each discussion and each debate brings out the issue more and more. From an occasional panel discussion at Cross Examination Debate Association national tournaments, this concern has become a common focus on many debate rounds. Teams argue that the approaches of the other team are exclusionary, that issues of inclusion are more important than debating the topic, and judges refuse to adapt to stylistic conventions that they find alien and alienating. This escalation has taken place because each new voice and new expression of concern is heard by others and many of them respond. As well, many of the claims Warner makes ring true to a number of debaters, coaches, and judges, and more and more the argumentative strategy of condemning exclusion is winning the ballot. This combination of social consciousness and strategic opportunity explains why things are changing. The concerns of Warner and others, especially debaters, are making a difference.

My major point here is that changes in the culture of even a small community like American college policy debate take place incrementally and slowly. For

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those who perceive of this as an apology for current exclusion, remember that changes in our individual attitudes and behaviors also change incrementally and slowly, so our community can be expected to do no less.

Second, Warner mentions some engineering solutions that concern me. He mentions that each team might select stylistic preferences, and that a symbol should appear next to a team name on the pairings. This has some obvious problems with implementation: what does the symbol stand for, do judges have symbols, and how does the debate among disagreeing styles proceed? Other than this suggestion Warner offers few practical ways to address the situation.

There have been some bold steps to deal with issues of exclusion. For example, Australian and Asian universities debating takes place in a "three on three" style, and it is required that at least one third of the members of each contingent are women (Australasian Intervarsity Debating Association Constitution, 2002). One wonders how such a requirement would be received by American college policy debate.

My concern is with trying to deal with this situation by introducing new "rules" into the debate activity. As my work and my essay indicated, I believe that hard and fast rules have a tendency to stifle and confuse a dynamic debate process. The sorts of changes and developments we have seen to address issues of exclusion could never have been accomplished by a rules-based approach, but have been evident through a process of social change.

Third, solutions to this problem appear to be better located in specific programs rather than in forensic governance institutions. The real changes come on each debate team as diversity of identity, interest, and skills is respected and celebrated. The model I have come to call the "death march to the trophy" leads debate programs to replicate the ways of other successful programs in an attempt to "do what they do, only better." When the measure is success in competition, the premium will be put on conforming to exclusionary styles and recruiting from already privileged populations. However, when debate programs view themselves as providing for the personal growth and development of students within a learning community things begin to change. It is no longer a question of "how high" a student will rise in competition, but "how far" they will progress in their own growth and development. While only a few can be "stars" along the "death

march," many can receive benefits within a personal growth and development model of debate team organization.

No action by a national or regional organization is going to produce these results. Indeed, Warner was the chair of the Cross Examination Debate Association's Diversity Committee, and yet no concrete action was taken. I argue in my original essay that when we focus on institutional fixes, we often demobilize ourselves as we wait for "the organization" to solve the problem.

Fourth, I want to explore the issue of student choice in all of this. I have serious disagreements with programs that dictate what students will say and how they will say it. Freedom of speech is a concept that should apply to debaters. While in the game of football the coach may wish to dictate the play to be run, in academic debate this may happen, but I believe it is inappropriate. Debate is a forum for the development of critical thinking and choice, and certainly argument and style selection is a part of this. If programs that dictate that debaters must use the "exclusionary" styles described by Warner are wrong, is it not also wrong to require that students not use these tactics? To the extent that the University of Louisville and other teams are involved in a project to change "exclusionary" styles because they agree on that mission, I support their efforts. However, to the extent that there is a "squad policy" that the current dominant styles are prohibited, I would question that tactic. Such coercion can be subtle, such as giving more opportunities to those who conform, the threat of scholarship availability, or the unwillingness to coach teams who are interested in straying from that mission. I am not aware of the specifics of the Louisville program in this regard, but their program mission statement (University of Louisville Debate Society, 2000) seems to indicate that this is a group mission; although there is no indication that anyone is pressured to conform to Warner's vision.

While this situation is troubling, I do see progress. In fact, real progress has to be made on a grassroots basis – debate by debate, judge by judge, and program by program. We are now, I believe, close to a point where those challenging some of these styles and procedures are becoming a critical mass large enough to have a real impact on the entire American policy debate community. I disagree about creating new formal rules and new national organization procedures to deal with

this situation. As so often happens, it only takes a small axe to chop down the big tree and create a new vista in the forest.

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CHANGING THE GAME? EMBRACING THE ADVOCACY STANDARD

Steve Woods

Intercollegiate debate has always been a game. It is only within the past few decades that the overt claim that it is so has been advanced. While the controversy surrounding the supposed "de-legitimizing" of the activity because of the gaming description has subsided, a new turn in the competitive arena has raised the question once again about the legitimacy of viewing the activity as a game. This essay will evaluate the progression of debate, consider the status of current practice and its implications for the gaming paradigm, and propose an advocacy standard as a means to help resolve some of the existing tensions regarding the clash of argument communities within the activity.

Where Are We at in the Game?

The evolution of debate from persons engaged in argument to being institutionalized in the academic setting has been discussed by Snider. From persons deciding simply what they liked or what is appealing, academic debate instituted a framework for those evaluations to stem from. The first phase of debate placed stock issues at the center of the decision framework. These points of conflict were contested between the affirmative debaters who were required to possess them, and the negative debaters who sought to deny them. The questions of harm and its significance, inherency, solvency, and topicality were issues of presence or non-presence in the establishment of a *prima facie* case. This structure related to the classical rhetorical concept of *stasis*. As presented by Aristotle, and developed further by Hermagoras, the concept deals with arguments in controversies that must be proven. As adapted for debate with the resolution being the controversy, the "stock issues" were central to the content of the debate and were the basis for deciding an outcome.

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The second stage of academic debate began to go beyond the simple question of the presence or non-presence of the stock issues. The affirmative was no longer a set of hoops that had to be jumped through, but a cohesive advocacy for a specific action. With focus shifting to the plan and its outcomes, the affirmative represented more of a system that was being advocated than a static set of circumstances that existed or not. Negatives began to call on judges to compare the world created by the affirmative to the status quo, and compare the costs and benefits of that change. The ideas that there may be a disadvantage to action became a way to acknowledge the presence of the stock issues existing for the affirmative, without conceding that they were sufficient in and of themselves for endorsement. The systems approach enabled the negative to offer up comparative systems that were not part of the status quo through counter plans. The judge could pick between a variety of systems, the affirmative, the status quo, or some non-status quo option advanced by the negative.

This second stage of debate also adopted some elements of hypothesis testing. The affirmative was introduced, and it was the negative's job to falsify affirmative claims. This justified an approach that could challenge the *prima facie* nature of the affirmative, involve defense of the status quo or reluctance to change based in the disadvantage (or multiple disadvantages), and also an aversion toward the status quo with the counter plan (or multiple counter plans). While there was some concern about the negatives ability to offer contradictory positions in the same speech, from the relatively innocuous tension between inherency and the link to the disadvantage to the extreme of multiple contradictory world views expressed through numerous disadvantages and counter plans, the second stage of debate still recognized the existence of the stock issues. This second stage was basically a version of "stock issues plus." Given the huge advantage of preparation afforded to the affirmative, along with the procedural advantage of having the first and last speech, adding to the types of arguments that the negative could offer was generally acceptable. And the issues of contradictory arguments being presented could be debated in the context of any given round where such a strategy was employed.

Is the Game Changing?

Academic debate is now entering a third stage, the critical turn in the activity. The identifying element of this change is that abandonment of the role playing that the construct of *fiat* enabled. In both Stage I and II, the affirmative offered a plan of action that involved the agency of institutions or persons that were not physically present or actually represented by the participants in the debate. Generally a governmental institutional actor was assumed to be the implementer of the plan of action. Debaters pretended to be Congress, or the appropriate body with the power to take the "should" in the resolution into fulfillment with the endorsement of the judge's decision. Even if they acknowledged that they were not Congress per se, there was a shared assumption that this is what a policy could look like and that we could pretend it was in place to debate its merits or problems.

Critique-style debating (including performance-style debating to broadly cover the turn toward the critical) overtly abandons the traditional view of fiat. It is important to note that it is a particular conceptualization of fiat that is abandoned, not necessarily the construct itself. What is foregone is the inclination to give the affirmative credit for the imagined actions of governmental agents. The only merit that can be valued is that which is developed in the debate itself. "In round" discourse becomes the measured and evaluated content, not the hypothetical actions willed upon non-present actors or agents.

Unlike the transition between Stage I and II, Stage III does not add pieces to the board. Rather, it is a way to remove the pieces of an opponent. Also, either the affirmative or the negative side can deploy this particular strategy, unlike the move from Stage I to II, where only the negative was really expanding their ground. This ongoing transition, or clash of debate conceptualizations, is problematic to those operating under the assumptions of Stage II. Because of the ability for the critique to utilize self-sealing rhetoric to defend itself and indict attack, people challenging the critique feel frustrated in being denied arguments usually available to them. An example lies in a speaker advancing a critique of threat-constructing rhetoric. The counter-speaker argues that not acting is a link to increasing likelihood of conflict. The original speaker can then claim that the "disadvantage" to accepting the idea of not acting on threat- constructive language is proof of how creating scenarios for conflict leads them to happen. The

performance by the counter-speaker is proof enough that conflict-language-based reasoning promotes conflict. The claim of the original speaker to be wary of such errors is the more desirable option. The ever-escalating claims of the counter-speaker of "real world" behavior and "risk analysis" only fuel the strength of the claim of the critique by accounting for such rhetoric and then categorically dismissing it as valid. By not acknowledging the validity of the criticism, the counter-speakers are proving that they don't "get it" and that they are part of the problem.

The question of what to weigh is central to the conflict. The claim that there is "nothing to weigh" in debate is an existential claim without judgment when advanced by those favoring a critical perspective. "Nothing to weigh" is also advanced as an indictment of the critical perspective by those not favoring the style. For the critic advocate the concept that no real action is taken at the end of the debate means that rather than counting up "dead bodies" or number of nuclear wars, the quality of performance in the round should be evaluated. Conversely, a lack of tangible impacts would make the debate impossible to evaluate for someone who operates under the assumption of real-world fiat being the theory for evaluation.

Additionally, the traditional methods of proof in debate are also open to challenge in Stage III. While approached by some through a performance perspective, others approach alternatives as method, so elements of music, poetry, and narrative, among other forms of communication, are part of a valid examination of the issues of the debate. The use of peer-reviewed, published, authority-based textual evidence is not a privileged form of support for these debaters. In fact, it may be an element under indictment of the criticism being forwarded. This challenge to traditional debate practice produces a strong reaction from those who doubt the value of Stage III-style debate. Perhaps the transition between Stage I and II can be conceptualized as the move from checkers to chess. The nature of what the pieces can do and the number of pieces on the board changed, but the rules of engagement stayed fixed for those acknowledging at the outset what each piece's function was until the completion of the game. Stage II to III is a move from chess to Dungeons and Dragons. What a piece, or character, or argument, can do now is more dependent on the desires of the player of the game

than on the fixed rules of the game. The ability to nullify an attack or be undamaged by its presence may rely simply on the skillful deployment of changing parameters designed by the player.

It is this changing nature of the rules that frustrates those desiring adherence to Stage II-style debating. In Stage I and II debates the rules may be complicated, but they are relatively constant. There is an orthodox debate behavior in those stages that operates on unwritten rules, but those rules are widely understood.[1] So even though there are no rules in debate but for side relating to speaker order and time of speeches, Stage I and II generally managed to produce debates in which similar evaluative process were used. A situation where a "policy" team is debating a "critique" team with a "policy" judge is not really a concern for the persons embracing a policy approach. It is in those situations where two out of the three are critique-oriented that frustration emerges for those favoring a policy style. Policy teams that must adapt to critique teams and judges, and policy judges that hear critique teams, feel that there is no basis to argue or to decide what has been argued. Conversely, the teams utilizing critical arguments have designed them to interact, and indict, the policy style of presentation and thinking. While critique-favoring teams may not be happy with the outcomes when dealing with policy-oriented teams and critics, they at least have an argument that gives them argumentative ground in those debates. They also are prepared for situations where critical arguments are accepted by the other team or critic.

Judges have the unique situation of dealing with multiple formulations for evaluation in a round wherein there are both policy and critique advocates. In policy rounds, what gets weighed may be in dispute, but not how it gets weighed. In rounds with both argument forms existing, *what* gets weighed is argued along with *how*. There are often competing decision rules that are difficult to implement because both imply that what the other weighs is irrelevant, or the decision rules are never explicitly stated, furthering the lack of clash in the debate.

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[1] To say they are unwritten is not literally accurate, given the many textbooks and journal articles dealing with academic debate. But the point is that, except for the ADA and NEDA, the content of debate is remarkably non-regulated by rule.

Some teams have responded to the two styles by incorporating both types of arguments in the same debate. Much like the multiple counter plans and disadvantages that hypo-testing fostered, concern over contradictory arguments is often advanced. Such contradiction also may carry a greater price as the "performance" and in-round discourse of the debaters becomes part of what is assessed in the evaluative framework. Thus, advancing one policy argument that is in tension with another critical argument simultaneously is a more pre-mediated form of error due to the moral weight given the *a priori* nature of the decision calculations for critical arguments.

Who Determines the Rules?

The issue may not be is Stage II giving way to Stage III, but who has control over the content of debate. Do the debaters have control over the content of the debates, or do the judges have *de facto* control? Teams that favor Stage II or III may find themselves in front of a critic that favors the other style. In those cases they can choose to adapt by changing style, modify their style to account for the judge's preferences, or not change at all. By changing style they may find themselves on unfamiliar ground in terms of presentation or preparation, but they are not forcing the judge to evaluate arguments they do not like. By modifying their style they may be lessening the impact of their arguments or have difficulty in making the incompatible more compatible, but they are showing the judge some desire to adapt and still maintain their preferred arguments. By not adapting they risk wholesale rejection but retain their favored argumentative ground.

While perfect *tabula rasa* behavior by judges is perhaps unrealistic and probably unworkable, as no debate is ever complete in fulfilling all unspoken assumptions. Judges generally evaluate the debate that they given in context to the debate that occurred. In Stage II-style debates, the general assumption of some form of cost-benefit analysis would be the default evaluative paradigm. Arguments that are presented will be weighed in comparison to each other, and the relative advantage or disadvantage of action would guide the outcome. So, in the absence of explicit decision rules or efforts to point the judge to a specific means of analysis, there is very little surprise when the judge acts to compare outcomes in

an impact-based framework. In debates between the Stage II and Stage III frameworks, that default position is no longer available as what is weighed is incompatible, or it may argued that weighing itself is an irrelevant (fiat is illusory) or undesirable action (violates the assumptions of the given critical argument).

Judges in this position are left to sort out a basis for acting in the context of the round, or by imposing their own paradigm. So who controls the content of the debate, the debaters or the judges? It is easy to see debaters that prefer Stage III debates going on to judge and invoking a Stage III paradigm as their default so the judge has control, but ultimately the judges reflect debater practices by having been debaters themselves. But, for any Stage III change to begin at all, it has to be rewarded by judges who are more familiar with Stage II being persuaded to vote for Stage III teams. It is unlikely that a debater practicing Stage III style debate would continue on in the activity despite never being rewarded by victory. The nature of the transformation from one stage to another will be guided by the success of the debaters advancing the changes. If Stage III style debating never won rounds, no one would practice it, just as counter plans never would have caught on if they did not have argumentative utility that judges were willing to reward with wins. This leads to some irony in that success in the game of debate may be in tension with those in Stage III who see their approach as dismantling the game-based approach.

The End of the Game (Paradigm)?

As debaters and judges are working out the transition or transformation of debate round by round, the question has emerged as to whether Stage III dismantles the gaming paradigm. There are three key points that debaters may make that indicate a break with the assumptions of gaming. None of these ideas are universal for persons advancing critiques or engaging in performance. It is too varied an argumentative landscape to assign a single meaning to the construct. It would be entirely possible to advance critiques and engage in performance firmly within the assumptions of Stage II. It is when argumentative assumptions from Stage III are used to exclude or make irrelevant the assumptions from Stage II that the gap between Stage III and gaming is most apparent.

Critique debaters advance arguments and reasoning that indicates that the line between the real world and debate is as illusory as fiat. Debate does not

automatically increase or decrease anyone's amount of agency. Our capacity to influence the outside world does not change simply with the existence of a debate ballot being filled out. Arguments need to be presented that address the real parameters of agency that exist in the persons in the room. The performance and reasoning of the debaters should be designed to activate the critic as a real person, not someone acting as an umpire between two contestants.

Since debates are evaluated by in-round discourse, those choices now are real and not hypothetical. This has an implication related to the debaters and their relationship to the real world versus the contest at hand. Debaters have responsibility not only for their own rhetoric, but for the rhetoric of the literature they choose to present. In a simple way this is reflected in issues of sexist language: Did the debater, or the evidence they introduced, use sexist language? If there was a sexist use of language, it is resolved and evaluated as part of the in-round discourse. Debate becomes a personal experience with responsibility for discourse that is not dismissed simply because one is speaking as a debater.

In the most direct challenge to the game's requirement of a winner and loser, many Stage III-oriented debaters have abandoned the outcome of the event as well, either by proclaiming that the winner or loser does not matter or simply refusing to employ language that asks for the ballot or to pick a winner and loser. This view has also been forwarded in variations of the dual win, the dual loss, and no decision outcomes as possibilities. Most tournaments now include in their invitations language which indicates that, in the event of a judge assigned to a debate not providing the tabulator with a decision involving one win and one loss to the assigned teams, a procedure of the tabulator's discretion will be employed to assign an outcome, usually implying a random outcome.

The first two challenges really don't invalidate the game's assumptions, just the role of those playing. Having responsibility for discourse and being limited to one's real capacity as an agent might be limitations on how the game is played, but not denial a game is being played. There are factors outside the assumptions about why certain content is valid or not that define debate's game quality. The elements of speech order and time constraints are still contrived aspects of the interaction of "real persons" in a given time and space assignment that is also contrived and not

naturally occurring. Holding one responsible for one's language is also not beyond the realm of the game. The batter ejected from a game for arguing balls and strikes using colorful language quickly realizes that being in a game does not artificially insulate a person from responsibility for statements.

The world of policy technocrats and public decision makers is bound to strict codes of expectation regarding their public statements about constituencies and members of the public. Racist or gender-insensitive comments would not be tolerated by administrators, especially those who see such comments as public liabilities. In the debate context, making sure that all references or literature introduced into the debate are consistent, and that the in-round rhetoric of the debater in explaining the arguments is consistent with the assumptions of the literature, is a parallel expectation.

This consideration of appropriate language based on a moral or ethical rationale is a common part of policy-oriented debate. The critical approach doesn't use evidence to assess such transgressions. What statistical public opinion considers is not as important as the decisions made by the individuals in this debate. Since public policy does not really get enacted as a result of the communication, the consideration of the value of "ends" is irrelevant. Rules of evaluation that measure outcomes as justifications for action are made moot when the judge acknowledges no action occurs or does not pretend to evaluate the debate as someone they are not in terms of endorsing action (as the Federal Government for example). Stage III debate uses its theoretical assumptions to operate as a means to suspend the normal rules of debate behavior and remove items that have usually been weighed in a team's favor to make those items completely irrelevant.

The critical approach not only changes the rules about what is weighed, but it also operates to change the rules of order of consideration. The basis for criticism becomes a means to identify the importance of issues and operates as a special rule that suspends other considerations of merit ("weighing" impacts for instance). This appeal to the "real world" and "real agency" are rhetorical reconstructions of rules to gain access to *a priori* consideration in the debate. This *a priori* status operates as a presumptive function for the team advancing the critique. The appeal to limits of possibilities in the real world, not the game of debate, is a means of making the claim that it is the most accurate reflection of the mirror of nature. But

such an appeal is still just a means of modifying the rules of decision by offering them as non-debatable because they are the true version of the "way things are." The rationales for endorsement are based on appeals that assume the correctness of the assumptions without the empirical validation required and impossible to even (re)produce in Stage II debates.

The shift from playing a game to making debate "real" also challenges the meaning of participation for the evaluator/critic of the round and for the opposing team. With debate as a game, the critic can step back from her or his own perceptions and truths and make decisions that are based on the arguments in the debate. Often a critic will begin an explanation of a decision with a comment like "I don't really believe this, or care to endorse this position, but in this debate...". With the critical turn in debate, often the ballot is not a hypothetical document, but a personal pledge. Judging a debate becomes a transformative experience for such a critic. They are asked to personally embrace a position and to use the ballot to confirm their change of belief. They are no longer detached observer-evaluators, but they are targets of direct personal persuasion. The elimination of the line between the game and the real obliterates the possibility of evaluation along any other means than subjective and personal. The opposing team becomes a target. They are not merely representatives or presenters of a position for consideration in a specific context; they are now conspirators and perpetrators of serious transgressions. The opposition's choice to advance arguments that are the basis for criticism is indicative of their social and moral failure.

In such a condition debate becomes ideological evangelism. It removes the option of conditional endorsement for the purposes of investigation and testing. The critical turn requires that one abandon contestant status but always assume a publicly accountable identity subject to the scrutiny of others. Such a climate is anti-educational in that it prevents the ability to approach issues from an educational standpoint that allows for experimentation and representation of ideas that are not internalizations of the person advancing them. Debate is no longer a free speech or experimental speech space. Instead, it becomes a moral judgment ground likely to chill discourse and silence exploration of a variety of voices. Debate judges will find a tournament experience to be a series of attempts to alter their worldview and, ultimately, invitations to metaphysical conversion. By

retaining the line between the real world and the game of debate no issues are excluded from discussion, and more are made possible. Responsible advocacy also is possible, and ethical moral transgressions can be addressed as subjects without expanding judgments to the presenters.

The final element of the turn from the game of debate involved in Stage III is the abandonment of attachment to outcome. Quite simply one might ask why such debaters choose to utilize scarce educational resources to actively enter and travel to a competition when they don't care about the outcome. Those debaters seeking activism as an outcome of their debate experience should bypass the debate experience and go be activists. The opportunity to use their free speech rights exist more conveniently and cost effectively on their own campus or in their own community. There is no surprise about what is going to happen at a debate tournament related to competition. It makes more sense for debate to be seen as activism training. Persons are given the opportunity to experiment, train their skills, and receive feedback on their strategies and message. If debaters still want to not be concerned about outcome, it is inappropriate for them to demand that their opposition not be given an outcome as well, or be penalized for seeking an outcome. The process of giving out a decision is not exclusively competitive, but such processes are feedback mechanisms concerned with decision making. Upon entering a tournament there is an agreement that a decision being made is one type of feedback that is guaranteed the participants. They may not get an oral critique after the debate, or comments written on the ballot, but they will receive an indication of a judge's preference in comparison to another opponent.

But what is a judge to do while Stage II and Stage III work out their differences in the rules regarding content evaluation? Most judges are likely to be familiar with Stage II debating. More and more judges are hearing Stage III style teams, and some judges are entering the pool firmly supportive and familiar with Stage III style by having engaged in it actively as a participant. There are likely to be large portions of the policy debate community that will adhere to one camp or the other for quite some time.

The Advocacy Standard and the Game

Debate automatically creates a problematic status for the issue of authenticity. The resolution is artificially constructed as a priority, and even if the resolution is abandoned, the timing of the tournament and rationale for its existence are not externally mandated or related to real-world events. Only occasionally would issues of war or crisis dictate the pre-emption of an event; never has a tournament been held in response to an event. The debaters may also be engaging in an act of speaking for others in their outlining of harms and rationale for action. Also, given the nature of switch-side debating, they may find themselves in a personally uncomfortable assignment to refute a case or strategy they are in agreement with. Yet the debate context requires some representation of "status" to gain access to the decision-making forum. They are assigned a role of proponent or opponent regardless of their concern about the nature of the resolution's guidance where the debate is concerned. The evaluation of a team's advocacy can occur without requiring an authentic advocacy, and in competing assumptions about the nature of the resolution, the round, or the activity.

The advocacy standard would ask three main questions: (1) is what the advocate stands for clear (does the advocate take a stand), (2) is the advocate consistent, and (3) does the advocate ethically engage the opposition and critic in the debate. Regardless of the paradigm offered by the teams involved, the advocacy standard can help evaluate two seemingly dissimilar approaches. Even if the two teams in the debate do not seem to be clashing over the ideas in the round, the judge can still make meaningful comparisons between the teams regarding their advocacy. At the end of the debate, rather than trying to weigh competing claims or arguments which in fact may not be in competition, a judge can make a determination of who did the best debating. The requirement of advocacy does require that there be debating done. This may seem in tension with teams offering performance as their form of presentation in the debate. But ultimately, the performance is offered as a form of argument, a reason to select one team over another. The requirement of advocacy does not nullify the act of performance but requires it to fit the context of competitive argument.

Teams that explicitly reject competitive argument should not be concerned with the outcome of a debate to begin with. It seems counterintuitive to critique a

situation that is based on binary outcome and still insist that one should be rewarded with a positive outcome in that system. One cannot say the game is invalid, and then insist that the lack of validity in the game is proof that they should win it. The advocacy standard does not deny the validity of performance; it only requires that those engaging in it advance the underlying argument it embraces openly. If performance is the choice of a debate team to engage an issue brought forward by the resolution, the other team, or of their own choosing, it is their responsibility to provide some context to those who are participants in the discussion. If rapping, or role playing, or poetry are forms to be interpreted as argument, then the person advancing those forms must make clear the claim being made and how it is evaluated.

The reason that debate is seen as a game separate from the real world is mainly that the outcomes of debate have no real impact on the choice or actions of institutions outside of debate. It is seen as a training ground for persons who will seek to influence the public sphere. And while performance is a strategy used to influence the public and policy makers, such as street theater or political satire, there is an accompanying explanation that comes from an organization or movement that gives such actions context. Debaters who engage in performance and fail to provide a context for their argument and explain how it is responsive to issues of concern are failing to complete their persuasion. They risk preaching only to the choir and creating more division and discontent. There is an ethical obligation for the persons engaged in discussion to attempt to engage in dialogue instead of monologue. The persuasive character of performance is its ability to reach out to the other and create mutual understanding. Performance that is used to silence or exclude other views or forms of expression operates at a level where argument is not important, only the hegemonic imposition of meaning with the faith that only one team engaged in performance has the true nature of affairs of the world revealed to them. It closes space for debate and dialogue rather than opening it. It is reasonable for judges who evaluate the speech acts of two different teams to require that the teams engage in a form of discourse that does not exclude the ability to listen equally to either team.

It is fair for the critic of the debate to ask that the teams that are engaged knowingly in a context that has a binary outcome to identify the issues of

importance, how their approach is a basis for making a good decision about that issue, and what distinguishes their choice from the alternative that exists in the other view presented by the opposition. A judge who is asked to make a decision should also feel that game is indeed contestable and not predetermined by the choice of one of the parties involved. As long as debaters choose to voluntarily enter debate tournaments, both policy makers and performers have to openly accept the reality that they are advocates. Neither stance occupies a neutral approach to discourse. And neither stance is automatically privileged by the rules of the game. And neither stance is assisted by ignoring the context of debate as a game with binary outcomes that requires the participants to develop the basis for decision making each round on an ad hoc basis. When a team is debating in front of a critic that operates under the same assumptions as they do, those elements may go unstated in the discourse of the round, but they are still present in the framework that they operate under.

Conclusion

This essay has engaged the ongoing changes in debate and examined current practices in competitive debate. Even as those changes have occurred, the status of debate as a game has not changed. Those that make the claim that debate is about real discourse and that the speech acts in debate are not artificial constructs but real and genuine utterances of real and genuine people still operate in behaviors that perpetuate the game. They seek outcomes that are binary, they attempt to have competitive success, and they have forgone other real and genuine opportunities for discourse to engage in artificially created circumstances to make their utterances. The appeal to be outside the game ends up being a means to exclude other discourse from being evaluated, and to elevate one's discourse above another's. Claims about discourse being more real and genuine ultimately end up being the ultimate expression of a gaming logic, as they alter the rules of the game to ensure only one take on how the game should be played will be considered.

Judges that evaluate the advocacy of the teams and require that they make arguments in the debate, not just expressive or declarative statements, put a fair burden on both teams to address the issues of concern in a meaningful way. It is the act of judging that reinforces that the game is being played. It is reasonable for

the critic to expect that it be played in such a way that both teams have an opportunity for choice in how it played while still ensuring fairness among differing approaches that are on their face incompatible.

JUDGMENT DAY: REPLY TO WOODS

Alfred C. Snider

I admire Steve Woods as a skilled debate teacher who also treasures any opportunity to involve a wider public, and their issues, in the debate exercise. I largely agree with the content of his essay. Thus, my comments will be relatively brief.

First, Woods has continued in his direction of seeking "practical" ideas for debate students, judges, and teachers. This article is a discussion of policy debate realities and then a suggestion as to how judges and debaters can adapt to this situation in a practical and beneficial way. Woods embraces the gaming model and suggests ways to improve our practice within. I appreciate his efforts.

Second, Woods makes an important contribution when he recalls the influence of the "systems approach" provided by Brock et al. (1973). Previously debate issues had been seen in isolation, creating a situation where the affirmative had to beat back all of the attacks on its "stock issues" in order to win. Under a systems approach each stock issue would be important according to its relation ship to the entire body of argumentation. Thus, an affirmative team might solve just a small part of the problem but would still present a superior "system" when compared to the status quo. It might be productive to relate the systems approach to the situation described by Woods, where issues (policy vs. critical) are seen in isolation.

Third, during the critical turn described by Woods the game goes on. He rightly identifies that as long as debaters come to the playing field they are still playing the game, even if they depart from traditional procedures. Once again, the game goes on, but different decision procedures are suggested.

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Fourth, the advocacy standard offered by Woods seems promising but currently lacks precision, something critics often seek, and usually in vain. I suggest that his work on this concept continue with an eye towards fleshing it out and providing more guidelines for its application. I think there is much that might be gained from consulting the "narrative paradigm" for communication offered by Fisher (1989) in any attempt to expand on the advocacy standard for judging competitive academic debates.

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