

POST- MODERN CRITIQUES AS STRATAGEMS IN THE POLICY DEBATE DISCOURSE

by

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Perhaps the most dramatic change in academic policy debate over the last decade has been the introduction of a new class of argument called a “critique” (also spelled “kritik” by those seeking to reference the cultural roots of some versions of the argument).

Critiques reference in their myriad examples a range of disparate thinkers, but have coalesced into a similar *form*, with a particular purpose in a round of competitive Policy Debate. A pervasive subset of Critiques invoke a school of academic discourse known as “Post-Modern Criticism.” There are many different strains of Post-Modernism, and reviewing them all is beyond the scope of this paper, but it is important that the reader be introduced to the work of at least two authors, Michel Foucault and Martin Heidegger, in order to understand these archetypal examples of this new debate position.

It is ironic that a more complete appreciation of Foucault and Heidegger, and recourse to the analytical methodology they helped evolve, serves to undermine the unique strategic potential of the post-modern critical discourse, rendered as The Critique, as a constructed tool to gain victory in a round of Policy Debate.

Foucault was a historian who sought to increase understanding of certain classical systems of knowledge, through the very rejection of descriptive historical analytical norms such as tradition, continuity, and evolution, insisting that a discourse should be evaluated in the “now”. One might be tempted to view Foucault as a social biologist in disposition; his studies of both sexuality and the scientific method betray his respect for the quantifiable, and his meticulous and vast descriptions of phenomena are reminiscent of the zoologist describing a new species, or an anthropologist a novel culture. However, unlike a traditional scientist, Foucault was a relativist, and relentlessly criticized the idea of objective truth, describing instead relative accepted-truths operating as part of a system of cultural norms. His archeology of history rejected the norms of history (such as an ordering of events in a constructed sense of continuity), demonstrating his methodology of stepping “outside the box” of the intellectual project he is analyzing. However, it is imperative to note that Foucault’s descriptions are not determinative. Foucault writes, in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*:

“My aim is not to transfer to the field of history, and more particularly to the his-

tory of knowledge, a structuralist method... My aim is to uncover the principles and consequences of a... transformation that is taking place in the field of historical knowledge.... My aim is most decidedly not to use the categories of cultural totalities in order to impose on history, despite itself, the form of structural analysis. The series described, the limits fixed, the comparisons and correlations made are based not on the old philosophies of history, but are intended to question teleologies and totalizations...” (pg 15)

He continues, speaking of his own work:

“It is not critical, most of the time; it is not a way of saying that everyone else is wrong. It is an attempt to define a particular site by the exteriority of its vicinity; rather than trying to reduce others to silence, by claiming that what they say is worthless, I have tried to define this blank space from which I speak, and which is slowly taking shape in a discourse that I still feel to be precarious and so unsure.” (pg 17)

Thus, a sense of Foucault’s method is gleaned: he seeks to reveal by *pure* description, by writing a history “of the present”, showing how relationships *are* by determining where one event touches another. However, Foucault perturbs the present in a particular way: not by peeling back current events and relating them to the past, but by disassociating each thing from those discrete objects around it, in order to better observe what *this* object is, as opposed to *that*. As Andrew Barry, Thomas Osborne, and Nikolas Rose note,

“Such a fragmentation of the present is not undertaken in a spirit of poststructuralist playfulness. It is undertaken with a more serious, if hopefully modest, ambition - to allow a space for the work of freedom. Here, indeed, the place of ethics is marked in Foucault’s thought. Analyses of the present are concerned with opening up “a virtual break which opens a room, understood as a room of concrete freedom, that is possible transformation”; the received fixedness and inevitability of the present is destabilized, shown as just sufficiently fragile as to let in a little glimpse of freedom - as a practice of difference - through its fractures....” (pg 5)

In the search for freedom, Foucault noted its absence, through the introduction of the idea of *disci-*

plinary power. Given the present context of the Policy Debate discourse, it is perhaps ironic to note that Foucault's main descriptions of disciplinary power were apolitical. Rather, Foucault was initially concerned with bodies and individuals escaping what he referred to as bio-power, or control induced by the application of medical norms on the individual. The application of Foucault's *ethos* and method to political discourse only came later, through a series of interviews and essays, but not in a single unifying text by Foucault. When asked about political discourse, Foucault placed disciplinary power as belonging to neither sovereignty nor government, but part of a triangle of sovereignty-discipline-government, a shape which perhaps helped to generate the idea that power is fluid, and that the use of power results in its own destruction, since it can be owned by neither the government nor the governed.

The juxtaposition of Foucault's overarching care to avoid structuralist tendencies with the use of his discourse by policy debaters to advocate the negation of a particular point of view is thus deeply unsettling. Indeed, coming to Foucault's actual writings *after* having heard examples of his discourse rendered in a debate round was a jaw-dropping experience for me, because of the complete discontinuity of Foucault's project with the appeal to negation of a particular discourse in a round of policy debate. Contradiction seems to be an inadequate term for those who advance Foucault's discourse as an appeal to negate a proposed course of action. What is going on here is more than a contradiction; it is an active structural construction of a new totalizing norm, *arguing in favor* of a *rejection* where Foucault definitively dismisses any such action, existing in the realm of the debater trying to win an argument where Foucault appealed for an avoidance of normalizing tendencies, a grab for *disciplinary power*.

Pat O'Malley noted that:

"Almost the defining property of Foucault's conception of disciplinary power is that it works through and upon the individual, and constitutes the individual as an object of knowledge. In the disciplines, the

central technique is that of normalization in the specific sense of creating or specifying a general norm in terms of which individual uniqueness can be recognized, characterized, and then standardized. Normalization in the disciplinary sense thus implies "correction" of the individual, and the development of a causal knowledge of deviance and normalization." (p 189, Foucault and Political Reason)

Foucault wrote that:

" what we are concerned with here is not to neutralize discourse, to make it the sign of something else, and to pierce through its density in order to reach what remains silently anterior to it, but on the contrary to maintain it in its consistency, to make it emerge in its own complexity." (p 47)

Foucault is thus the anti-debater. He seeks not to affirm or negate, but to understand what exists in the *now*.

Is it possible that debaters who advance the Foucault Critique as an appeal to Negate are unaware of this problem? An oft-used response cited by debaters when presented with this apparent problem is that negation is not an appeal to endorse the Negative, but rather to reject the affirmative discourse. But, as we have already seen, Foucault himself avoids any such rejection, and substitutes a desire for complete understanding. Given the discontinuity between Foucault's method and how his discourse is referenced in a debate round, the question remains: why is Foucault being used in such a manner? The answer to this question involves stepping back from the inner-workings of the Critique discourse during the debate, and focusing on the actual structure of the Debate Round, which will be referred to as the "Policy Debate discourse." Foucault's method will be applied to an Archeology of the Critique in the Policy Debate discourse.

Foucault wrote:

"One last precaution must be taken to disconnect the unquestioned continuities by which we organize, in advance, the discourse that we are to analyze: we must renounce two linked, but opposite themes. The first involves a wish that it should never be possible to assign, in the order of a discourse, the irruption of a real event; that beyond any apparent beginning, there is always a secret origin - so secret and so fundamental that it can never be quite grasped in itself. Thus one is led inevitably, through the naivety of chronologies,

towards an ever-receding point that is never itself present in any history... Discourse must not be referred to the distant presence of the origin, but treated as and when it occurs."

However, he continues: "These pre-existing forms of continuity, all these syntheses that are accepted without question, must remain in suspense. They must not be rejected definitively of course, but the tranquility with which they are accepted must be disturbed; we must show that they do not come about of themselves, but are always the result of a construction the rules of which must be known, and the justifications of which must be scrutinized..." (p 25; the Archeology of Knowledge)

How then to proceed?

"First we must map the first *surfaces* of their *emergence*... We must also describe the authorities of delimitation.... Lastly, we must analyze the *grids of specification*... But the above enumeration is inadequate... How can one speak of a 'system of formation' if one knows only a series of different, heterogeneous determinations, lacking attributable links and relations?" (p 41)

It should therefore be made explicit that, despite the necessary beginning, middle, and end, the narrative to follow cannot have a "real" starting point, thus alerting the reader to the obvious multitude of events still "out there" which are excluded in this short story, and also noting that the underlying purpose of this synthesis will be laid bare, and subject to scrutiny. Indeed, in *The Order of Things*, Foucault offers a specific synthesis of how modern science developed (see, for example, page 345). Thus, it seems such an exercise is well-grounded, with the appropriate caveats and cautions. As an additional measure, we might reject the idea that the synthesis which follows is a "history", and say rather that it is a narrative of where I am *now* in terms of my dispositions towards the Critique in Policy Debate. I'm not trying to be "cute" here; while this narrative has the form of a conventional history, we strip it of its pretense as "The Way Things Came to Be" by unmasking it as the author's synthesis, and render it instead as an Archeology of my current understanding of the activity. On the other hand, it may be informative to temporarily suspend the post-modern ethos in order to understand an in-

stance of its use, thereby stepping out of the Method in order to see how it is working in the present discourse. There is clearly a tension here, but hopefully it will be resolved before we have finished. Here then is my narrative:

The Rise of The Critique in the Policy Debate Discourse

The evolution of Policy Debate has been punctuated by radical innovations. What has remained constant is the basic format: two individuals advocate the Affirmative, whose goal is to prove a Resolution of Policy true, most commonly by advancing a specific plan-of-action to solve a particular problem as an example of the truth of the resolution; two individuals advocate the Negative, who need prove the resolution false.

The majority of innovations in Policy Debate can be traced to the development of tactics taken by the Negative. The first set of argument-classes used by the Negative included: inherency arguments, geared at showing the plan was unnecessary, because the status quo was capable of the problem; the use of solvency arguments to show that the plan wasn't up to the task of solving the problem; and the use of the Disadvantage, to show that the plan would incur certain deleterious consequences, which outweighed any good that it might do. These arguments constituted the majority of the Negative arsenal. The Disadvantage was clearly most useful strategically, since it actually provided an offense to the negative, a reason to vote against the plan. In order for a disadvantage to be applicable, it had to provide a link between what the Plan advocated and the deleterious impact presented. Also, and this will be important later, that impact had to be Unique to the affirmative. In other words, it would not matter much if the Plan resulted in inflation if inflation was already occurring, unless there was an additional and unique harm to increasing inflation further.

For about ten years, and very occasionally this debate recurs, there was a distinct thread of theoretical argument as to whether the resolution or the plan should be the focus of the debate - this was practically resolved in favor of the plan, since a resolitional focus would allow a near-infinite number of alternate justifications for the resolution by the affirmative, and an equally large number of negative counterwarrants aimed at proving the resolution false, by demonstrating potentially disad-

vantageous examples of the resolution.

The early eighties gave rise to the wide use of the Counter-plan by the Negative. Instead of simply defending the status quo, the Negative was now able to offer an alternative to the plan. The test of whether the counterplan was superior to the plan was found in a theory called Competitiveness - the counterplan was found to be competitive with the affirmative if it provided a Net Benefit - if it solved the problem that the Affirmative Plan sought to solve, while avoiding a Disadvantage that the Affirmative accrued. The Affirmative could seek to test whether a Counter-plan was competitive by Permuting the counter-plan, thereby asking if the simultaneous adoption of all of the plan, plus all or part of the counterplan, would be worse than doing the counterplan alone. If advocating simultaneous adoption of the counter-plan and the affirmative would result in avoiding the disadvantage, then the counter-plan was not competitive. If however, there would be a net benefit to simply doing the counterplan, and not doing the plan as well, then the counterplan was shown to be superior.

There were many examples of counterplans advanced, the earliest constituting a test of the word "federal" in the resolution. Since most resolutions required action by the federal government, and thereby gave rise to plans which called for federal-level legislation, one of the earliest counter-plans written was the argument that legislation by State governments would be preferable, originally because State government action would avoid an infringement of Federalism, but also because it would avoid either positively or negatively affecting presidential popularity. Attempts to permute State action, and argue that simultaneous action of the Federal government and the State government would actually be preferable, were unsuccessful, because such action would still incur the Reagan, and then the Bush, and then the Clinton argument.

Then came a much more radical test of the words "federal government" in the resolution - the Anarchy Counterplan. This counter-plan argued that instead of the government action advocated by the Affirmative, the federal government should be dismantled in its entirety, because governments lead to militarism and war. However, while this argument enjoyed some early success, someone eventually discovered that it was vulnerable to a permutation - the affirma-

tive could still defend that the federal government should do their plan, while advocating that all other aspects of the federal government should be dismantled; this permutation solved for the militarism of government, while still allowing for the advantage advocated by the Affirmative - the counterplan thus did not have a net benefit, and was dismissed on the grounds that it did not compete with the plan.

However, the Anarchy idea did not go away. It came back as a disadvantage called Statism. The Negative argued that the plan served to entrench the state, by presenting a policy which was seen as advantageous, thus allowing the state to continue its evil ways. This argument, however, suffered from a lack of uniqueness: the Affirmative was able to show that even without the plan, the state would continue to exist, and that therefore the affirmative plan should not be rejected for doing something advantageous, since no quantifiable harm could be assigned to an entrenchment.

Therefore, those seeking to advance arguments in Policy Debate aimed at undermining the very existence of government could not find an appropriate tool in the Argument-Forms then available: the counterplan would be permuted; the disadvantage was not unique. In purely structuralist terms, there was a strategic and therefore technical Problem which demanded a technical Solution. A new Form of argument was found to be needed, and that form was constructed as the Critique.

The Critique did not irrupt from nothing, but rather exploded out of frustration with the Counterplan and the Disadvantage, borne by the desire for an argument which did not have to be Unique and could not be Permuted, by the wish to say this particular "thing" and have it "matter" in the Policy Debate discourse. Where there was once a Statism Disadvantage, there was now a new player, the Statism Critique, which would not be denied by Uniqueness... Or would it?

When the Statism Critique was first offered, it was taken seriously by very few. It smelled and felt like a Disadvantage, so it was treated as such. When it was argued that the Argument did not have to be Unique, the response was "Why Not?" It was still the case that the State would exist with or without the Affirmative, so why should this new construct be any different in its call for rejection of an Affirmative which, when *fiated*, would do some demonstrated good? This early frustration with

achieving victory with the new Argument highlighted a remaining technical problem in fitting the Critique into the realm of the Policy Debate discourse: *fiat*.

Fiat is one of the primary theoretical tools available to the Affirmative (and, in the case of counterplans, to the Negative); it allows for the assumption that the plan proposed is actually implemented, so that the plan's effects might be tested. Without *fiat* the Affirmative would be caught in an impossible double-bind between the burden of demonstrating the plan to be necessary, by proving the existence of some inherent barrier in the status quo which blocks a present solution to the problem, and proving that the plan is effective; if the inherency of the problem is demonstrated to be due to the intractable nature of the present legislature, then this same legislature would obviously not be pre-disposed to the plan. *Fiat* allows the affirmative to ignore questions of plan implementation. Unfortunately for early versions of the Critique, *fiat* also proved to be a potent tool in justifying the need for an argument to be unique. If the plan made the status quo better, why not adopt it, given that the same State existed in the world before and after plan adoption?

The problem of *fiat* gave rise to the second technical innovation instituted through the advocacy of the critique: the notion that *fiat* was illusory. At first, this point seems to be stunning in its obviousness, and in its implicit assumption that the Affirmative was suffering under the delusion that their plan was actually implemented by the Powers-That-Be upon the signing of the debate ballot. But the statement that *fiat* is illusory was used to try to wrest away from the Affirmative the *fiat*-tool, in order to limit to the Affirmative *the Idea* that they sought to promote the State *through their discourse in the debate round*. The Negative claimed that the Affirmative's proposal had impact only on the discursive level, only in that the discourse favored by the Affirmative had the effect of demonstrating the State to be good. Under this model, where *fiat* is illusory, the only thing that matters is what the Affirmative says, and if they say the State is good, that's a unique example of such a claim, thus linking uniquely to the Critique. We thereby see how, with this second technical innovation, the Critique came to grab hold - while on the surface shunning the notion of Uniqueness, the Critique was able to establish unique-ground by linking the simple utterance of the Affirmative to the implications of the criticism.

The Affirmative needed to have an answer, and countered on two levels. First, the Affirmative sought to argue that *fiat* is a test - no one, obviously, believes that *fiat* "happens", but it is impossible to discuss the policy implications of the plan without the assumption that it happens. Second, the Affirmative stood up one day and Permuted the Critique. The Affirmative argument was that it was possible to simultaneously recognize that the State is bad, while using it to do some concrete good. Further, this combination was superior to simple criticism, because it solved for any implicit assumption that the State may be good, while still arguing for the solution of the problem. Here, the Negative responded as follows: "You can't permute a Critique."

We'll return to the Permutation dispute momentarily...

The change in the notion of *fiat* allowed for an even wider proliferation of Critiques, and brought forth a more fundamental level of criticism, onto the level of Truth and Power.

Post-Modernism came more strongly to the foreground of the Critique palette with the Critique of Normativity. This argument sought to go to the most fundamental basis of debate, and held that Normative Thought itself was untenable. Unfortunately, the Negative advancing this criticism was caught in a double-bind, because by asking the judge to vote for the Negative, they were requesting a normative judgement. This particular double-bind may have been part of the third Technical change to the Policy Debate discourse wrought by the Critique - the appeal to pure Negation. According to the Negative, the Criticism required the judge to reject the Affirmative discourse. This rejection was not tantamount to the endorsement of *anything*, including the status quo. It was simply a recognition of the criticism, that the Affirmative discourse was undesirable. The fact that such Negation resulted in the Negative side winning the debate was simply an accident.

Indeed.

Critiques were now resulting in debate wins. Perhaps, therefore, it was not a complete coincidence that they were also gaining in popularity. However, there was still widespread resistance to them, until the introduction of two additional Post-Modern Critiques - the Foucault Critique, and the Heidegger Critique.

We have already introduced Fou-

cault. Martin Heidegger seemed to hold much promise for the Critique debater, because it was his position that the framing of an issue as part of a problem-solution dichotomy would inevitably lead to failure. Heidegger thought that the separation between the idea of the problem and that of the solution was illusory, and that attempts at making technical fixes as part of a rational mind-set constituted a constructed facade; an alteration of the *thing* by a desire to change it. Since the very form of the Policy Debate discourse demanded that the Affirmative frame discussion under a problem-solution rubric, use of Heidegger's concept was a natural for the Negative.

Thus ends my narrative.

We have now before us the Critique as a distinct Entity. However, all discussion of: the Critique's "validity"; the theoretical properties of the Critique; and substantive counter-points to the Critique have been issued within the confines of the Debate Round, without the recognition of the existence of an over-arching Policy Debate discourse. To my knowledge, what has not occurred is an Archeology of the Critique as part of that discourse, or a critique, if you will, of The Critique in the Policy Debate Discourse.

The Critique does not stand alone, divorced of purpose. It stands in relation to other Arguments in the Policy Debate round. There are tests available to determine its purpose. Here is a thought experiment: If there is doubt that The Critique is advanced by the Negative to win a Debate Round, perform the following experiment: when the Negative says that a Critique cannot be permuted, answer this way: Why not?

Why Not?

If the purpose of a Critique is discursive in nature, why isn't that discourse fluid? It is as if the Negative is saying to the Affirmative: you may not agree with me, it is simply not allowed! But this is a case wherein the honest and thoughtful and sincere concession of the Negative argument results in its disappearance, so to allow such a concession would be disastrous for a Negative effort to Win the Debate. What other purpose could there be to forbidding a Permutation of the Critique other than maintaining ground on which the Negative might win the debate? If the goal was simply discursive... if the goal was simply to accept The Critique for What It Is, one might think that the more acceptance, the better! But in

the Policy Debate discourse, the Critique could *not function as a strategic argument* if it were permutable, so the Negative cannot allow the Affirmative to accept it.

It has been argued that the permutation of a Critique is insincere, that when the Affirmative adopts the Criticism they do so merely to make it go away, and therefore their advocacy is hollow. But this argument works both ways - if the Negative can accuse the Affirmative of falsely advocating the Critique for the purpose of Winning, why can't the Affirmative similarly accuse the Negative of just this thing? And who is in the better position to win this argument - the team which says "I agree with you," or the team that says "You may not agree with me."

The advocacy that the Critique may not be permuted is simple proof that the Critique has a purpose in the Policy Debate discourse, and that purpose is to win. (On another level, it is almost laughable that such a great effort has to be extended to prove this point; ask yourself this: who in a Policy Debate round makes arguments for any purpose other than to win the Debate?)

The Critique is thereby unmasked as much more than what it is claimed to be. It is a tool to win a debate round. And in this case it is a tool which has been constructed, piece by piece, to avoid theoretical and strategic pitfalls suffered by other arguments. The Critique is a structured entity in the greater Problem-Solution framework of the Policy Debate discourse - the problem is: How do you win the debate round? The solution is: run the Critique.

The act of advancing a Critique thereby is subject to the Heidegger argument - if discourse is all that matters, and the Affirmative is to be Criticized for posing a problem-solution dichotomy to address the harms of the case; then the Negative is subject to Criticism discursively for constructing a Solution to the Problem of winning the debate; the proof of the construction is the negative claim: *You may not agree with me.*

Let us pause for a moment, and recall Foucault. Foucault said that power is fluid, and traced it as it shifted back and forth between individuals. In the Policy Debate discourse, power was originally held by those who opposed the notion that the State is good, because the Affirmative held the Argument-tools to defeat that idea in its forms as a Counter-plan or as a Disadvantage. This could be seen as an instance of Disciplinary Power, where the judge was

compelled to discipline the Negative, chilling their discourse. Then came The Critique, and power was shifted to the Negative. Now the Affirmative was bereft of Argument-tools, and suffered the disciplinary power of the judge: any discourse which advocated that a problem might be solved, or that the State may be used, was rejected. This flow of power is quite an impressive display of the insight of Foucault - it demonstrates how disciplinary power leads to resistance, which leads to its own destruction. But now there is a unique situation: the disciplinary power is held by a side which is arguing *against* the use of disciplinary power! And discourse if being silenced by invoking an author who cautions *against* any silencing of discourse. This untenable situation inevitably leads to the sapping of the Negative's disciplinary power: no one who advocates Foucault or who advocates Heidegger can use these Critiques to win a debate round. Power is fluid. Permutations are possible.

Does this back-and-forth constitute a never-ending series of double binds? No - there is hope. The original Affirmative advocacy is structuralist and humanist in its intent, and therefore there is no contradiction with that advocacy and the construction of the permutation. Also, it is simply the case that Foucault believed in rights, and believed in the possibility of governmental change - he even participated in demonstrations, and argued for governmental changes which increased individual liberty.

Looking at how the Critique exists now in the Policy Debate discourse, one is buffeted by ironies. The original desire to criticize the state has resulted in an argument which protects the state from any attempt to change. From a desire for radical transformation springs forth a position complete in its totalizing nature. This totalizing characteristic of the absolute refusal that the State may be used for good gives rise a new plea for liberty, a new resistance to disciplinary power. Liberation is to be found in a simple mechanism - the ability to speak and to debate. The Affirmative may say: "I *can* agree with you; I am allowed to say what I will say, and I agree that the State can be bad; I agree that certain problem-solution dichotomies are false; I agree that threats can be constructed." To achieve liberty, the Affirmative need only say: I agree. To deny the Affirmative this discourse is indistinguishable from any Totalitarian denial - what is the difference between

saying "you may not speak what I speak" and saying "you may not speak"? They are of a continuum. An equally serious irony is the discontinuity between the projects of Foucault and Heidegger and the totalizing manner in which their projects are utilized in the Policy Debate discourse. Some have argued that Heidegger's program gave rise to Totalitarianism - but that may be because of the surprising way in which the desire for radical transformation seems to collide on a circular path with the totalizing nature of an Argument for which the Critique debater argues *there is no way out...*

There are remaining issues, such as: what is the judge to do, faced with the Foucault critique of the Foucault Critique, or the Heidegger critique of how Heidegger is used in the Policy Debate discourse? If the judge were to listen to the Negative, who advocates rejection, then the judge would reject the negative. If the judge were to listen to Foucault, she or he would simply understand and comprehend the Critique for *what it is*, but would not use it to silence any discourse. It would simply *be*, without serving as a structuralist mechanism to secure a victory.

What about the other Critiques?

Foucault and Heidegger are still there, available to the Affirmative to unmask any claim that these arguments are not permutable, or need not be unique. Once the permutation is accepted, then what happens depends on the argument. At least discourse is not stifled, and power is shared.

Writing in the November 28th, 1999 issue of the New York Times Magazine, Jacob Weisberg discusses the current struggle between former American Communists and anti-Communists, and the battle for understanding and for historical redemption. Weisberg finds his way between these two diametrically opposing camps in the advocacy of the liberal anti-Communists.

Liberal anti-Communism begins in the 1930s with Sidney Hook and John Dewey and the Commission of Inquiry into the Moscow Purge Trials. Hook subsequently founded the Committee for Cultural Freedom, an organization that resisted both Communism and the demagogic and bigoted anti-communism of HUAC.

It was liberal foreign-policy thinkers like Paul Nitze and George Kennan who de-

vised the Truman Doctrine and containment, successful strategies for resting the spread of Communism at the outset of the cold war. And it was liberal intellectuals like Arthur Schlesinger Jr. and Reinhold Niebuhr who developed the most useful understanding of the Communist threat. In his classic 1949 statement in 'the Vital Center,' Schlesinger argued that while Communism was certainly a danger to America, it wasn't much of a threat *in* America. The way to answer it, he wrote, was not by banning and prosecuting Communism, but through the Constitutional methods of 'debate, identification and exposure.'

Schlesinger's prescription seems to offer a useful posture to the judge, operating in the Policy Debate discourse – arguments should not be banned, even if they are radical and frightening to those in power. They should be debated, identified and exposed. They should be understood for what they are: they are arguments. And they should stand or fall based on their internal assumptions, and the validity of their claims, wherever those claims take us.

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