September 2017

Complete Issue 54(1)

Delta Sigma Rho – Tau Kappa Alpha

Volume 54, Issue 1
Spring 2017

Speaker & Gavel

Speaker & Gavel is the publication of
Delta Sigma Rho – Tau Kappa Alpha

S&G Editor

Dr. Todd Holm

Director of Professional Communication
2077 Geiger Hall
Expeditionary Warfare School
Marine Corps University
Marine Corps Base Quantico
Quantico VA 22134-5038
mailto:toddtholm@gmail.com

Becoming a Member of the Editorial Board

So as not to overload our editors and ensure a quick turn-around from subject matter experts, we accept nominations and self-nomination to the board. Contact the editor if you or someone you know has a terminal degree (PhD, EdD, JD, MFA), a forensics background either as a competitor or coach, and some publication experience. You don't have to be currently active in forensics; as a matter of fact, former forensics people are perfect for our needs because they are not as overloaded during the travel season.

Call for Papers

Speaker and Gavel is an international, peer-reviewed journal publishing high-quality, original research in the field of communication studies. While it has its roots in the pedagogy of competitive speech and debate and welcomes submissions from that sub-discipline it is open to, and regularly publishes, articles from any of communication's sub-disciplines*. **We maintain a focus on competitive speech and debate issues** but we are also open to submissions from all communication related fields including (but not limited to):

Applied Comm	Humor Studies	Rhetoric
Forensics	Public Relations	Interpersonal Comm
Organizational Culture	Computer Mediated Comm	Small Group Comm
Argumentation & Debate	Instructional Comm	Cultural Studies
Health Comm	Queer Studies	Organizational Comm
Political Comm	Conflict	Speech Anxiety
Communication Theory	Intercultural Comm	Critical Cultural Theory

Additionally the journal is open to all research methodologies, (rhetorical, qualitative, quantitative, historical, etc.). In addition S&G will also except one or two literature reviews for each issue and a limited number of scholarly book reviews may also be considered. Viewpoint articles - research-based commentary, preferably on a currently relevant issue related to the forensics and/or debate community will also be considered. All research, with the exception of the literature reviews and scholarly book reviews, should further our understanding of human communication. The way(s) in which the manuscript does that should be clear and evident. All submissions are independently reviewed by anonymous expert peer referees.

> The society name is Delta Sigma Rho-Tau Kappa Alpha, derived from "Oratory, the key to power" and "Honor for merit"

By Submitting an Article for Publication:

When you submit a paper for publication you are stipulating that:

1. The manuscript is your own original work and has not been previously published and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere.

2. If a previous draft was presented at a conference or convention (which will not negatively affect the chances of publication and is encouraged) it has been noted on the title page.

3. The manuscript does not contain anything abusive, libelous, obscene, illegal, defamatory, nor does it contain information you know or suspect to be false or misleading.

4. You have gained permission to use copyrighted material (photos, cartoons, etc.) and can provide proof of that permission upon acceptance.

5. You have conducted any original empirical research after the approval of and in accordance with your institution's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

> *The successful practitioner has an obligation to publish to share the wisdom gleaned from years of experience.*

Send submissions to:
Dr. Todd T. Holm
toddtholm@gmail.com

**Speaker & Gavel
follows the
APA
Style Guide Format**

DSR-TKA on the Web!

Click Here

http://dsr-tka.org/

Speaker and Gavel on the Web!

Click Here

The Submission Process

If you are new to the process of publishing do not hesitate to ask questions. We are always willing to help fledgling academics find their ways. Generally when you submit to S&G you will hear back from us within six weeks. If your article is seen as valuable enough for publication you will most likely be offered the opportunity to *Revise and Resubmit* the article based on reviewer comments. We would like to see those revisions, along with a letter explaining how you have revised the article based on the feedback you received, within a month but if more time is needed we will work with you.

Guidelines for Submission

1. Submission deadlines are January 15th and July 15th of each year. It is never too early to submit your article.

2. Submissions should be made via email as Word document attachments with the author(s) contact information in a separate attachment. (Send to toddtholm@gmail.com)

3. Speaker & Gavel requires submissions follow the most recent Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines.

4. The text should be double-spaced throughout and should be standard Times New Roman 12 point font.

5. Personal identifiers should be removed from the title page and from the document. The rest of the information on the title page and abstract should remain intact.

6. Please provide full contact information for the corresponding author including email, mailing address, and preferred contact phone number. Also include academic affiliations for all co-authors. This information should be sent in a document separate from the main text of the article to ensure an anonymous peer review.

7. Please provide information about any special funding the research received or conventions or conferences at which previous drafts have been presented so it can be noted in the publication.

8. Once accepted for publication you will be expected to provide some additional biographical information, a headshot, and recommended pop-out box text.

Editor's Note: S&G went to an entire online format with volume 41/2004 of the journal. The journal will be available online at: www.dsr-tka.org/ The layout and design of the journal will not change in the online format. The journal will be available online as a pdf document. A pdf document is identical to a traditional hardcopy journal. We hope enjoy and utilize the format.

Table of Contents

Alumni Corner

Meta-Analysis of Research on the Functional Theory of Political Campaign Discourse

William L. Benoit –University of Alabama, Birmingham

William L. Benoit (PhD , Wayne State University)

Dr. William L. Benoit (Ph.D. Wayne State University) is a professor of Communication Studies at the University of Alabama, Birmingham.   Bill has taught such courses as political communication, persuasive defense, argumentation, and persuasion.   He developed and applied the Functional Theory of Political Campaign Discourse as well as Image Repair Theory.

Meta-Analysis of Research on the Functional Theory of Political Campaign Discourse

Benoit

Meta-Analysis of Research on the Functional Theory of Political Campaign Discourse

William L. Benoit

Functional Theory has been applied to a variety of election campaign messages, including candidacy announcement speeches; TV spots; debates; direct mail brochures; candidate webpages; nomination acceptance addresses; vice presidential debates; senate, gubernatorial, and mayoral debates; senate, gubernatorial, and house TV spots; and debates and TV spots from other countries. This approach argues that election messages address one of three functions (acclaims, attacks, defenses) and one of two topics (policy, character). This study reports a meta-analysis of several Functional Theory predictions: acclaims are more common than attacks (defenses are consistently the least common function and were not tested here); policy is discussed more than character; when discussing past deeds incumbents acclaim more and attack less than challengers; attacks, and policy statements, are more common in general than primary campaigns; when addressing general goals and ideals, attacks outnumber acclaims. General goals were the basis of more acclaims and fewer attacks than future plans. Candidates use fewer acclaims and more attacks than other sources. Two hypotheses were not confirmed: incumbents did not attack more and acclaim less than challengers generally or when discussing future plans. The essay concludes with suggestions for future research in this area.

Key Words: Functions, Topics, speeches, TV spots, debates, brochures, webpages, incumbency, campaign phase, source

Election campaign messages undergird the political systems of many countries around the globe. Campaigns work to persuade citizens to cast their votes for the candidate. Legitimate criticisms can be leveled against election campaigns (e.g., candidates can be deceptive, demagoguery can thrive in a campaign, campaign donations can corrode the process of democracy, and too many voters are apathetic); nevertheless election campaigns are an essential part of democracy and ubiquitous today. In the United States candidates run for a diverse group of elective offices, including mayor, city council, congress (state and federal), governor, president, and in some jurisdictions, judgeships. The federal government in America has 537 offices (president, vice president, senators, and representatives). Citizens cast votes for 18,749 positions in state government. Local (city, county) governments in the U.S. hold elections for another 500,396 elected officials. So, the United States holds elections for almost 520,000 offices (Lawless,

Functional Meta-Analysis

2011). For better or worse, the American approach to elections (use of advertising, debates, and other messages) has been used in many countries around the world. For example, political leaders' (president, prime minister, chancellor) debates have been held in many countries, including Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Nigeria, Northern Ireland, Poland, Scotland, South Korea, Spain, Taiwan, the Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and Wales. Television advertisements are employed in other countries although their use is limited by law in some countries. Some countries limit the time period in which TV spots can be used (Kaid & Holtz-Bacha 2006). In the UK, for example, political candidates are prohibited from running television spots. Political parties are allowed to air Party Election Broadcasts but "the maximum length of [PEBs] has declined progressively, from 30 minutes in 1955 to four minutes 40 seconds" (Scammell & Langer 2006, p. 76). Still, TV spots and other kinds of campaign messages are employed around the world in contemporary election campaigns. The sheer number of campaigns is a reason for election research.

Second, literally billions of dollars are lavished on political campaigns (Benoit, 2014a). For example, Wilson (2012) determined that in the 2012 American general election presidential campaign, over a billion dollars was spent by Obama, Romney, and political groups (about twice as much as was spent in 2008). The *Washington Post* reported that as of October 19, 2016 over $3.8 billion had been raised for Democrats and Republicans in the presidential primary and general election (2016); of course millions more in contributions were raised for down-ballot races. Additional money is spent for the hundreds of thousands of other campaigns for other political offices in the U.S. and around the world.

Third, it made a difference, for example, whether Democrat Hillary Clinton or Republican Donald Trump was elected as president in 2016. Regardless of which candidate one preferred, there is no doubt that Trump will pursue markedly different policies than Clinton would have done had she won the Electoral College. The same thing could be said of other candidates, such as Barack Obama and Mitt Romney in 2012. It also matters whether Donald Trump, Jeb Bush, Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio or one of the other Republican contenders won the nomination, just is it made a difference whether Hillary Clinton, Bernie Sanders, or one of the other Democrats won their party's nomination.

Fourth, research documents effects from watching television advertising, an important campaign medium. Mulder (1979) reported that advertising in a Chicago mayoral race was positively related to attitudes toward the candidates. McClure and Patterson (1974) indicated that in the 1972 presidential campaign, "exposure to political advertising was consistently related to voter belief change" (p. 16; see also Atkin & Heald, 1976). Other research has found a positive relationship between ad spending and election outcomes (Joslyn, 1981; Palda, 1973; Wanat, 1974). Experimental research employing TV spots used by candidates in elections (Atkin, 1977; Basil, Schooler, & Reeves, 1991; Christ, Thorson, & Caywood, 1994; Faber & Storey, 1984; Faber, Tims, & Schmitt, 1993; Garramone, 1984, 1985; Garramone & Smith, 1984; Geiger &

Benoit

Reeves, 1991; Hitchon & Chang, 1995; Johnston, 1989; Just, Crigler, & Wallach, 1990; Kaid, 1997; Kaid & Boydston, 1987; Kaid, Leland, & Whitney, 1992; Kaid & Sanders, 1978; Lang, 1991; McClure & Patterson, 1974; Merritt, 1984; Newhagen & Reeves, 1991) as well as studies on ads created by researchers (Becker & Doolittle, 1975; Cundy, 1986; Donohue, 1973; Garramone, Atkin, Pinkleton, & Cole, 1990; Hill, 1989; Meadow & Sigelman, 1982; Roddy & Garramone, 1988; Rudd, 1989; Thorson, Christ, & Caywood, 1991) demonstrates that televised political advertisements have a variety of effects (recall of ad content, attitudes toward candidates, voting intention) on viewers.   Based on the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections, Gordon and Hartmann (2013) reported that "our findings illustrate that advertising is capable of shifting the electoral votes of multiple states and consequently the outcome of an election" (p. 33).   Significant effects from TV spots have been confirmed through meta-analysis (Benoit, Leshner, & Chattopadhyay, 2007).   Jacobson's (2015) literature review declares that "A review of the evidence leaves no doubt election campaigns do matter in a variety of important ways" (p. 31).   McKinney and Warner (2013; see also Boydson, Glazier, Pietryka & Resnik, 2014; Jamieson, 2015; Warner & McKinney, Schill & Kirk, 2014) conclude that "the evidence is quite conclusive that campaign debates do indeed matter" (p. 256).   Campaign messages do not affect every citizen, and they do not influence every one in the same way (Jarman, 2005), but they inform a significant number of voters and change or reinforce existing attitudes for many.

Research has also established that debates – another important campaign medium – have several effects on those who watch them (see, e.g., Benoit, Hansen, & Holbert, 2004; Benoit, McKinney, & Holbert, 2001; Benoit, McKinney, & Stephenson, 2002; Benoit & Stephenson, 2004; Benoit, Webber, & Berman, 1998;   Holbrook, 1996; McKinney & Carlin, 2004; Racine Group, 2002; Reinemann & Maurer, 2005; Shaw, 1999a, 1999b).   Patterson (2003) reported that "Citizens learn more about the candidates during the ninety minutes of an October debate than they do in most other weeks of the campaign" (pp. 170-171).   Significant effects from watching debates have been confirmed through meta-analysis (Benoit, Hansen, & Verser, 2003).   Research confirms effects of watching debates in non-presidential campaigns (e.g., Just, Crigler, & Wallach, 1990) and non-U.S. campaign debates (e.g., Blumler, 2011; Senior, 2008).

Campaign effects may not always be obvious but messages have substantial effects and can be very important.   Sides and Vavrek (2013) offered a useful metaphor for understanding campaign effects, comparing presidential election campaigns to "a game of tug-of-war.   Both sides are pulling very hard.   If for some reason, one side let go – meaning they stop campaigning – the other side would soon benefit" (p. 9).   So, if either major candidate in a contested election ceased producing campaign messages he or she would quickly drop in the polls.

Campaigns enable candidates to connect with citizens and provide opportunities for voters to participate in democracy. The candidates' election messages which constitute campaigns deserve scholarly attention.   One approach to understanding election campaign messages is provided by the Functional Theory of Political Campaign Discourse.   Textual literature reviews

Functional Meta-Analysis

of research on Functional Theory are available in Benoit (2007, 2014a, 2014c).   The purpose of this study is to report meta-analyses of data on eleven Functional Theory predictions.

Meta-analysis (see, e.g., Glass, McGaw, & Smith, 1981; Hunter & Schmidt, 1990, 2004; Rosenthal, 1991; or Wolf, 1986) is a statistical method for cumulating the findings of multiple studies of a given dependent variable.   This method has important advantages over traditional, narrative literature reviews.   First, it works from effect size rather than significance levels. Sullivan and Feinn (2010) explain that:

> The effect size is the main finding of a quantitative study. While a *P* value can inform the reader whether an effect exists, the *P* value will not reveal the size of the effect. In reporting and interpreting studies, both the substantive significance (effect size) and statistical significance (P value) are essential results to be reported. (p. 279)

This consideration is important because significance levels are highly dependent on sample size and the sample size for the research on Functional Theory is quite large.   Second, meta-analysis provides a statistical (relatively objective) approach to summarizing past research.   Furthermore, it permits corrections for such factors as sampling error and measurement error.

Functional Theory of Political Campaign Discourse

Functional Theory was developed for several reasons.   First, far too much research into the nature (content) of election campaign messages is atheoretical.   Functional Theory articulates assumptions about election discourse and offers several predictions about the content of such messages.   Second, content analysis of political TV spots is quite common in the literature (with most research analyzing functions (positive versus negative ads) and/or topic (issue versus image ads).   However, comparatively little research investigates the nature of other kinds of election messages, such as announcement speeches, televised primary and general election debates, announcement speeches and acceptance addresses, or candidate webpages.   Functional Theory proposes a method that can be, and has been, applied across campaign media (and across level of office and country).   Third, the content analysis that has been conducted of advertisements has limitations.   Some studies do not examine both functions and topics (Functional Theory analyzes both).   Most research uses the entire spot as the coding unit: TV spots were coded either as positive or negative (a few studies added a third possibility, comparative ads) and coded as addressing either policy or character.   Kaid and Johnston (1991) acknowledged that using the entire spot as a coding unit has potential limitations: "Our method of dichotomizing the sample into positive and negative ads by determining a dominant focus on the candidate or his opponent is useful for analysis but may understate the amount of negative information about an opponent present even in a positive ad" (p. 62).   Coding entire spots could also lead researchers to

Benoit

overestimate attacks.   To illustrate this potential problem, consider this spot for George W. Bush in 2000:

> Announcer: *Under Clinton/Gore, prescription drug prices have skyrocketed, and nothing's been done*. George Bush has a plan: Add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare.
>
> Bush: Every senior will have access to prescription drug benefits.
>
> Announcer: *And Al Gore? He says he wants to fight for the people against HMOs, but his prescription drug plan forces seniors into one HMO selected by the federal government. Al Gore: Federal HMO*. George Bush: Seniors choose.

Italicized utterances attack Gore whereas the other remarks acclaim Bush.   To describe this entire spot as *either* positive *or* negative clearly erroneously classifies part of what is being said to voters. Even classifying this as a comparative ad (which implies a 50/50 split) overlooks the fact that about two-thirds of this ad is negative and one-third positive.   Compare that ad, with both acclaims and attacks, with this spot used in the same campaign:

> *2.2 trillion dollars. That's a lot of money: 8,000 dollars for each American. It's our government's projected surplus over the next 10 years.   Al Gore plans to spend it all and more. Gore's proposing three times the new spending President Clinton proposed, wiping out the entire surplus and creating a deficit again.   Gore's big government spending plan threatens American prosperity.*

Unlike the previous advertisement, this one is entirely negative.   Yet using the entire ad as the coding unit would "count" these two messages the same, each as one attacking ad.   The same problem arises in studies coding a spot as addressing either issue or image.   Kaid (1994) took the unusual step of dividing presidential primary ads from the 1992 campaign into three groups: image ads, issue ads, and negative ads, a category system that implies that image and issue ads were distinct from negative spots.   Surely negative ads can address issues and image (or both), but this classification system does not make that point clear.   Benoit and Airne (2009), for example, studying Senate, House, and gubernatorial ads from 2004, found that 42% of the ads in their sample contained both acclaims and attacks and 75% of spots discussed both policy and character. Coding by themes allows the analysis to more accurately represent the content of these messages. Benoit and Benoit-Bryan (2014a) explain that "Themes are complete ideas, claims, or arguments; a single theme can vary in length from one phrase to an entire paragraph" (p. 159).   A moment's reflection will reveal that using the entire message as the coding unit would be useless for content analysis of speeches or other message forms.   Finally, West (1997) uses the entire spot as his coding unit and for the period of 1952-1996 he reports more than 10% more negativity than Benoit (1999).

Fourth, much research on the content of election messages does not report inter-coder reliability.   Studies of debates which do not report reliability include D'Alessandro (2017),

Functional Meta-Analysis

Dragan (2016), and Rzepecka (2016); research on advertising which does not report reliability include Banda and Windett (2016), Carsey, Jackson, Stewart, and Nelson (2011), Dudek (2008), Lau and Redlawsk (2015), and Ridout and Holland (2010). Other research reports inter-coder reliability as simple agreement between coders (e.g., Kaid & Johnston, 2001). However, with two categories (positive or negative; issue or image) even monkeys pushing keys labeled "positive" or "negative" are likely to agree 50% of the time. Functional Theory uses Cohen's (1960) κ, which controls for agreement by chance. This means we can place greater confidence in data produced by the Functional Theory than in many other studies.

A fifth limitation of past research is that few studies go beyond functions (positive, negative) or topics (issue, image); Functional Theory divides the topics of policy and character into sub-categories (past deeds, future plans, general goals; personal qualities, leadership ability, ideals). Statements about policy and character can be sub-divided into more specific kinds of statements. Finally, Functional Theory ads a third function, defenses (refutations of attacks). Defenses are quite rare in political advertising, so this is not a telling criticism of research on ads, but in debates defenses can account for 5-10% of the candidate remarks. Thus, Functional Theory was developed in response to limitations of the existing literature.

This approach has received growing acceptance. For example, Nai and Walter (2015) edited a book on negative campaigning, adopting Functional Theory "as a baseline for defining and measuring negative campaigning" (p. 17). Hrbkova and Zagrapan (2014), studying political leaders' debates, wrote that "The most influential attempt at systematic analysis of political debates based on a specific theoretical construct is the functional theory by William Benoit" (p. 736). Isotalus (2011) wrote that "One of the most used and systematically tested theories in the studies of the content of television debates has been functional theory" (p. 31). This theory merits scholarly attention.

This theory makes five assumptions about election campaigns (Benoit, 2007). First, voting is a comparative act. To win elective office, candidates only need to appear – and it is important to remember that political campaigns are about voters' perceptions – preferable to their opponents. Candidates do need not to persuade all citizens (or even all voters) of their superiority; they must only persuade enough voters to win the election. The idea that political candidates do not have to persuade all voters of their preferability is very important because many issues are controversial and people disagree about the most important character traits of a president: Candidates cannot hope to persuade all voters of their preferability on either policy or character. Candidates who espouse a particular position on any given controversial issue are likely to simultaneously attract and repel different groups of voters who embrace different beliefs and values; it is lucky that a political candidate does not have to persuade all voters to win an election.

Second, candidates must call attention to areas of contrast between themselves and their

Benoit

opponent(s).   Those seeking elective office do not have to disagree with opponents on every conceivable issue: Who would oppose curbing inflation, creating jobs, or protecting the country from terrorists? Nevertheless, voters would have no reason to prefer one candidate over another if the candidates appear identical in every regard. Candidates must distinguish themselves from opponents on at least some points of comparison if they are to appear preferable to opponents. The need to reach voters to create some contrasts between or among candidates means that communication is vital to political election campaigns.

The third assumption is that citizens obtain information about candidates and their issue stands through election messages from a variety of sources, including candidates, their supporters, the news media, and special interest groups. Candidates use messages in a variety of media to inform voters about themselves and their policies and to identify differences between opponents, including TV spots, debates, speeches, webpages, and Facebook pages.   In the 2016 campaign Donald Trump made headlines repeatedly with his tweets.

Fourth, candidates can establish preferability to opponents by using messages that employ the functions of acclaims, attacks, and defenses. Acclaims tout a candidate's strengths or advantages.   Attacks identify an opponent's alleged weaknesses or disadvantages.   Defenses respond to, or refute, attacks made against a candidate.   These functions work together as an informal version of cost-benefit analysis. This observation does not mean Functional Theory assumes that voters quantify benefits (acclaims) or costs (attacks and defenses) or that they engage in mathematical calculations (adding or averaging costs and benefits) to make vote choices. Acclaims are capable of increasing a candidate's perceived benefits. Attacks can increase the apparent costs of an opponent. Defenses have the potential to reduce a candidate's perceived costs. Functional Theory does not assume that acclaims, attacks, and defenses are necessarily persuasive: Some messages are poorly conceived or do not reach the intended audience; some voters are far from open-minded.   Furthermore, knowledge and attitudes of voters differs, as does the way citizens perceive messages from and about candidates.

Election discourse can address two potential topics, policy and character, a fifth assumption of Functional Theory.   Candidates can acclaim, attack, and defend (1) *what he or she has done or will do* in office (policy) and (2) *who he or she is* (character).   These terms (policy, character) are preferable to other terms often encountered in the literature: issue and image.   The term "issue" refers to disputable questions.   Because candidates often discuss their personalities, it is possible for *character* to be an *issue* in a campaign.   Furthermore citizens develop perceptions – impressions or images – of the candidates' policy positions as well as their character, which means one could talk about voters' *images* of the candidates' *policy* positions.   Using the terms policy and character avoids these potential difficulties.

It is important to note that these two topics are not entirely discrete.   When a candidate takes a particular position on an issue (policy) could influence the audience's perceptions of that

candidate (character).   For example, espousing a proposal to help the homeless (policy) could foster the impression that the candidate is compassionate (character).   Similarly, a candidate thought to be a bigot (a character trait) could be assumed to oppose legislation to help minorities (policy).   Still, legislation to help the homeless or on minorities is different from the personal qualities of compassion or bigotry.   High values for inter-coder reliability in research using the Functional approach (see below) on topics of campaign discourse demonstrates that despite some overlap, policy and character are distinct topics.

Functional theory further divides discourse on policy into past deeds (record in office), future plans (means or specific proposals for policy), and general goals (ends, desired future state of affairs).   Functional Theory focuses on the past (past deeds) and the future (future plans and general goals).   It does not have a category to represent campaign discourse using the present tense.   For example, candidates sometimes make statements like "I am working hard to create jobs."   If this work has actually created any jobs, that accomplishment should be (and almost certainly would be) used as the basis for an acclaim on past deeds (e.g., "Job creation increased 15% under my stewardship").   If that hard work has not actually produced any results, the statement is essentially an acclaim on general goals ("My goal is job creation").   This analysis comports well with theories of voting from political science which identify two theories of vote choice: Retrospective voting, where vote choice is based on an assessment of what the candidates have accomplished in the past, versus prospective voting, which bases vote choice on speculation about what the candidates will likely accomplish (in the future) if elected (Lanoue, 1994).   There is no third theory of voting concerned with the present.   Functional Theory also sub-divides utterances on character into statements about personal qualities (personality), leadership ability (experience in elective office, ability to lead), and ideals (values or principles, this concept is not derived from social psychology).

Predictions

The Functional Theory of Political Campaign Discourse makes a number of predictions, eleven of which are tested here (it also offers other predictions – e.g., that news coverage discusses attacks more than candidates actually use attacks – but the data on these other predictions are too sparse to justify meta-analysis).

Acclaims have no drawbacks, attacks have one drawback (many voters dislike mudslinging, so an attack can generate backlash – see, e.g., Merritt, 1984; Stewart, 1975), and defenses have three limitations (defenses can make a candidate appear reactive rather than proactive; because attacks usually address the target's weaknesses, defenses often take a candidate off message; one must identify an attack in order to refute it, so a defense can inform or remind voters of a potential weakness).   So, candidates have reasons to use more acclaims than attacks and more attacks than defenses.   Some authors believe that attacks are very common in candidate messages.   For example, West (2001) indicated that more of advertisements were negative than

Benoit

positive.   Kamber (1997), for example, notes that "previous eras saw severe personal attack on political candidates, but they also saw detailed and sometimes inspiring deliberation over the issues. Our present political discourse is nothing but spleen" (p. 4). Broder (2002), a journalist, wrote that "the ads people are seeing are relentlessly negative... often never a hint as to why a voter should support the person paying for the TV spot."   However, Functional Theory predicts that acclaims are more common than attacks.

H1. Acclaims will be more common than attacks.

Concerns about backlash from attacks are only one consideration that influences the frequency of attacks in campaign messages.   For example, challengers tend to attack more than incumbents, candidates who trail their opponents usually attack more than leaders, the frequency of attacks by a candidate is directly related to the number of attacks made against that candidate, the use of attacks is directly related to competitiveness, attacks increase as election day approaches, and ads sponsored by political parties and political groups are usually more negative than spots from candidates (see, e.g., Benoit, 2014a; Damore, 2002; Elmelund-Praestekaer, 2010; Maier & Jansen, 2015; Ridout & Holland, 2010; Sullivan & Sapir, 2012).   Presidential television advertisements from candidates who trailed throughout the general election campaign attacked more often than their opponents (who led during the entire general election campaign) or candidates in races where the lead changed during the campaign (Benoit, 2014a).

It is important to acknowledge that attacks are not inherently false or misleading (Benoit, 2013): Some attacks are reasonable just as some acclaims are false or misleading.   Geer (2006) argues that informed decision making requires an understanding of pros and cons, so attacks can be an important part of the democratic process.   He also notes that attacks are more likely to include evidence than acclaims.   Defenses are consistently the least common function so this function was not included in this prediction.

A second prediction holds that candidates for elective office will discuss policy more often than character.   Many believe that character is more important than policy.   Clarke and Evans (1983) surveyed 82 reporters, concluding that:

> Strikingly, issue-related topics recede when reporters turn to analyzing the strengths and weaknesses that they think will determine the election....   On the whole, candidates do not dwell on these [personal] characteristics in their appeals to voters.   Yet journalists believe that they are important factors in determining the outcome of a congressional race. (pp. 39-42)

Skewes (2007) notes that "in covering candidates for the White House, the one aspect of coverage that journalists universally agreed was important. . . was coverage of the candidates' character" (p. 57).   So, many writers hold the belief that character is more important than policy.   Research has demonstrated that the *New York Times* reports character remarks more often than candidates make

Functional Meta-Analysis

such remarks (Benoit, Hemmer, & Stein, 2010; Benoit, Stein, & Hansen, 2005). News coverage of American senate, gubernatorial, and mayoral election campaigns (Benoit, Furgerson, Seifert, & Sargardia, 2013) and of prime minister campaigns in Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom (Benoit, Compton, & Phillips, 2013) show the same pattern, with news discussing character more than the candidates themselves. However, King (2002) noted the "almost universal belief that leaders' and candidates' personalities are almost invariably hugely important in determining the outcomes of elections is simply wrong" (p. 216). Scholars and journalists alike stress character over policy.

Of course, some citizens do think the most important function of a president (prime minister, chancellor) is to serve as a role model (character) but more voters see the most important factor in evaluating political leaders is their work proposing and implementing governmental policy. Consistent with this belief, public opinion polls in the U.S. reveals that more respondents say policy is a more important determinant for their vote for president than character (Benoit, 2003). Benoit also contrasted the topics of candidates who won (primary, acceptance, general; primary and general TV spots and debates, acceptance addresses): Winners were significantly more likely to discuss policy, and less likely to discuss character, than losers. Hofstetter (1976) explains that "issue preferences are key elements in the preferences of most, if not all, voters" (p. 77). King (2002) analyzed research on the role of character in 51 elections held in 6 countries between 1960 and 2001 confirming that "It is quite unusual for leaders' and candidates' personality and other personal traits to determine election outcomes" (p. 216). So, most voters consider policy to be more important than character in deciding their presidential vote and election results (voting patterns) are consistent with this belief.

H2. Candidates will address policy more often than character.

Baker and Norpoth's (1981) analysis of the 1972 West German debates found that candidates discussed issues more than ethics (character), consistent with this prediction. H7, discussed below, considers the influence of campaign phase on topic of campaign message.

Incumbency is another variable capable of influencing the functions of campaign discourse (see Dover, 2006, for a treatment of incumbency in presidential TV spots). Scholars have identified several advantages possessed by incumbents. For example, Salamore and Salamore (1995) state that incumbents have greater recognition, ability to raise campaign funds, and ability to begin campaigning early. Incumbents are also likely to receive even more attention from the press than challengers (see, e.g., Smith 2005; Smith & Mansharamani, 2002; Trent & Trent, 1974, 1995). In almost all cases the incumbent will be better known than the challenger, particularly if the incumbent party candidate is an incumbent president running for re-election. This means that knowledge of, and attitudes about, candidates are likely easier to change for challengers than incumbents. Unless an incumbent is unpopular, challengers must give voters a reason to evict the incumbent and attacks are usually the basis for that argument.

Benoit

H3. Incumbents will acclaim more, and attack less, than challengers.

This contrast should be particularly sharp when the candidates discuss past deeds or record in office.   Only incumbents have a record in the office sought in an election.   Challengers often have records in other offices, such as governor or senator.   However, experience in other elective offices is simply not comparable to experience in the White House (e.g., presidents negotiate treaties and serve as commander in chief); the incumbent's record in the Oval Office is the best evidence of how a candidate will perform in elected.   As the data in Table 5 reveal, both incumbents and challengers discuss the incumbent's record in office (past deeds) more than the challenger's record: Incumbents discuss their own record in 70% of statements about past deeds and the challenger's record in 30% of themes on record in office.   Challengers discuss the incumbent's record in 75% of utterances about past deeds and their own record in 25% of their statements on this topic. Obviously, when discussing their own record incumbents acclaim; when discussing the incumbent's record, challengers attack.   Statistical analysis reveals this contrast is significant with a large effect size (χ^2 [df = 1] = 4153.33, $p < .0001$, $\varphi = .45$).   Non-presidential campaigns without incumbents running for re-election are considered "open seat" elections and data on such candidates not used in the tests of H4 (or H5).

H4. When discussing past deeds (record in office), incumbents will acclaim more, and attack less, than challengers.

So, incumbents as a group are likely to acclaim more, and attack less, than challengers – particularly when the candidates talk about past deeds.

H5. When discussing future plans, incumbents will attack more and acclaim less than challengers.

The fifth prediction anticipates that when discussing future plans (specific policy proposals), incumbents will acclaim less and attack more than challengers.   Proposing a future plan implicitly indicts the incumbent, who has failed to implement a desirable change in policy.   Of course, it would be unwise for an incumbent to assert that everything is perfect and no changes are needed. But every time either candidate offers a proposal for policy change, these future plans suggest something is not going well under the incumbent.   This means that challengers are more likely to acclaim on future plans than incumbents.   Because more future plans are likely to be proposed by the challenger, more opportunities exist for incumbents, compared to challengers, to attack future plans.

Functional Theory anticipates that messages from the primary phase of the campaign will differ in predictable ways from general election messages (see, e.g., Davis, 1997; Kendall, 2000; Mayer, 2000; Norrander, 2010; Palmer, 1997).   The primary phase pits candidates against other members of the same political party.   In 2016, for example, Donald Trump contested the Republican nomination with Jeb Bush, Ben Carson, Chris Christie, Ted Cruz, Mike Huckabee,

Functional Meta-Analysis

Ron Paul, Marco Rubio, and Scott Walter.   Hillary Clinton ran against Lincoln Chafee, Martin O'Malley, Bernie Sanders, and Jim Webb.   Of course, every candidate differs somewhat from other members of the same party, but greater differences are likely to exist when candidates of different parties clash in the general election.   Fewer policy differences among candidates means fewer opportunities to attack; more policy differences mean more opportunities to attack.   Also, in the primary campaign phase candidates have an incentive to moderate their attacks.   In the primary, every candidate wants the losing opponents to support him or her in the general election.   So for example, if Ted Cruz had won the 2016 Republican primary, he would have wanted Ben Carson, Marco Rubio, Chris Christie, John Kasich, and the others to advocate for him during the general campaign.   Even more importantly, every nominee in the general election wants the support of all party members, including those who preferred a different candidate during the primary.   Both of these considerations (support from other candidates, support from other candidates' partisans) provide a reason to moderate attacks in the primary, so as not to offend other candidates or the other candidates' supporters.   This constraint does not exist in the general election campaign.

> H6. More attacks, and fewer acclaims, will be used in general election messages than in primary messages.

Benoit (2014a) isolated presidential candidates who won their party's nomination and who therefore deployed both primary TV spots and general ads: 21 of the 22 candidates acclaimed more, and attacked less, in their primary ads than they did in their general spots.

Another difference between primary and general elections is that generally candidates are less well-known in the primary than the general election.   In 2016, for example, relatively few people knew Ben Carson and his issue positions.   The same can be said for other candidates such as John Kasich, Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio and Bernie Sanders.   The candidates' need to introduce themselves in the primary is a reason to stress character in that phase.   Furthermore, as noted earlier, fewer policy differences exist between members of the same party (in the primary) than between nominees from different political parties.   It is easier for candidates to differentiate themselves from candidates of the other party than candidates of the same political party.

> H7. General campaign messages will discuss policy more, and character less, than primary election messages.

Data comparing TV spots from primary and general campaigns confirm this prediction.   When looking exclusively at presidential candidates who ran spots in both phases of the campaign, 20 of 22 candidates' ads were consistent with this prediction (Benoit, 2014a).

Functional Theory offers predictions about the forms of policy and character (in addition to the predictions about incumbency and past deeds, incumbency and future plans).   It is easier to for a candidate to embrace (acclaim) general goals and ideals than to reject them (attack).   For instance, what candidate would oppose reducing inflation or keeping America safe?   Similarly,

candidates are less likely to attack than acclaim when discussing ideals: It is difficult to criticize values and principles such as freedom, equal opportunity, or justice. This consideration leads to two hypotheses.

H8. When discussing general goals, candidates will acclaim more than they attack.

H9. When discussing ideals, candidates will acclaim more than they attack.

The next prediction proposed here contrasts two forms of policy: future plans (means) and general goals (ends). It is more difficult to attack general goals than future plans. For example, candidates might agree that we should reduce taxes (a goal) but disagree about how to achieve this end (across the board tax cuts or targeted reductions, and, if the latter, which programs should be targeted for reduction?). This consideration may incline candidates to be somewhat vague: The more details a candidate provides about policy, the easier it for opponents to attack.

H10. Acclaims will be used more often to discuss general goals than future plans; attacks will be more common when candidates address future plans than when they discuss general goals.

Acclaims should be more common than attacks when discussing both of these two forms of policy; however, attacks should be more difficult to make against general goals than future plans.

An important variable in the process of communication is the source. Kaid and Johnston (2001) reported that ads that feature candidates themselves speaking used fewer attacks than spots featuring anonymous announcers or surrogate speakers. Franz, Freedman, Goldstein, and Ridout (2008) found that candidate-sponsored advertisements included fewer attacks than those from Interest groups and political party ads (see also Benoit, 2014b; or Sullivan & Sapir, 2012). The idea here is that attacks can create backlash from voters who detest mudslinging. Candidates do make attacks, but they prefer to have other sources produce most of the attacks. Hopefully, if a backlash from attacks occurs with some voters, it will damage the surrogate sources more than the candidate. Accordingly, Functional Theory predicts that

H11. Candidates use more acclaims, and fewer attacks, than other sources.

It is important to note that Functional Theory's predictions are not laws but reasons. For example, it does not hold that acclaims *must* outnumber attacks, just that candidates have reasons to acclaim more than they attack. Individual candidates can choose to attack more than they acclaim. The same is true of other predictions (e.g., candidates have reasons to discuss policy more than character, but Functional Theory does not assert that they *must* do so).

Functional Theory, particularly as applied to political leaders' debates, has generated criticism. Isotalus and Aarnio (2006) argue that this theory "seems to be more appropriate for a two-party system but it is of a limited value for a multi-party system" (p. 64). However, Functional Theory has been successfully applied to political leaders' debates in several multi-party

systems: Australia 2013 (Benoit & Benoit-Bryan, 2015); Canada 2006 (Benoit & Henson, 2007) and 2011 (Benoit, 2011); Northern Ireland 2010 (Benoit & Benoit-Bryan, 2014b); Scotland 2010 (Benoit & Benoit-Bryan, 2014b), South Korea 2002 (Lee & Benoit, 2005), 1997 (Choi & Benoit, 2009), and 2002 (Choi & Benoit, 2009); the United Kingdom (Benoit & Benoit-Bryan, 2013); and Wales 2010 (Benoit & Benoit-Bryan, 2014b).   This work focuses on leaders' debates; we do not know whether analyses other messages such as TV spots would confirm these data.   Some research (e.g., Dudek & Partcaz, 2009; Hrbkova & Zagrapan, 2014) provides only partial support for Functional Theory's predictions; it is possible that this inconsistency stems in part from differences in culture or from other scholars' failure to use an extensive codebook, as does Functional research.   This could also mean that the inconsistent data is less reliable than the data employed here.

This analysis used the correlation coefficient *r* as opposed to other measures of effect size (e.g., Cohen's *d*; see Hunter & Schmidt, 1990, 2004).   Two corrections were made to the effect sizes.   First, the effect sizes were corrected for measurement error by using the reliability for each variable for each study.   After this step, sampling error was corrected by weighting the average overall effect size by the number of subjects in the study.   Hunter and Schmidt (1990) noted that if the population correlation is assumed to be consistent across all studies then "the best estimate of that correlation is not the simple mean across studies but a weighted average in which each correlation is weighted by the number of persons in that study" (p. 100).   All things being equal, studies with larger sample sizes provide a better estimate of the population parameter being measured and deserve to be weighted more than studies with smaller sample sizes.

Data

This meta-analysis employs data from many sources.   Table 1 describes the sample.   The data are taken from content analysis of many candidates, multiple campaigns (years), multiple media, different offices, and messages from the U.S. and other countries.   The search for studies began with Louden's (2016) bibliography of publications on election campaigns.   An Internet search was conducted, using the search term "Functional Theory" combined with other terms: "debates," "television spots," "television advertising," "television commercials," "announcement speeches," "acceptance addresses," "acceptance speeches," "webpages," "brochures," "direct mail," and "pamphlets."   Google Scholar was also employed to locate publications that cite Functional Theory publications (Benoit, 2007; Benoit et al., 1999, 2008; Benoit, Brazeal, & Airne, 2007; Benoit & Klyukovski, 2006; Benoit & Sheafer, 2006; Benoit & Stein, 2005; Brazeal & Benoit, 2006).   Each time a pertinent publication was located, the references were examined to locate additional studies.   Studies had to report the *n* and the effect size (or a statistic that could be converted into an effect size) to be included in the sample.   Some studies provided data for only some of the predictions (e.g., many studies reported no data on primary campaign messages).   In only one case did two studies report the same data.   Brazeal and Benoit (2001) analyzed

Benoit

non-presidential TV spots from 1986-2000.   Brazeal and Benoit (2006) extended that study, supplementing the sample of 1986-2000 with ads broadcast in 1980, 1982, 1984, 2002, and 2004. Because the second study includes all of the data from Brazeal and Benoit (2001) along with "new" data, only data reported in Brazeal and Benoit (2006) were included in the meta-analysis.

A few studies (e.g., Dudek & Partcaz, 2009; Hrbkova & Zagrapan, 2014; Isotalus, 2011) were not included in the sample because they did not report reliability.   The effect size (r) from each hypothesis was corrected for measurement error (reliability) and weighted by sample size: A weighted mean effect size was calculated for each hypothesis and a confidence interval was constructed to test the significance of this weighted mean effect size.

It is important to distinguish the three different ns reported here; one reason this is important is that significance levels are sensitive to sample size.   For example, consider H1 on the functions of messages.   One message form used to test H1 was primary TV spots; Table 1 reports an n of 1516, the number of different primary TV spots that were content analyzed in this sample. The n used to calculate the r for primary TV ads in H2 is the number of themes coded for these spots, 7952 (reported in Table 2).   Combining all message forms, the total n of messages used to test H1 is 10,947 (10,947 primary and general TV spots, primary and general debates, etc.); the total n of themes in these studies is 184,955.   These two ns provide a high degree of confidence in the rs calculated for each message form.   However, the third n, used to calculate confidence intervals to testing the significance of H1, is the number of *message forms* in the sample of *r*s, which is 16 for this hypothesis (announcements, acceptances, primary and general brochures, primary and general spots, primary and general debates, vice presidential debates, primary and general webpages, non-presidential spots and debates, mayoral webpages, non-US debates, and Mexican spots).   This means that, when a significant result is reported for a meta-analysis, that significance is not a consequence of the large sample of spots (or other messages) or the large number of themes coded in this research.

Because all the tests reported here concerned predictions, one-sided confidence intervals of .05 (calculated employing the *standard deviations* of the corrected, weighted effect sizes) were used for significance testing.   Significant effect sizes were tested for homogeneity of variance: All significant effect sizes in this meta-analysis had heterogeneous variance.   This is not surprising

Table 1. *Sample of Messages in the Meta-Analysis*

Message Form	Years (or countries)	Number of Messages
Announcement Speeches	1960-2012	114
Primary TV Spots	1952-2012	1516
Primary Debates	1948, 1960, 1968, 1972, 1980-2012	173

Functional Meta-Analysis

Primary Brochures	1948-2004	270
Candidate Primary Webpages	2000, 2004, 2008	38
Acceptance Addresses	1952-2012	64
General TV Spots	1952-2012	1362
General Debates	1960, 1976-2012	29
Vice Presidential Debates	1976, 1984-2012	9
General Brochures	1948-2004	445
Candidate General Webpages	2000, 2004, 2008	6
Candidate General Facebook	2008, 2012	4
Gubernatorial Debates	1994-2004	15
Gubernatorial TV Spots	1974-2008	1347
Senate Debates	1998-2006	21
Senate TV Spots	1980-2008	1586
House TV Spots	1980-2008	782
Non-Presidential Primary Debates	2002-2004	4
Mayoral Debates	2005-2007	10
Mayoral candidate webpages	2013	13
Non-U.S. Debates	Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Israel, South Korea, Spain, Taiwan, Ukraine, UK	18
Mexican TV Spots	2006-2015	3125
Total		10951

given Functional Theory's assumption that candidates choose the content of their messages. No obvious variable accounted for heterogeneity of variance for any hypothesis.

The data reported here are highly reliable. Inter-coder reliability in these studies was calculated using Cohen's (1960) κ, which controls for agreement by chance. For example, in Benoit et al. (2003) five co-authors had κs of .79-1.0 for function, .76-.98 for topic, .91-1.0 for forms of policy, and .78-1.0 for forms of character. Benoit et al. (2007) with six co-authors also had high inter-coder reliability, with κs of .82-1.0 for function, .82-.97 for topic, .75-1.0 for forms of policy,

Benoit

and .76-.92 for forms of character.   Landis and Koch (1977) explain that values of *kappa* from 0.61-0.80 represent "substantial" agreement and values from 0.81 to 1.0 reflect "almost perfect" inter-coder reliability (p. 165).   This high level of reliability may stem from the detailed codebook and coding rules developed to implement Functional Theory.

Validity can be difficult to establish.   However, some evidence supports the validity of these data.   Geer (2006) argued that his data were valid because his measure of negativity in TV spots "correlates. . . a staggering 0.97 with Benoit's" measure of attacks (p. 36).   His data, in turn, support the validity of the data reported here.

The *r*s for each message form were corrected for measurement error using the reliability coefficient (κ) for that data.   Then each corrected *r* was weighted by sample size for a given study. The *sd* of the corrected, weighted *r*s were used to construct confidence intervals.   If the confidence interval includes zero, the corrected weighted *r* was not significant.   If the confidence interval did not include zero, the effect size was significant.

Results

The first hypothesis held that acclaims would be more common than attacks in candidate election discourse. Sixteen message forms with a combined *n* of 184,955 themes were used for this analysis.   The weighted mean effect size corrected for measurement error *r* was .52, which was significant.   Cohen (1992) explains that a *Pearson r* of around .1 constitutes a small effect size, around .3 is a medium effect size, and over .5 is a large effect size, so this finding represents a large effect size. See Table 2 for these data.

Table 2. *Functions of Political Campaign Messages*

Message	Acclaims	Attacks	χ^2	*n*	corrected *r*
Announcement Speeches	5418 (76%)	1718 (24%)	1917.4	7136	.55
Acceptance Addresses	2652 (76%)	821 (24%)	964.26	3473	.6
Primary Brochures	8207 (84%)	1526 (16%)	4586.02	9733	.73
General Brochures	8149 (71%)	3398 (29%)	1953.98	11547	.43
Primary Spots	5734 (72%)	2218 (28%)	1553.72	7952	.47
General Spots	3851 (55%)	3174 (45%)	65.04	7025	.1
Primary Debates	25428 (69%)	11231 (31%)	5497.82	36659	.43
General Debates	5519 (62%)	3332 (38%)	539.9	8851	.27
Primary Webpages	14308 (94%)	972 (6%)	11637.58	15280	.95

Functional Meta-Analysis

General Webpages	12110 (91%)	1154 (9%)	9047.96	13264	.89
Vice Presidential Debates	2912 (58%)	2137 (42%)	118.66	5049	.16
Non-Presidential Spots	15415 (70%)	6552 (30%)	3575.14	21967	.43
Non-Presidential Debates	7361 (70%)	3121 (30%)	1715.09	10,482	.40
Mayoral Webpages	5628 (93%)	418 (7%)	4489.6	6046	.97
Non-U.S. Debates	10978 (60%)	7298 (40%)	740.6	18276	.22
Mexican TV Spots	12985 (87%)	1888 (13%)	8798.49	14873	.75
Total *n*	weighted corrected *r*	*sd*			
185,865	.52	.27	$p < .05$		

Hypothesis 2 expected that candidates for elective office would discuss policy more often than character.   This analysis employed data from 16 message forms with a combined *n* of 182,353.   The weighted mean corrected effect size was .39, which was significant, a moderate effect size.   These data are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3. *Topics of Political Campaign Messages*

Message	Policy	Character	χ^2	*n*	corrected *r*
Announcement Speeches	3833 (54%)	3303 (46%)	39.22	7136	.08
Acceptance Addresses	1887 (54%)	1586 (46%)	25.92	3473	.15
Primary Brochures	6020 (62%)	3626 (38%)	594.16	9646	.3
General Brochures	8848 (77%)	2699 (23%)	3273.4	11547	.6
Primary Spots	4253 (54%)	3563 (46%)	60.74	7816	.1
General Spots	4540 (61%)	2894 (39%)	364.45	7434	.23
Primary Debates	25226 (69%)	11166 (31%)	5431.38	36392	.48
General Debates	6567 (74%)	2284 (26%)	2072.58	8851	.59
Primary Webpages	9658 (73%)	3485 (37%)	2898.4	13143	.54
General Webpages	10779 (81%)	2474 (19%)	5204.33	13253	.73

Benoit

Vice Presidential Debates	3455 (68%)	1597 (32%)	682.6	5052	.41
Non-Presidential Spots	12071 (56%)	9644 (44%)	271.04	21715	.12
Non-Presidential Debates	7366 (71%)	3042 (29%)	1796.4	10408	.44
Mayoral Webpages	4277 (71%)	1769 (29%)	1039.54	6046	.45
Non-U.S. Debates	13515 (74%)	4681 (26%)	4287.86	18196	.54
Mexican TV Spots	2341 (36%)	4256 (64%)	ns	6497	-.31
Total *n*	weighted corrected *r*	*sd*			
186,605	.39	.27	$p < .05$		

The third prediction anticipated that incumbents would acclaim more, and attack less, than challengers.   This analysis included nine message forms with a combined *n* of 70,160.   The weighted effect size corrected for measurement error was .14, which was not statistically significant.   These data are reported in Table 4.

Table 4. *Functions of Incumbents versus Challengers in Political Campaign Messages*

	Acclaims	Attacks	χ^2	*n*	corrected *r*
Acceptance Addresses					
Incumbents	**1534 (83%)**	317 (17%)	93.15	3473	.18
Challengers	1118 (68%)	**504 (31%)**			
Brochures					
Incumbents	**4152 (77%)**	1218 (23%)	222.82	11547	.15
Challengers	3997 (65%)	**2180 (35%)**			
US Presidential Spots					
Incumbents	**2078 (59%)**	1471 (41%)	39.36	7025	.07
Challengers	1773 (51%)	**1700 (49%)**			
US Presidential Debates					
Incumbents	**2458 (70%)**	1031 (30%)	197.79	7758	.18
Challengers	2342 (55%)	**1927 (45%)**			
US Vice Presidential Debates					
Incumbents	**1568 (63%)**	915 (37%)	24.31	4965	.07

Functional Meta-Analysis

Challengers	1397 (56%)	**1085 (44%)**			
Non-Presidential Spots					
Incumbents	**6464 (83%)**	1289 (17%)	1472.72	18078	.31
Challengers	5831 (57%)	**4404 (43%)**			
US Non-Presidential Debates					
Incumbents	**1982 (75%)**	662 (25%)	137.15	5594	.17
Challengers	1777 (60%)	**1173 (40%)**			
Mayoral Webpages					
Incumbents	819 (100%)	2 (0.4%)	419.81	1777	.96
Challengers	700 (73%)	256 (27%)			
Non-US Debates					
Incumbents	**2634 (67%)**	1288 (33%)	158.93	9943	.14
Challengers	3279 (52%)	**2742 (43%)**			
Total *n*	weighted corrected *r*	*sd*			
70,160	.14	.3	*ns*		

The next hypothesis (H4) also contrasted messages from incumbents and challengers but limited its scope to comments about the two candidates' records in office (past deeds). It is based on nine message forms with a combined *n* of 20,937. The relationship between function and incumbency here was significant: The corrected weighted mean *r* was .59, another large effect size. These data can be found in Table 5.

Table 5. *Functions of Incumbents versus Challengers on Past Deeds in Political Campaign Messages*

	Acclaims	Attacks	χ^2	*n*	corrected *r*
Acceptance Addresses					
Incumbents	**321 (74%)**	110 (26%)	241.98	749	.62
Challengers	54 (17%)	**264 (83%)**			
Brochures					

Benoit

Incumbents	**1994 (76%)**	613 (24%)	927.38	4615	.59
Challengers	637 (32%)	**1371 (68%)**			
Spots					
Incumbents	**542 (49%)**	568 (51%)	192.66	2257	.32
Challengers	241 (21%)	**906 (79%)**			
Debates					
Incumbents	**799 (69%)**	362 (31%)	695.43	2556	.6
Challengers	242 (17%)	**1153 (83%)**			
Vice Presidential Debates					
Incumbents	**514 (62%)**	318 (38%)	354.38	1831	.48
Challengers	188 (19%)	**811 (81%)**			
Non-Presidential Spots					
Incumbents	**1582 (75%)**	539 (25%)	703.55	3778	.48
Challengers	520 (31%)	**1137 (69%)**			
Non-Presidential Debates					
Incumbents	**716 (76%)**	229 (24%)	452.12	1836	.55
Challengers	233 (26%)	**658 (74%)**			
Mayoral Webpages					
Incumbents	445 (100%)	2 (0.4%)	419.81	586	.88

Functional Meta-Analysis

Challengers	30 (22%)	109 (78%)			
Non-US Debates					
Incumbents	**656 (63%)**	383 (37%)	474.16	2729	.47
Challengers	365 (22%)	**1325 (78%)**			
Total *n*	weighted corrected *r*	*sd*			
20,937	.59	.15	*p* < .05		

The fifth hypothesis contrasts the function of utterances from incumbents versus challengers that address future plans (specific policy proposals). When talking about their future plans, challengers are more likely to acclaim, and less likely to attack, than incumbents. Data from eight message forms with a combined *n* of 7,692 contributed to this analysis. The weighted effect size corrected for measurement error here is .09, which was not significant. See Table 6.

Table 6. *Functions of Incumbents versus Challengers on Future Plans in Political Campaign Messages*

	Acclaims	Attacks	χ^2	*n*	corrected *r*
Acceptance Addresses					
Incumbents	108 (73%)	**40 (27%)**	8.59	226	.22
Challengers	**70 (90%)**	8 (10%)			
Brochures					
Incumbents	613 (71%)	**249 (29%)**	8.53	1344	.1
Challengers	**378 (78%)**	104 (22%)			
US Presidential Spots					
Incumbents	180 (42%)	**253 (58%)**	10.91	911	.12
Challengers	**251 (53%)**	227 (47%)			
US Presidential Debates					
Incumbents	377 (61%)	**239 (39%)**	19.78	1293	.14
Challengers	**493 (73%)**	184 (27%)			

Benoit

US Vice Presidential Debates

	Acclaims	Attacks	χ²	n	corrected r
US Vice Presidential Debates					
Incumbents	70 (39%)	**109 (61%)**	7.29	335	.16
Challengers	**84 (54%)**	72 (46%)			
Non-Presidential Spots					
Incumbents	187 (68%)	**89 (32%)**	151.29	1096	.42
Challengers	**781 (81%)**	39 (19%)			
Non-Presidential Debates					
Incumbents	24 (55%)	**20 (45%)**	4.27	94	.23
Challengers	**68 (72%)**	26 (28%)			
Mayoral Webpages					
Incumbents	37 (100%)	0	$p = .2$†		-0.1
Challengers	135 (95%)	7 (5%)			
Non-US Debates					
Incumbents	646 (68%)	**298 (32%)**	15.6	2393	.09
Challengers	**1098 (76%)**	351 (24%)			

Total *n*	weighted *r*	*sd*	
7,692	.09	.13	*ns*

†*Fisher's Exact Probability Test*.

Hypotheses six and seven contrasted the content of primary versus general campaign messages.   H6 addressed the functions of these two groups of messages.   Six message forms with a combined *n* of 122,567 provided data for this analysis.   The corrected weighted mean effect size is .1, which is significant, but a small effect size.   See Table 7 for these data.

Table 7. *Functions of Primary versus General Political Campaign Messages*

	Acclaims	Attacks	χ^2	n	corrected r
Brochures					
Primary	**8207 (84%)**	1526 (16%)	561.35	21280	.17
General	8149 (71%)	**3398 (29%)**			
Presidential Spots					

Functional Meta-Analysis

			χ^2	n	corrected r
Primary	**5630 (72%)**	2186 (28%)	516.12	15160	.2
General	3983 (54%)	**3361 (46%)**			
Presidential Debates					
Primary	**21901 (66%)**	9666 (29%)	161.05	39325	.07
General	4800 (57%)	**2958 (35%)**			
Webpages					
Primary	**14308 (94%)**	972 (6%)	56.35	28544	.04
General	12110 (91%)	**1154 (9%)**			
Non-Presidential Spots					
Primary	**3024 (73%)**	1115 (27%)	27.28	8476	.06
General	2944 (69%)	**1393 (31%)**			
Non-Presidential Debates					
Primary	**699 (71%)**	211 (22%)	98.63	9871	.11
General	5377 (58%)	**3584 (37%)**			
Total n	weighted corrected r	sd			
122,567	.1	.06	$p < .05$		

Hypothesis seven concerned the topics of primary versus general campaign message. The analysis was based on data from six message forms with an n of 124,308. The weighted mean effect size corrected for measurement error was .16, a significant but small relationship. These data are reported in Table 8.

Table 8. *Topics of Primary versus General Political Campaign Messages*

	Policy	Character	χ^2	n	corrected r
Brochures					
Primary	6020 (62%)	**3626 (38%)**	507.33	21193	.16
General	**8848 (77%)**	2699 (23%)			
Presidential Spots					

Benoit

Primary	4253 (54%)	**3563 (46%)**	69.16	15259	.08
General	**4540 (61%)**	2894 (39%)			
Presidential Debates					
Primary	25226 (69%)	**11166 (31%)**	81.08	45243	.04
General	**6567 (74%)**	2284 (26%)			
Webpages					
Primary	9658 (73%)	**3485 (27%)**	233.31	26394	.1
General	**10779 (81%)**	2472 (19%)			
Non-Presidential Spots					
Primary	1840 (48%)	**1979 (52%)**	73.09	7422	.11
General	**2093 (58%)**	1510 (42%)			
Non-Presidential Debates					
Primary	531 (60%)	**349 (40%)**	52.45	8797	.09
General	**5703 (72%)**	2214 (28%)			
Total *n*	weighted corrected *r*	*sd*			
124,308	.16	.04	*p* < .05		

H8 limited its analysis to candidates' utterances on general goals. Data were obtained from 16 studies which had a sample size of 58,607. The corrected weighted mean *r* was .87 and this result was statistically significant. According to Cohen (1992) this represents a large effect. See Table 9 for these data.

Table 9. *Functions of General Goals in Political Campaign Messages*

Message	Acclaims	Attacks	χ^2	*n*	corrected *r*
Announcement Speeches	**1829 (92%)**	153 (8%)	1417.24	1982	.92
Acceptance Addresses	**649 (92%)**	56 (8%)	498.79	705	.91
Primary Brochures	**2886 (95%)**	147 (5%)	2473.5	3033	.99
General Brochures	**2903 (88%)**	399 (12%)	1898.85	3302	.9
Primary TV Spots	**1776 (90%)**	199 (10%)	1259.2	1975	.91

General TV Spots	**1129 (82%)**	243 (18%)	572.15	1372	.71
Primary Debates	**14867 (91%)**	1468 (9%)	10981.03	16325	.96
General Debates	**2041 (85%)**	360 (15%)	1176.91	2401	.8
Primary Webpages	**4902 (98%)**	103 (2%)	4599.56	5005	.99
General Webpages	**3559 (96%)**	1154 (4%)	1226.22	4713	.57
VP Debates	**1042 (81%)**	247 (19%)	490.32	1289	.68
Non-Presidential Spots	**1922 (88%)**	264 (12%)	1257.53	2186	.85
Non-Presidential Debates	**3172 (88%)**	427 (12%)	2093.64	3599	.84
Mayoral Webpages	**1914 (98%)**	36 (2%)	1808.66	1950	.99
Non-U.S. Debates	**2674 (84%)**	504 (16%)	1481.72	3178	.81
Mexican TV Spots	**3736 (83%)**	790 (17%)	1917.57	4526	.73
Total *n*	weighted corrected *r*	*sd*		
58,607	.87	.12	$p < .05$	

The next prediction (H9) limited its analysis to statements about ideals. Sixteen message forms with a combined *n* of 17,843 produced a weighted corrected mean effect size of .77, another large effect. This was significant. These data are displayed in Table 10.

Table 10. *Functions of Ideals in Political Campaign Messages*

Message	Acclaims	Attacks	χ^2	*n*	corrected *r*
Announcement Speeches	**1415 (91%)**	134 (9%)	1059.37	1549	.95
Acceptance Addresses	**646 (85%)**	114 (15%)	512.82	695	.99
Primary Brochures	**528 (92%)**	49 (8%)	397.64	577	.99
General Brochures	**446 (81%)**	106 (19%)	209.42	552	.7
Primary TV Spots	**652 (89%)**	81 (11%)	444.8	733	.84
General TV Spots	**386 (78%)**	108 (22%)	156.45	494	.63
Primary Debates	**3370 (88%)**	443 (12%)	1230.35	2713	.78
General Debates	**534 (82%)**	120 (18%)	262.07	654	.67
Primary Webpages	**1819 (95%)**	86 (5%)	1574.72	1905	.99

Benoit

General Webpages	**922 (97%)**	32 (3%)	828.42	954	.94
Vice Presidential Debates	**169 (78%)**	49 (22%)	66.06	218	.62
Non-Presidential Spots	**573 (83%)**	114 (17%)	306.67	687	.74
Non-Presidential Debates	**351 (85%)**	62 (15%)	202.23	413	.81
Mayoral Webpages	**630 (97%)**	19 (3%)	575.22	649	.96
Non-U.S. Debates	**544 (84%)**	102 (16%)	302.42	646	.77
Mexican TV Spots	**3305 (95%)**	164 (5%)	2844.1	3469	.99
Total *n*	weighted corrected *r*	*sd*			
17,843	.77	.14	*p* < .05		

The eighth prediction contrasted the functions of candidate utterances on future plans (specific plans, means) versus general goals (ends).   Sixteen messages forms contributed data representing an *n* of 72,770.   The corrected weighted mean effect size obtained was .16, which was significant but small.   Table 11 displays these data.

Table 11. *Functions of Future Plans versus General Goals in Political Campaign Messages*

	Acclaims	Attacks	χ^2	*n*	corrected *r*
Announcement Speeches					
Future Plans	392 (89%)	**48 (11%)**	4.81	2422	.04
General Goals	**1829 (92%)**	153 (8%)			
Acceptance Addresses					
Future Plans	178 (79%)	**48 (21%)**	30.49	931	.2
General Goals	**649 (92%)**	56 (8%)			
Primary Brochures					
Future Plans	505 (89%)	**64 (11%)**	35.6	3602	.11
General Goals	**2886 (95%)**	147 (5%)			
General Brochures					
Future Plans	755 (81%)	**176 (19%)**	28.78	4233	.1
General Goals	**2903 (88%)**	399 (12%)			

Functional Meta-Analysis

Presidential Primary Spots					
Future Plans	404 (72%)	**154 (28%)**	111.38	2533	.24
General Goals	**1776 (90%)**	199 (10%)			
Presidential Spots					
Future Plans	431 (47%)	**480 (53%)**	309.53	2283	.4
General Goals	**1129 (82%)**	243 (18%)			
Presidential Primary Debates					
Future Plans	2581 (72%)	**1016 (28%)**	1002.25	19932	.26
General Goals	**14867 (91%)**	1468 (9%)			
US Presidential Debates					
Future Plans	870 (67%)	**423 (33%)**	158	3694	.24
General Goals	**2041 (85%)**	360 (15%)			
Primary Webpages					
Future Plans	3049 (95%)	**144 (5%)**	40.11	8198	.08
General Goals	**4902 (98%)**	103 (2%)			
General Webpages					
Future Plans	2334 (96%)	94 (4%)	.34	6142	-.01
General Goals	3559 (96%)	155 (4%)			
VP Debates					
Future Plans	154 (46%)	**181 (54%)**	166.55	1624	.32
General Goals	**1042 (81%)**	247 (19%)			
Non-Presidential Debates					
Future Plans	444 (74%)	**158 (26%)**	88.99	4201	.16
General Goals	**3172 (88%)**	427 (12%)			
Non-Presidential Spots					
Future Plans	642 (72%)	**245 (28%)**	134.99	3684	.21
General Goals	**2476 (89%)**	321 (11%)			

Benoit

Mayoral Webpages

Future Plans	1094 (99%)	9 (1%)	5.15	3053	-0.04
General Goals	1914 (98%)	36 (2%)			

Non-US Debates

Future Plans	1037 (72%)	**399 (28%)**	89.38	4614	.16
General Goals	**2674 (84%)**	504 (16%)			

Mexican TV Spots

Future Plans	178 (91%)	17 (9%)	10.7	4721	.06
General Goals	3736 (83%)	790 (17%)			

Total *n*	weighted corrected *r*	*sd*		
72,770	.16	.12	*p* < .05	

The final hypothesis anticipated that campaign messages from candidates have more acclaims and fewer attacks than those from other sources (e.g., surrogates, outside groups). Eleven unique datasets with a combined *n* of 21,632 yielded a weighted corrected effect size of .19, which was significant but small.

Table 12. *Functions and Source of Campaign Message*

	Acclaims	Attacks	χ^2	*n*	corrected *r*
2000 Presidential					
Candidate	**221 (73%)**	79 (26%)	63.3	4195	$\varphi = .35$
Party	107 (40%)	**157 (59%)**			
2004 President					
Candidate	**86 (50%)**	86 (50%)	57.8	282	$\varphi = .52$
Third-Party	7 (6%)	**103 (94%)**			
2012 Presidential					
Candidates	**223 (31%)**	492 (69%)	40.04	1325	$\varphi = .17$
Parties	99 (16%)	**511 (84%)**			
2016 Presidential Primary					

Functional Meta-Analysis

Candidates	**1016 (77%)**	295 (23%)	28.79	2181	$\varphi = .12$
PACs	584 (67%)	**286 (33%)**			
2016 Presidential General					
Candidates	**136 (46%)**	160 (54%)	45.58	456	$\varphi = .32$
PACs	23 (14%)	**137 (86%)**			
1960-1996 Convention Speeches					
Acceptances	**1359 (74%)**	480 (26%)	150.39	2776	$\varphi = .23$
Keynotes	474 (51%)	**463 (49%)**			
2000 Senate					
Candidate	**927 (78%)**	255 (22%)	196.12	1414	$\varphi = .38$
Party	76 (32%)	**156 (67%)**			
2000 House					
Candidate	**318 (70%)**	135 (30%)	46.65	530	$\varphi = .31$
Party	23 (30%)	**54 (70%)**			
2004 Non-President					
Candidate	**4076 (74%)**	1648 (26%)	152.04	6080	$\varphi = .17$
Party + PAC	143 (40%)	213 (60%)			
2008 Senate + Governor					
Candidate	**883 (66%)**	450 (34%	19.49	1456	$\varphi = .13$
Party	57 (46%)	**66 (54%)**			
2006-2015 Mexican TV Spots					
Candidate	**12985 (87%)**	1888 (13%)	221.88	17284	$\varphi = .13$
Party	1829 (76%)	**582 (24%)**			
Total *n*	weighted corrected *r*	*sd*			
21,632	.19	.13	$p < .05$		

Discussion and Conclusion

Benoit

The Functional Theory of Political Campaign Discourse was developed to help understand certain elements (functions, topics) of candidate election messages.   It has been employed to analyze election campaign messages from many candidates, many years, multiple offices, in the U.S. and other countries.

This meta-analysis investigated 11 of Functional Theory's predictions, 9 of which were confirmed.   Acclaims are more common than attacks (this finding has a moderate effect size).   Attacks are risky because many voters report that they do not like mudslinging; a backlash against a candidate can ensue after that candidate attacks an opponent. Candidates for elective office discuss policy more than character (another moderate effect size).   Some voters view political leaders (such as presidents, prime ministers, chancellors, senators, governors, mayors) as personal role models; however, it seems that more voters see these leaders as policy makers.   Perhaps responding to voter preferences, most candidates discuss policy more than character.   Candidates' record in office (past deeds) is an important variable in campaigns: Both incumbents and challengers discussed the incumbent's record more than they talked about the challenger's record (this result was a moderate effect size).   Of course, incumbents acclaim when talking about their record whereas challengers attack when discussing the incumbent's record.   Messages from candidates feature fewer attacks than those from others.

Election messages employed in the primary phase of a campaign differ from those crafted for the general campaign.   Primary messages acclaim more and attack less than general messages; general campaign messages discuss policy more, and character less, than primary elections (these are both small effect sizes).   For example, in general, more policy differences (opportunities to attack) occur more between candidates of different political parties (general campaigns) than between candidates from the same party.   Furthermore, candidates are less well-known in the primary than the general campaign, encouraging more character discussion in the primary than the general campaign.   Both general goals (e.g., creating more jobs) and ideals (freedom) are easier to acclaim than to attack (these values represent large effect sizes).   It is important to note that bias could influence interpretation of these results.

The data show that messages from candidates use more acclaims and fewer attacks than messages from other kinds of sources (political action committees and political parties; acceptance addresses and convention keynotes).   The weighted corrected effect size was small.

Two predictions were not confirmed: that incumbents emphasize different functions than challengers (H3), that challengers acclaim more and attack less than incumbents when discussing future plans (H5).   In the case of H3, the χ^2 for every message form was significant but the effect sizes varied dramatically (from $r = .07$ to $r = .96$).   This means that the *standard deviation* (used to construct the confidence interval) was very large.   It is worth noting that the data from mayoral webpages can be considered an outlier: The effect size for these messages, 97, was substantially higher than the effect sizes for the other messages (.07-.31), which contributed to the large

Functional Meta-Analysis

standard deviation.   Functional Theory's prediction about incumbency and use of future plans was not upheld, perhaps because incumbents acclaimed more on future plans than expected by the theory (58% of incumbents' remarks on future plans were acclaims).   As noted above, Functional Theory does not make assertions about what candidates *must* say in their messages: Candidates and their advisors decide what to discuss in their messages; these hypotheses embody reasons rather than causes.   It is also possible that bias influenced interpretation of the data.

Page | 38

A further possible explanation for the failure to confirm prediction H3 can be found in cross pressures acting on these candidates..   H4 (incumbency and past deeds) and H5 (incumbency and future plans) show that incumbents and challengers are subject to cross pressures.   Compared with challengers, incumbents *acclaim more* (71% to 23%) and *attack less* (29% to 73%) on past deeds; incumbents *attack more* (42% to 23%) and *acclaim less* (58% to 77%) on future plans.   Even though the latter relationship was not significant, it reflects a cross pressure on candidates.   These two factors incline candidates in opposite ways when it comes to the functions of their campaign messages.

A focus on corrected, weighted effect sizes provides greater insight than relying just on statistical significance.   Relying just on significance testing, we know that nine predictions were confirmed and two were not.   However, considering effect size, we can seee that four predictions had small effect sizes (functions of primary vs. general, topics of primary vs. general, functions of future plans vs. general goals, and source of utterance), one relationship had a moderate effect sice (topics), and four findings had large effect sizes (functions, functions of past deeds for incumbents vs. challengers, functions of general goals, and functions of ideals).

The information provided by effect sizes allows greater understanding of these relationships than just reporting significance.

Political communication scholars should continue to investigate other theories: Functional Theory does not pretend to answer every question about election messages: For example, it does not analyze metaphors or visual elements of election messages. It does discuss such ideas as functions and topics, incumbency, and campaign phase.   This theory has strong predictive value for some elements of election campaign messages; further research here would be useful. Campaign messages using other message forms (e.g., candidate Facebook pages or tweets), other elective offices (e.g., U.S. House of Representatives debates), and other countries could prove useful.   Some research has investigated television spots from other countries (see, e.g., Benoit, 2014a) but only political leaders' debates outside the U.S. have received sustained attention from Functional Theory.   Further research can also provide additional data on trends over time because the content of election messages could shift over time.   For example, Benoit and Compton (2016) report that presidential TV spots had a sharp uptick in attacks in 2008 and 2012, compared with earlier campaigns.   Only longitudinal research can determine whether shifts in functions or topics have occurred over time.   Research into the audience effects of functions and topics (e.g.,

Benoit

Reinemann & Maurer, 2005) would be very helpful.   This theory deserves further attention from scholars.

Page | 39

Functional Meta-Analysis

References

*Airne, D., & Benoit, W. L. (2005). Political television advertising in campaign 2000. *Communication Quarterly, 53*, 473-492.

Atkin, C. K. (1977). Effects of campaign advertising and newscasts on children. *Journalism Quarterly, 54*, 503-508.

Atkin, C., & Heald, G. (1976). Effects of political advertising. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 40*, 216-228.

Baker, K. L., & Norpoth, H. (1981). Candidates on television: The 1972 electoral debates in West Germany. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 45*, 329-345.

Banda, K. K., & Windett, J. H. (2016). Negative advertising and the dynamics of candidate support. *Political Behavior, 38*, 747-766.

Basil, M., Schooler, C., & Reeves, B. (1991). Positive and negative political advertising: Effectiveness of ads and perceptions of candidates. In F. Biocca (Ed.), *Television and political advertising* (vol. 1, pp. 245-262). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Becker, L. B., & Doolittle, J. C. (1975). How repetition affects evaluations of and information seeking about candidates. *Journalism Quarterly, 52*, 611-617.

Benoit, W. L. (2003). Topic of presidential campaign discourse and election outcome. *Western Journal of Communication, 67*, 97-112.

Benoit, W. L. (2007). *Communication in political campaigns*. New York: Peter Lang.

*Benoit, W. L. (2011). A Functional analysis of the English language 2011 Canadian Prime Minister debate. *Contemporary Argumentation and Debate, 32*, 45-69.

Benoit, W. L. (2013). Mudslinging: The nature of attacks in political campaigns. In C. Rountree (Ed.), *Venomous speech and other problems in American political discourse* (pp. 129-147). Westport, CT: Praeger.

*Benoit, W. L. (2014a). *A functional analysis of presidential television advertisements* (2nd ed.). Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

*Benoit, W. L. (2014b). A Functional analysis of 2008 and 2012 presidential nomination acceptance addresses, *Speaker & Gavel, 51*, 50-59.

*Benoit, W. L. (2014c). *Political election debates: Informing voters about policy and character*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

*Benoit, W. L., & Airne, D. (2009). A functional analysis of non-presidential TV spots in campaign 2004. *Human Communication, 12*, 91-117.

*Benoit, W. L., & Airne, D. (2013). A functional analysis of non-presidential TV spots in campaign 2002. *Unpublished paper.*

Benoit, W. L., & Benoit-Bryan, J. M. (2013). Debates come to the UK: A Functional analysis of the 2010 British Prime Minister election debates. *Communication Quarterly, 61*, 463-478.

*Benoit, W. L., & Benoit-Bryan, J. M. (2014a). A Functional analysis of the 2010 Australian Prime Minister debate. *Journal of Argumentation in Context, 3*, 153-168.

*Benoit, W. L., & Benoit-Bryan, J. M. (2014b). A Functional analysis of UK debates in Northern

Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. *Western Journal of Communication, 78*, 653-667.

*Benoit, W. L., & Benoit-Bryan, J. M. (2015). A Functional analysis of 2013 Australian member of parliament and prime minister debates. *Studies in Media and Communication, 3*, 1-8.

*Benoit, W. L., Brazeal, L. M., & Airne, D. (2007).   A Functional analysis of televised U.S. Senate and gubernatorial campaign debates. *Argumentation and Advocacy, 44*, 75-89.

*Benoit, W. L., & Compton J. (2016). Functions and topics of 2012 American presidential advertising: An increase in attacks? *Journal of Mass Communication and Journalism, 6*: 297-303.

Benoit, W. L., Compton, J., & Phillips, B. (2013). Newspaper coverage of Prime Minister elections in Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom. *Human Communication, 16*, 201-213.

*Benoit, W.L., Delbert, J., Sudbrock, L. A., & Vogt, C. (2010). Functional analysis of 2008 senate and gubernatorial TV spots. *Human Communication, 13*, 103-125.

Benoit, W. L., Furgerson, J., Seifert, J., & Sargardia, S. (2013). Newspaper coverage of senate, gubernatorial, and mayoral elections. *Human Communication,16*, 215-229.

*Benoit, W. L. & Glantz, M. (2015). A Functional analysis of 2012 United States general election presidential and vice presidential debates.   In C. Bieber & K. Kamps (Eds.), *Die US-präsidentschaftswahl 2012* (pp. 289-306). Wiesboden: Springer.

*Benoit, W. L., Glantz, M., & Rill, L. (2016). Campaigning on the Internet: 2008 presidential general election candidate webpages.   *Unpublished paper*.

Benoit, W. L., Hansen, G. J., & Holbert, R. L. (2004). Presidential campaigns and democracy. *Mass Communication and Society, 7*, 177-190.

Benoit, W. L., Hansen, G. J., & Verser, R. M. (2003). A meta-analysis of the effects of viewing U.S. presidential debates. *Communication Monographs, 70*, 335-350.

*Benoit, W. L., & Hemmer, K. (2007). *A functional analysis of German chancellor debates, 2002 and 2005*. San Francisco: ICA.

Benoit, W.   L., Hemmer, K., & Stein, K. (2010). *New York Times'* coverage of American presidential primary campaigns, 1952-2004. *Human Communication, 13*, 259-280.

*Benoit, W. L., & Henson, J. R. (2006). A functional analysis of non-presidential primary debates. *Speaker & Gavel, 43*, 22-31.

*Benoit, W. L., & Henson, J. R. (2007). A Functional analysis of the 2006 Canadian and 2007 Australian election debates. *Argumentation & Advocacy, 44*, 36-48.

*Benoit, W. L., Henson, J., Davis, C., Glantz, M., Phillips, A., & Rill, L. (2013). Stumping on the Internet: 2008 presidential primary candidate campaign webpages. *Human Communication, 16*, 1-12.

*Benoit, W. L., Henson, J. R., & Maltos, S. (2007). A Functional analysis of mayoral debates. *Contemporary Argumentation and Debate, 28*, 20-37.

*Benoit, W. L., Henson, J., Whalen, S., & Pier, P. M. (2008). "I am a candidate for president": A functional analysis of presidential announcement speeches, 1960-2004. *Speaker & Gavel,*

45, 3-18.

*Benoit, W. L., & Klyukovski, A. A. (2006). A Functional analysis of 2004 Ukrainian presidential debates. *Argumentation, 20*, 209-225.

Benoit, W. L., Leshner, G. M., & Chattopadhyay, S. (2007). A meta-analysis of political advertising. *Human Communication, 10*, 507-522.

*Benoit, W. L., McHale, J. P, Hansen, G. J., Pier, P. M., & McGuire, J. P. (2003). *Campaign 2000: A functional analysis of presidential campaign discourse*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Benoit, W. L., McKinney, M. S., & Holbert, R. L. (2001). Beyond learning and persona: Extending the scope of presidential debate effects. *Communication Monographs, 68*, 259-273.

Benoit, W. L., McKinney, M. S., & Stephenson, M. T. (2002). Effects of watching campaign 2000 presidential primary debates. *Journal of Communication, 52*, 316-331.

*Benoit, W. L., & Sheafer, T. (2006). Functional theory and political discourse: Televised debates in Israel and the United States. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 83*, 281-297.

*Benoit, W. L., & Stein, K. A. (2005). A Functional analysis of presidential direct mail advertising. *Communication Studies, 56*, 203-225.

Benoit, W. L., Stein, K. A., & Hansen, G. J. (2005). *New York Times* coverage of presidential campaigns, 1952-2000. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 82*, 356-376.

*Benoit, W. L., Stein, K. A., McHale, J. P., Chattopadhyay, S., Verser, R., & Price, S. (2007). *Bush versus Kerry: A functional analysis of campaign 2004*. New York: Peter Lang.

Benoit, W. L., & Stephenson, M. T. (2004). Effects of watching a presidential primary debate. *Contemporary Argumentation and Debate, 25*, 1-25.

Benoit, W. L., Webber, D., & Berman, J. (1998). Effects of presidential debate watching and ideology on attitudes and knowledge. *Argumentation and Advocacy, 34*, 163-172.

*Benoit, W. L., & Wells, W. T. (1996). *Candidates in conflict: Persuasive attack and defense in the 1992 presidential debates*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

*Benoit, W. L., Wells, W. T., Pier, P. M., & Blaney, J. R. (1999). Acclaiming, attacking, and defending in presidential nomination convention acceptance addresses, 1960-1996. *Quarterly Journal of Speech, 85*, 247-267.

Blumler, J. G. (2011). Voters' responses to the Prime Minister debates: A rock of (future?) ages. In S. Coleman (Ed.), *Leaders in the living room: The prime ministerial debates of 2010: Evidence, evaluation, and some recommendations* (pp. 35-54). Oxford: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.

Boydson, A. E., Glazier, R. A., Pietryka, M. T., & Resnik, P. (2014). Real-time reactions to a 2012 presidential debate. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 78*, 330-343.

Brazeal, L. M., & Benoit, W. L. (2001). A Functional analysis of Congressional television spots, 1986-2000. *Communication Quarterly, 49*, 436-454. DOI: 10.1080/01463370109385640.

Page | 42

Benoit

*Brazeal, L. M., & Benoit, W. L. (2006). On the spot: A Functional analysis of congressional television spots, 1980-2004. *Communication Studies, 57*, 401-420.

Broder, D. (2002, October 6). Congress can't recognize vital issues. *Spokesman-Review*. Accessed 5/17/16: https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1314&dat=20021006&id=5LszAAAAIBAJ&sjid=rPIDAAAAIBAJ&pg=2818,4320236&hl=en

Carsey, T. M., Jackson, R. A., Stewart, M., & Nelson, J. P. (2011). Strategic candidates, campaign dynamics, and campaign advertising in gubernatorial races. *State Politics & Policy Quarterly, 11*, 269-298.

*Choi, Y. S., & Benoit, W. L. (2009). A Functional analysis of French and South Korean debates. *Speaker & Gavel, 46*, 59-78.

*Choi, Y. S., & Benoit, W. L. (2013). A Functional analysis of the 2007 and 2012 French presidential debates. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research, 42*, 215-227.

Clarke, P., & Evans, S. H. (1983). *Covering campaigns: Journalism in congressional elections*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Cohen, J. (1960). A coefficient of agreement for nominal scales. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 20*, 37-46.

Cohen, J. (1992). A power primer. *Psychological Bulletin, 112*, 155-159.

Christ, W. B., Thorson, E., & Caywood, C. (1994). Do attitudes toward political advertising affect information processing of televised political commercials? *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 38*, 251-270.

*Cruz, U. (2016). *A Functional Analysis of Mexican TV Spots 2006-2015*. Unpublished paper.

Cundy, D. T. (1986). Political commercials and candidate image: The effect can be substantial. In L. L. Kaid, D. Nimmo, & K. R. Sanders (Eds.), *New perspectives on political advertising* (pp. 210-234). Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press.

*Dalton, P., & McIlwain, C. (2011). Third party "hatchet" ads: An exploratory content analysis study comparing third-party and candidate spots from the 2004 presidential election. *Atlantic Journal of Communication, 19*, 124-151.

Damore, D. E. (2002). Candidate strategy and the decision to go negative. *Political Research Quarterly, 55*, 669-685.

Davis, J. W. (1997). *U.S. presidential primaries and the caucus-convention system*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

D'Alessandro, M. (2017). Political advertising in Argentina. In C. Holtz-Bacha & M. R. Just (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of political advertising* (pp. 75-86). New York: Routledge.

Donohue, T. R. (1973). Viewer perceptions of color and black-and-white paid political advertising. *Journalism Quarterly, 50*, 660-665.

Dover, E. D. (2006). *Images, issues, and attacks: Television advertising by incumbents and challengers in presidential elections*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Dragan, N-S. (2016). A semio-functional approach of relationship of attacks-defenses for

Functional Meta-Analysis

presidential debates in Romania, from November 2014. *Journal of Media Research, 9*, 36-49.

Dudek, P. (2008). Negative political advertising: Parliamentary election 2007 campaign TV spots. *Media Studies, 34*, 1-11.

Dudek, P., & Partacz, S. (2009). Functional theory of political discourse: Televised debates during the parliamentary campaign in 2007 in Poland. *Central European Journal of Communication, 2*, 367-379.

Elmelund-Praestekaer, C. (2010). Beyond American negativity: Toward a general understanding of the determinants of negative campaigning. *European Political Science Review, 2*, 137-156.

Faber, R. J., & Storey, M. C. (1984). Recall of information from political advertising. *Journal of Advertising, 13*, 39-44.

Faber, R. J., Tims, A.R., & Schmitt, K. G. (1993). Negative political advertising and voting intent: The role of involvement and alternative information sources. *Journal of Advertising, 22*, 67-76.

Franz, M. M., Freedman, P. B., Goldstein, K. M., and Ridout, T. N. (2008). *Campaign advertising and American democracy*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Garramone, G. M. (1984). Voter responses to negative political ads. *Journalism Quarterly, 61*, 250-269.

Garramone, G. M. (1985). Effects of negative political advertising: The roles of sponsor and rebuttal. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media, 29*, 147-159.

Garramone, G. M., Atkin, C. K., Pinkleton, B. E., & Cole, R. T. (1990). Effects of negative political advertising on the political process. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media, 34*, 299-311.

Garramone, G. M., & Smith, S. J. (1984). Reactions to political advertising: Clarifying sponsor effects. *Journalism Quarterly, 51*, 771-775.

Geiger, S. F., & Reeves, B. (1991). The effects of visual structure and content emphasis on the evaluation and memory for political candidates. In F. Biocca (Ed.), *Television and political advertising* (vol. 1, pp. 125-143). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Geer, J. G. (2006). *In defense of negativity: Attack ads in presidential campaigns*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

*Glantz, M., Delbert, J., & Davis, C. (2016). A Functional Analysis of 2013 mayoral campaign web pages. *Speaker & Gavel, 53*, 43-63.

Glass, G. V., McGaw, B., & Smith, M. L. (1981). *Meta-analysis in social research*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Gordon, B. R., & Hartmann, W. R. (2013). Advertising effects in presidential elections. *Marketing Science, 32*, 19-35.

Hill, R. P. (1989). An exploration of voter responses to political advertisements. *Journal of Advertising, 18*, 14-22.

Benoit

Hitchon, J. C., & Chang, C. (1995). Effects of gender schematic processing on the reception of political commercials for men and women candidates. *Communication Research, 22*, 430-458.

Hofstetter, C. R. (1976). *Bias in the news: Network television coverage of the 1972 election campaign*. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press.

Holbrook, T. M. (1996). *Do campaigns matter?* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hrbkova, L., & Zagrapan, J. (2014). Slovak political debates: Functional theory in a multi-party system. *European Journal of Communication, 29*, 735-744.

Hunter, J. E., & Schmidt, F. L. (1990). *Methods of meta-analysis: Correcting error and bias in research findings*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Hunter, J. E., & Schmidt, F. L. (2004). *Methods of meta-analysis: Correcting error and bias in research findings* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Isotalus, P. (2011). Analyzing presidential debates: Functional theory and Finnish political communication culture. *Nordicom Review, 32*, 31-43.

Isotalus, P., & Aarnio, E. (2006). A model of televised election discussion: The Finnish multi-party system perspective. *Javnost-The Public, 13*, 61-72.

Jamieson, K. H. (2015). The discipline's debate contributions: Now, then, and next. *Quarterly Journal of Speech, 101*, 85-97.

Kendall, K. E. (2000). *Communication in the presidential primaries: Candidates and the media, 1912-2000*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Jacobson, G. C. (2015). How do campaigns matter? *Annual Review of Political Science, 18*, 31-47.

Jarman, J. W. (2005). Political affiliation and presidential debates: A real-time analysis of the effect of arguments used in the presidential debates. *American Behavioral Scientist, 49*, 229-242.

Johnston, D. D. (1989). Image and issue political information: Message content or interpretation? *Journalism Quarterly, 66*, 379-382.

Joslyn, R. A. (1981). The impact of campaign spot advertising on voting defections. *Human Communication Research, 7*, 347-360.

Just, M., Crigler, A., & Wallach, L. (1990). Thirty seconds or thirty minutes: What viewers learn from spot advertisements and candidate debates. *Journal of Communication, 40,* 120-132.

Kaid, L. L. (1997). Effects of the television spots on images of Dole and Clinton. *American Behavioral Scientist, 40*, 1085-1094.

Kaid, L. L. (1994). Political advertising in the 1992 campaign. In R. E. Denton (Ed.), *The 1992 presidential campaign: A communication perspective* (pp. 111-127). Westport, CT: Praeger.

Kaid, L. L., & Boydston, J. (1987). An experimental study of the effectiveness of negative political advertisements. *Communication Quarterly, 35*, 193-201.

Kaid, L. L., & Holtz-Bacha, C. (Eds.). (2006). *The Sage handbook of political advertising*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Functional Meta-Analysis

Kaid, L. L., & Johnston, A. (1991). Negative versus positive television advertising in U.S. presidential campaigns, 1960-1988. *Journal of Communication, 41*, 53-64.

Kaid, L. L, & Johnston, A. (2001). *Videostyle in presidential campaigns Style and content of televised political advertising*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Kaid, L. L., Leland, C. M., & Whitney, S. (1992). The impact of televised political ads: Evoking viewer responses in the 1988 presidential campaign. *Southern Communication Journal, 57*, 285-295.

Kaid, L. L., & Sanders, K. R. (1978). Political television commercials: An experimental study of type and length. *Communication Research, 5*, 57-70.

Kamber, V. (1997). *Poison politics: Are negative campaigns destroying democracy?*   Cambridge, MA: Perseus.

King, A. (2002). Conclusions and implications. In A. King (Ed.), *Leaders' personalities and the outcomes of democratic elections* (pp. 210-221). Oxford: University Press.

Landis, J. R., & Koch, G. G. (1977). The measurement of observer agreement for categorical data. *Biometrica, 33*, 159-174.

Lang, A. (1991). Emotion, formal features, and memory for televised political advertisements. In F. Biocca (Ed.), *Television and political advertising* (vol. 1, pp. 221-243). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Lanoue, D. J. (1994). Retrospective and prospective voting in presidential year elections. *Political Research Quarterly, 47*, 193-205.

Lau, R. R., & Redlawsk, D. P. (2015). The effects of advertising tone on information processing and vote choice. In A. Nai & A. Walter (Eds.). *New perspectives on political campaigning: Why attack politics matter* (pp. 249-266). Colchester, England: European Consortium for Political Research Press.

Lawless, J. L. (2011). *Becoming a candidate: Political ambition and the decision to run for office*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lee, C., & Benoit, W. L. (2005). A functional analysis of the 2002 Korean presidential debates. *Asian Journal of Communication, 15*, 115-132.

Louden, A. (2016). Political communication.   Accessed 6/15/16: http://users.wfu.edu/louden/Political%20Communication/poltitle.html

Maier, J., & Jansen, C. (2015). When do candidates attack in election campaigns? Exploring the determinants of negative candidate messages in German televised debates. *Party Politics, 21*, 1-11.

Mayer, W. G. (Ed.). (2000). *In pursuit of the White House: How we choose our presidential nominees* (pp. 203-253). New York: Chatham House.

McClure, R. D., & Patterson, T. E. (1974). Television news and political advertising: The impact of exposure on voter beliefs. *Communication Research, 1*, 3-21.

McKinney, M. S., & Carlin, D. B. (2004). Political campaign debates. In L. L. Kaid (Ed.), *Handbook of political campaign research* (pp. 203-234). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Page | 46

Benoit

McKinney, M. S., & Warner, B. R. (2013). Do presidential debates matter? Examining a decade of campaign debate effects. *Argumentation & Advocacy, 49*, 238-258.

Meadow, R. G., & Sigelman, L. (1982). Some effects and non-effects of campaign commercials: An experimental study. *Political Behavior, 4*, 163-175.

Merritt, S. (1984). Negative political advertising: Some empirical findings. *Journal of Advertising, 13*, 27-38.

Mulder, R. (1979). The effects of televised political ads in the 1975 Chicago mayoral election. *Journalism Quarterly, 56*, 335-341.

Nai, A., & Walter, A. S. (2015). The war of words: The art of negative campaigning. In Nai & Walter (Eds.), *New perspectives on negative campaigning: Why attack politics matter* (pp. 3-33). Colchester: ECPR.

Newhagen, J. E., & Reeves, B. (1991). Emotion and memory responses for negative political advertising: A study of television commercials used in the 1988 presidential election. In F. Biocca (Ed.), *Television and political advertising* (vol. 1, pp. 197-220). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Norrander, B. (2010). *The imperfect primary: Oddities, biases, and strengths of U.S. nomination politics*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Palda, K. S. (1973). Does advertising influence votes? An analysis of the 1966 and 1970 Quebec elections. *Canadian Journal of Political Science, 6*, 638-655.

Palmer, N. A. (1997). *The New Hampshire primary and the American electoral process*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Patterson, T. E. (2003). *The vanishing voter: Public involvement in an age of uncertainty*. New York: Random House, Vintage Books.

*Pier, P. M. (2002). "*He said, she said: A functional analysis of gender differences in political campaign messages*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Missouri.

Racine Group. (2002). White paper on televised political campaign debates. *Argumentation and Advocacy, 38*, 199-218.

Reinemann, C., & Maurer, M. (2005). Unifying or polarizing? Short-term effects and postdebate consequences of different rhetorical strategies in televised debates. *Journal of Communication, 55*, 775-794.

Ridout, T. N., & Holland, J. L. (2010). Candidate strategies in the presidential nomination campaign. *Presidential Studies Quarterly, 40*, 611-630.

Roddy, B. L., & Garramone, G. M. (1988). Appeals and strategies of negative political advertising. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 32*, 415-427.

Rosenthal, R. (1991). *Meta-analytic procedures for social research* (rev. ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Rudd, R. (1989). Effects of issue specificity, ambiguity on evaluations of candidate image. *Journalism Quarterly, 66*, 675-682, 691.

Rzepecka, M. (2016). Analyzing televised presidential general election debates. *Ad Americam.*

Journal of American Studies, 17, 197-209.

Salamore, S. A., & Salamore, B. G. (1995). *Campaigns, parties, and campaigns: Electoral politics in America*. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.

Scammell, M., & Langer, A. I. (2006). Political advertising in the United Kingdom. In L. L. Kaid & C. Holtz-Bacha, (Eds). *The SAGE handbook of political advertising* (pp. 65-82). London: Sage.

Senior, P. (2008). Electoral impact of televised leaders' debates on Australian federal elections. *Australian Journal of Political Science, 43,* 443-464.

Shaw, D. R. (1999a). The effect of TV ads and candidate appearances on statewide presidential votes, 1988-96. *American Political Science Review, 93*, 345-362.

Shaw, D. R. (1999b). A study of presidential campaign event effects from 1952 to 1992. *Journal of Politics, 61*, 387-422.

*Shen, I., & Benoit, W. L. (2016). 2012 presidential campaign and social media: A Functional Analysis of candidates' Facebook public pages. *Midsouth Political Science Review, 17*, 53-80.

Sides, J., & Vavreck, L. (2013). The gamble: Choice and chance in the 2012 presidential election. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Skewes, E. A. (2007). *Message control: How news is made on the campaign trail*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Smith, C. A. (2005). Candidate strategies in the 2004 presidential campaign: Instrumental choices faced by the incumbent and his challengers. In R. E. Denton (Ed.), *The 2004 presidential campaign: A communication perspective* (pp. 131-151). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Smith, C. A., & Mansharamani, N. (2002). Challenger and incumbent reversal in the 2000 election. In R. E. Denton (Ed.), *The 2004 presidential campaign: A communication perspective* (pp. 91-116). Westport, CT: Praeger.

Stewart, C. J. (1975). Voter perception of mud-slinging in political communication. *Central States Speech Journal, 26*, 279-286.

Sullivan, G. M., & Feinn, R. (2010). Using effect size–or why the *P* value is not enough. *Journal of Graduate Medical Education, 4*, 279-282.

Sullivan, J., & Sapir, E. V. (2012). Modeling negative campaign advertising: Evidence from Taiwan. *Asian Journal of Communication, 22*, 289-303.

Thorson, E., Christ, W. G., & Caywood, C. (1991). Effects of issue-image strategies, attack and support appeals, music, and visual content in political commercials. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media, 35*, 465-486.

Trent, J. D., & Trent, J. S. (1995). The incumbent and his challengers: The problem of adapting to prevailing conditions. In K. E. Kendall (Ed.), *Presidential campaign discourse: Strategic communication problems* (pp. 69-93). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Trent, J. S., & Trent, J. D. (1974). The rhetoric of the challenger: George Stanley McGovern.

Central States Speech Journal, 25, 11-18.

Wanat, J. (1974). Political broadcast advertising and primary election voting. *Journal of Broadcasting, 18*, 413-422.

Washington Post. (2016). Money raised as of October 19. Accessed 11/6/16: https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/politics/2016-election/campaign-finance/

West, D. M. (2001). *Air wars: Television advertising in election campaigns, 1952-2000* (3rd ed.). Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly.

Wolf, F. M. (1986). *Meta-analysis: Quantitative methods for research synthesis*. Beverly Hill, Sage Publications.

Wilson, R. (2012, November 2). Obama and Romney teams top $1 billion in ad spending: The Romney side is outspending Obama, and both sides are now emptying their coffers at an unprecedented pace. *National Journal*. Accessed 3/31/13: http://www.nationaljournal.com/politics/obama-and-romney-teams-top-1-billion-in-ad-spending-20121102.

Warner, B. R., & McKinney, M. S. (2013). To unite and divide: The polarizing effect of presidential debates. *Communication Studies, 64*, 508-524.

*Designates a study contributing data to the meta-analysis.

Functional Meta-Analysis

Figure 1. *A Schematic Outline of Functional Theory*

	Acclaim Self	Defend Self	Attack Opponent
Message Content			
Policy			
Past Deeds	I created jobs	Unemployment was caused by my predecessor	Opponent failed to fight crime
Future Plans	My proposal will destroy ISIS	My plan does not cut taxes on the rich	Opponent's tax plan will help the rich and hurt the middle class
General Goals	I want to keep America safe	I want to stop illegal immigration	Opponent wants to discriminate against Muslims
Character			
Personal Qualities	I can be trusted	I am not a liar	Opponent is immoral
Leadership Ability	I have served as Governor of a large state	As Vice President I had important responsibilities	Opponent lacks experience in running a government
Ideals	Everyone has a right to justice	I do not think people are entitled to government handouts	Opponent thinks everyone should fend for themselves

Recasting the Founding Fathers: The Tea Party Movement, Neoliberalism, and American Myth

Calvin Coker -- University of Missouri

Calvin Coker

Calvin R. Coker is a doctoral candidate at the University of Missouri. He received B. A.s in English literature and history from Washburn University and an M. A. in communication from Missouri State University. He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in communication at the University of Missouri, where his research program focuses on the representation of marginalized groups in public sphere discourse including projects focusing on the representation of disenfranchised groups in the media and politics. Calvin has taught classes in public speaking, communication theory, and political communication.

Proper APA citation for this article is:

Coker, C. (2017). Recasting the Founding Fathers: The Tea Party Movement, Neoliberalism, and American Myth. *Speaker & Gavel*, *54*(1), 52-70.

Recasting the Founding Fathers: The Tea Party Movement, Neoliberalism, and American Myth

Calvin Coker

This article analyzes representative texts from the Tea Party Movement (TPM), a conservative American political movement, to demonstrate the TPM uses the myth of the Founding Fathers as an argumentative strategy to craft and justify a sanitary neoliberal political project. The necessity of such of a project lies in the underlying democratic crisis of neoliberalism, a crisis navigated by the TPM through strategic use of political myth. Neoliberal policies require, in many instances, democratic consent, though those policies often serve to disenfranchise many of the groups supporting them. This essay argues the TPM uses myth for the purpose of creating a salient group identity, recasting modern political conflicts, and articulating a political path forward. Finally, the implications of using political myth in contemporary politics are then introduced and discussed.

D onald J. Trump's presidential victory against Hillary Clinton wasn't simply a stunning rebuke of contemporary political prediction and punditry; Trump, for some, signaled a shift towards a more populist, anti-establishment conservatism that threatened the sitting political order (Rosenberg, 2016). A cursory look at the past decade of conservative politics suggests, however, that Trump's ascension reflects less a shift and more a refinement of populist conservative sentiment. The reactionary Tea Party Movement (TPM), an unlikely coalition of grass roots activism and heavy funding through conservative political action committees has been present in national conversations on conservatism since their rise to political prominence in 2010 (Williamson, Skocpol, & Coggin, 2011). However, waning public support for their movement combined with the success of Trump, who did not officially affiliate himself with the TPM, led to some pundits contending the TPM is "pretty much dead" (Jossey, 2016, para. 1). This death, bemoaned by Rich Lowry (2016) in Politico as the destruction of a "potent vehicle against Big Government" (para. 9), suggests the TPM's unique conservative movement will soon be relegated to history books.

Reports of the death of the Tea Party may be an exaggeration, however. The installation of Tea Party darling Rep. Mike Mulvaney (R-SC) as the White House budget chief suggests the TPM's extreme fiscal conservatism will continue to impact political calculations in the future

---

A version of this project was presented at the 2015 Central States Communication Association in Madison, WI.

(Herb, 2017). Indeed, despite Time's contention in their Person of the Year article that Trump "has little patience for the organizing principle of the Tea Party: the idea that the federal government must live within its means and lower its debts" (Scherer, 2016, para. 56), it appears the former business mogul has more in common with the reactionary movement than not. The TPM embodies a fiery politics broadly appealing to segments of the population who feel disenfranchised from the political process by focusing on extremely limited government, an unapologetic defense of American exceptionalism, and anxiety towards racial and social change in the public sphere (Zernike, 2010). Many of those same ideals, mixed with populism and a rejection of political niceties, describe in large part Trump's candidacy and perhaps portent his presidential actions (Chait, 2016).

A combination of significant electoral success in 2010, large scale political attention on issues such as the debt ceiling in 2011, the ousting of former Speaker of the House John Boehner in 2015, and a sympathetic President, all suggest the Tea Party is far from dead. Rather, the TPM's tactics have actually inspired anti-Trump activists to mimicry (Shreckinger, 2016). This mimicry assumes a viability of the argumentative strategies employed by the TPM, and a portability of those strategies. The TPM's focus on populism, "common sense conservatism," and constitutionalism all function argumentatively to promote the goals of the movement. The goals of the TPM, however, are rather unique; though some have characterized the movement as short lived and reactionary (Fraser, 2014), the TPM is merely the most visible element of neoliberal politics insistent on individualism and capital accumulation (Harvey, 2005; Guardino & Snyder, 2012). As such, the movement adapts to the unique rhetorical and ideological constraints inherent in the adoption of a neoliberal hegemonic project. The proceeding essay will argue that the TPM uses the political myth of the Founding Fathers (Wingo, 2003) to justify a neoliberal political project. That justification manifests through the TPM using myth to create a salient group identity, recast contemporary conflicts in mythopoeic terms, and present a political path forward.

Neoliberalism is an ideological project to "re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and to restore the power of economic elites" (Harvey, 2005, p. 18). Despite the dominance of neoliberalism in western economic philosophy and policy, Harvey (2005) suggests the ideology faces a crisis of public support in democratic countries. Contemporary manifestations of neoliberalism have fostered unchecked acquisition of wealth that tramples the majority of workers and citizens thus rendering widespread democratic support of those policies tenuous. By promoting unrestrained economic freedom, advocates of neoliberalism have constructed a global economy where select few benefit from globalization and expanded corporate control while a majority of the world's population is subject to deteriorating living conditions and individual rights. In the context of democratic societies, Harvey (2005) asks, "how is it, then, that 'the rest of us' have so easily acquiesced in this state of affairs?" (p. 38). This acquiescence is the central question of this essay, with a partial answer lying in the rhetorical strategies of the TPM.

The present study suggests the TPM makes use of the political myth of the Founding Fathers (Wingo, 2003) to sanitize, and resolve contradictions within, neoliberalism. The mythology of the Founding Fathers consists in part of the history of revolutionary heroes, the philosophy of the American Revolution, and the physical locations and monuments dedicated to the founding of the country. That myth is routinely referenced in American pop culture, education, and politics. These components of the myth, including its plot structure and philosophical undertones, are coupled with neoliberal ideology by the TPM to resolve core contradictions in neoliberalism. That contradiction as evidenced by the TPM is democratic support for economic and social policies that would in practice massively disadvantage those who support them. To garner democratic support for neoliberalism, the TPM has employed a political myth with significant rhetorical currency to articulate a salient group identity and sidestep criticism. This articulation is of the utmost importance for rhetorical scholars, as the linkage between ideology and political tropes exploits public gaps in historical and political literacy, as well as provide political cover for problematic policies and ideologies in the public sphere.

Page | 54

Myths function by assigning importance to culturally shared narratives, with political myth representing "the continual process of work on a common narrative by which the members of a social group can provide significance to their political conditions and experience" (Bottici & Challand, 2006, p. 320). The present study describes the TPM's employment of political myth as a means to justify the expansion of neoliberalism. To that end, the essay is presented as follows. First, the hegemonic project of neoliberalism is covered alongside theorizing of political myth. Next, the TPM's use of the Founding Father myth is substantiated through representative texts from TPM leaders and websites. Finally, the implications of the ideological use of political myth are discussed.

The Neoliberal Project

One of the first measures of the Obama presidency, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, drew criticism from conservative think tanks and politicians upon its passage in 2009. The bill was criticized in distinctly neoliberal terms, with conservative thinkers like David Boaz of the Cato Institute writing in January of 2009 that the bill would essentially "put the government in charge of handing out money" (para. 6). One financial analyst, CNBC reporter Rick Santelli, burst into a tirade on national television inviting the country's entrepreneurs to a "Chicago Tea Party" to protest the bill as a "subsid[ization] of the loser's mortgage"(Ciandella, 2014, p. 1). The presence of economic "losers," and the direct linkage Santelli and others articulate between government regulation and economic catastrophe crafted a rhetorical opportunity seized by conservative activists in the creation of the Tea Party Movement. The goals of the movement, to combat an expansive federal government and intervention in the market, are consistent with neoliberalism as articulated by Harvey (2005).

Though neoliberal economic policies were advocated in some intellectual circles in the

1950s and 1960s, thinkers such as Friedrich von Hayek and Milton Friedman[1] were able to push an "anti-collectivist, anti-statist ideology which designates the market as the guarantor of individual freedom" that gained traction following the 1970 global economic downturn (Guardino & Snyder, 2012, p. 528). The ideology fetishizes the individual and promotes market-based solutions by problematizing regulatory bodies and state level economic planning. The role of the neoliberal state, according to Harvey (2005), is to "favor strong individual private property rights, the rule of law, and the institutions of freely functioning markets and free trade" (p. 64) whilst clearing away impediments to the free market. This is not to say neoliberalism functions simply as a government lead project. Rather, neoliberalism is simultaneously material and symbolic, a configuration of policies and discourses working in concert to rationalize themselves and resolve internal contradictions.

At its core, neoliberalism is contradictory because it promotes unbridled acquisition of capital by corporate entities while holding the rights of the individual to be sacrosanct (Harvey, 2005). When rights to profit conflict with regulations, civil liberties, or a community's well-being, neoliberalism would champion the accumulation of capital above all else while nominally defending individual rights. As a political project, then, neoliberalism must contend with structures and ideologies that enshrine democratic rule, a rule that in theory would oppose and prevent economic and political dominance by the moneyed few. This dilemma has given rise to political movements either overtly or inadvertently supportive of a broader neoliberal project of globalization (Harvey, 2005). To wit, Guardino and Snyder (2012) suggest the TPM works to expand neoliberalism by cementing previously disparate voting blocks of working class white voters, libertarians, and social conservatives. Of specific note is the method of unification; as a neoliberal project, the TPM may not represent a worthwhile political endeavor for groups with divergent economic concerns (DiMaggio, 2011).

Early TPM affiliated candidates, such as former Dominos CEO Herman Cain, made waves in the 2012 presidential election by advocating regressive economic policies such as a national sales tax that would disproportionately impact a majority of Americans (Sharockman, 2011). Indeed, even contemporary policies advocated by Tea Party affiliated political leaders such as Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY) promise to substantively change the economic landscape of the United States. Paul's defection in early 2017 on the passage of the federal budget was one of a long list of actions promising to dramatically shrink the size of government and reduce the regulatory burden on the free market (Weyl, 2017). These cuts, most often advocated for

---

1. Both Hayek and Friedman significantly influenced the study of economics in the mid to late twentieth century, and had notable intellectual roles in the development of neoliberal ideology and policies. Jones (2014) recognizes Friedrich von Hayek's (1944) work *The Road to Serfdom* as one of the foundational works in early formulations of neoliberalism. Hayek won the Nobel Memorial Prize for Economic Sciences in 1974 with Gunnar Myrdal. Milton Friedman's academic work at the University of Chicago, combined with his influence in the Reagan and Thatcher administrations, cements Friedman as a significant intellectual and material contributor to the rise of neoliberalism. Friedman won Nobel Memorial Prize for Economic Sciences in 1976.

entitlement spending on programs such as WIC, TANF, Medicaid, and even Social Security, would impact a significant portion of the self-identified base of the TPM (Guardino & Snyder, 2012). Despite economic inconsistencies that would logically hinder the TPM's political attractiveness, Aravosis (2013) estimated following the 2010 midterm election that the TPM was represented by approximately "39% of the Republican Party in the Senate, and 62% of the Republican Party in the House" (para 5). In more recent years, Norman (2015) suggests roughly "four in 10 (42%) [Republicans] still support the Tea Party" with 17% of the American public expressing support for the TPM prior to the 2016 election (para. 7). Significantly, however, many of the policies advocated by TPM candidates and legislators appear inconsistent with the economic goals of a majority of the electorate, privileging unrestrained capital acquisition in opposition to insulating the less fortunate from the ills of the free market (DiMaggio, 2011; Guardino & Snyder, 2012).

As a movement, the TPM advocates reducing the size of government alongside political and ideological conservatism championing the individual (Burghart & Zeskind, 2010; Abramowitz, 2011; Williamson, Skocpol, & Coggin, 2011). Rallies conducted following Santelli's call in 2009 were focused on cutting government spending and protesting the Affordable Care Act and other Obama administration actions as curtailments of individual freedom. Combined with these political goals, consistent in many instances with broader conservative and libertarian platforms, was a paranoia that questioned the legitimacy of the sitting president and standing political institutions (Skocpol & Williamson, 2012). Additionally, the TPM unifies supporters under the banner of racial anxiety. Parker and Barreto (2013) indicate, "supporters of the Tea Party are statistically more likely to hold negative attitudes towards immigrants and sexual minorities across a range of different issues and topics" (p. 157). Harvey (2005) suggests racist ideologies can be mobilized in a neoliberal project in "cultural nationalism of the white working classes and their besieged sense of moral righteousness" (p. 50). A large component of the TPM's view of entitlement cuts is a broader discussion of what constitutes "hard work" and "deservingness" in America, notions which are inextricably linked with race (Gilens, 1996; Katz, 1989).

The TPM certainly resembles what Harvey (2005) would call a neoliberal project. Notably, however, that project has garnered substantive popular support inconsistent with the aims of its policies. Harvey (2005) suggests neoliberalism is internally incoherent, and tenets of the ideology are jettisoned the moment they appear to contradict the broader project of capital acquisition. Harvey argues neoliberalism is a utopian philosophy, and material projects to promote neoliberalism did "whatever needed to be done to achieve [their] goal. […] when neoliberal principles clash with the need to restore or sustain elite power, then the principles are either abandoned or become so twisted as to be unrecognizable" (p. 18). Harvey indicates there are "enough contradictions in the neoliberal position to render evolving neoliberal practices (vis-à-vis issues such as monopoly power and market failures) unrecognizable in relation to the seeming purity of neoliberal doctrine" (p. 21). He proposes scholars look to fissures between ideology and materiality as spaces of critique. Such a fissure exists in the TPM's use of political

myth. By articulating neoliberal principals such as "individualism," "freedom," and "the free market" alongside the myth of the Founding Fathers, the movement fuses neoliberal ideological goals with persuasive strategies.

Myth and the Tea Party

The myth of the Founding Fathers, according to Wingo (2003), recasts American revolutionaries as forward thinking heroes positioned opposite a callous tyrannical government. The myth, following the chronology of contemporary historical understandings of the American Revolution, casts the notable politicians and war heroes against the British in a struggle for independence. A mythopoeic telling of the revolution, however, diverges from the historical record to suggest the revolutionaries triumphed against insurmountable odds through ingenuity, determination, and (depending on the context) divine providence to topple a seemingly invincible foe. Despite the defined structure of the Founding Fathers myth, with definite characters and plot, political myths need not be invoked in full form. Rather, images, allusions, or even discussions of physical location can all transfer cultural memories from the myth onto a given subject (Wingo, 2003). Contemporary remembrances, such as monuments, historical sites, and even portraits on money, create a simplified and sanitary vision of the foundational figures of the revolution. Flood (1996) argues myths can resist critical evaluation because they tap into salient historical constructs. Myths routinely serve as the first and most memorable exposure a person has to a given history, and as such can "function as the basis for generalization, categorizations, and expectations which are not easily or always adequately revised" (p. 87). Historical myth, then, has the capacity to recast an ideological argument as naturalized and unassailable.

A litany of scholars (e. g. Barthes, 1972; Levi-Strauss, 1955; Malinowski, 2011; Rowland, 1990) have discussed myth in social discourse, suggesting myths function narratively to articulate values and make sense of experiences (Kerényi, 1963). Political myth is theorized as distinct from broader social narratives in terms of process, form, and function. In the context of politics, myth is "marked" by its use. Flood (1996) distinguishes political myth from sacred myth (e. g. Barthes, 1972, Levi-Strauss, 1955; Malinowski, 1992) by indicating political myths have a complicated relationship to the historical markers they purport to represent, a distinct form and characteristic ideological marking, and a defined audience prepared to accept that myth in a particular way. Bottici (2011) further refines Flood by suggesting political myths are narratives that develop situated significance over time, and continually morph to fit contemporary needs. Ultimately, Bottici (2011) rejects the importance of form for myth (see Rowland, 1990) in favor of a delimited definition emphasizing the ideological role myth plays.

Bottici (2007) argues scholars ought to imagine myths not as discrete objects to be debunked, but rather as processes used to justify social formations. Bottici (2011) suggests "political myths are mapping devices through which we look at the world, come to feel about it, and also to act within it as a social group" (p. 44). Myths can be understood as mechanisms to achieve social change and coalesce identity around culturally shared symbols. Roy and Rowland

(2003), in their study of Hindu Nationalist movements, argue, "nationalist sentiment serves as the motive, but myth forms the engine for the movement" (p. 226). Political myths are transcendent narratives, collective stories continually (re)articulated to ascribe significance to a cause or course of action. Historically grounded myth explains the past, simplifies the present, and predicts the future (Roy & Rowland, 2003). Additionally, historical myth refocuses the debate not on accuracy, but on justifications for future action. In the TPM's use of the Founding Fathers myth, the debate decenters from whether the founders would (not) have supported the contentions made in their name.

Page | 58

The Tea Party and the Founding Fathers

Given the interspersed and divergent nature of TPM membership, centralized texts do not exist in the traditional sense. As such, the Tea Party response to the State of the Union, occurring every year since 2011, is taken as a representative anecdote of TPM discourse. These responses represent an opportunity for the TPM to introduce themselves to the American People, as the movement is not a fixture of American politics (Guardino & Snyder, 2012). Furthermore, the responses represent deliberate persuasive attempts to position the movement as legitimate opposition to established political parties and leadership. These speeches, combined with various TPM websites of their largest political action committees, represent an appropriate cross section of the movement's discourse. As the speeches selected feature a number of notable TPM leaders, including Tea Party Caucus founder and former Congresswoman Michelle Bachmann (R-MN), former GOP presidential candidate Herman Cain, and current Kentucky Senator Rand Paul (R-KY), the texts selected here represent the discourses provided by the public faces of the TPM.

The TPM's use of the Founding Fathers myth functions in three distinct ways. First, the myth of the founders is a tool of unification, a means of articulating an identity for TPM members that erases and transcends economic disparity. Second, political myth is a mechanism to recast contemporary conflicts not as tensions between economic policies and social well-being, but as battles between righteous revolutionaries and tyrannical government forces. Finally, the Founding Fathers myth offers a path forward, capitalizing on an understanding of conflicts in mythopoeic terms by justifying neoliberal solutions through mythic appeals.

Myth as a tool of identity

Group differences are salient drivers of political action (e. g. Bottici & Challand, 2006; Mouffe, 2013; Roy & Rowland, 2003). One of the central crises of neoliberalism is the manifestation of extreme group differences through the concentration of wealth in the hands of few individuals while relying on ideological consensus to mobilize democratic nations (Harvey, 2005). By focusing on a culturally shared trait such as national pride, it is possible for disparate groups to transcend economic differences in favor of shared heredity or cultural identity. Roy and Rowland (2003) indicate the use of historical myth is a means to simultaneously define group boundaries and sharpen the salience of an identity in the context of nationalist groups. The Teaparty.org website uses shared national identity to articulate an in-group, indicating:

…our very own heritage held the key to unleashing the American Spirit. The Tea Party was the perfect choice. The Tea Party concept was far superior because it removed all the obstacles of party lines along with the baggage of confused issues, and focused only on a few key points. (Eichler, 2011)

Numerous scholars of political myth (Bottici, 2007; 2011; Burke, 1939; Row & Rowland, 2003) discuss both biological and ethnic heritage as a twofold unification strategy. First, unification is achieved through the erasure of difference. As a political impact of neoliberalism, economic difference is particularly salient; Guardino and Snyder (2012) suggest neoliberal policies are ultimately problematic for many of the groups supporting them due to economic alienation and commodification of labor, aspects which benefit a select few members of the wealthy elite. Despite the material impact of these policies, however, a wider coalition of economic elites and working class individuals is necessary for the adoption of neoliberal politics in a democratic system. As such, economic difference must be erased, explained away by the myth of American greatness to justify the larger political project. Former Republican Presidential candidate and Domino's CEO Herman Cain, in his 2012 State of the Union Response, downplayed economic differences in favor of ideological homogeneity, stating "if you believe in less taxes, less government, the free market system, more individual responsibility, and enforcing the Constitution, you are a tea party person" (Cain, 2012). By wrapping ideological messages consistent with neoliberalism in rhetoric designed to erase difference, the TPM is able to unify disparate economic groups.

Second, unifying behind a social category such as race or nationality is a mechanism to elevate the in-group's status. Appealing to innate characteristics transcends status afforded by wealth or education in favor of shared heritage deemed more important. Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY), in his State of the Union Response, argues as much, erasing biological and ethnic differences by elevating neoliberal values of individualism and economic success:

[I]t's not the complexion of our skin or the twists in our DNA that make us unique. America is exceptional because we were founded upon the notion that everyone should be free to pursue life, liberty, and happiness. For the first time in history, men and women were guaranteed a chance to succeed based NOT on who your parents were but on your own initiative and desire to work. (Paul, 2013)

Exceptionalism is marked here as neoliberal individualism, a person's "desire to work" being that which "made us great" (Paul, 2013). By juxtaposing historical myth and neoliberal dogma, Paul articulates American history as a natural progression of individualism and unrestrained capitalism. Exceptionalism is appropriated to justify economic policies of bootstrapping, reduced regulation, and reduction of social programs in America.

Finally, the use of the Founding Fathers myth crafts a palatable identity by casting the TPM as heroes, prepared to vanquish the villainous. Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT), in his State of the Union Response suggests, "Americans have a natural instinct to stand up and speak out when they know something is wrong" in reference to expanding government power under the Obama

administration (Lee, 2014). These "natural instincts" cast the TPM, and by extension all Americans, as capable combatants in the war against tyranny. Indeed, businessman and political commentator Wayne Allan Root, in his State of the Union Response, contends history is on the side of the TPM and the American public, as "we can take back the White House and turnaround America. It's really not difficult. Just follow the Founding Fathers and put your faith in the American people" (Root, 2016, emphasis original). In the same breath, Root recasts the Founding Fathers and the American project in contemporary terms: "Always turn to the American people and the taxpayers and small business to save America. They've never failed us…and they never will" (Root, 2016). The ideological crisis of neoliberalism is rearticulated by positioning the American people as economic subjects capable of restoring a system of capital accumulation. The American spirit, that foundational fight against tyranny and oppression, is elevated as an identity marker to justify policies consistent with a neoliberal hegemonic project.

As frame of conflict

Following the creation of a salient group identity, political myths can be used to recast modern conflicts in the spirit of mythopoeic interactions. TPM supporters often articulate the movement as the underdog in conflicts with forces of tyranny. Cain (2012) contends, "We the people are coming and we know that we are up against Goliath, but this is why the tea party movement will become not a single David trying to slay Goliath. We will be an army of Davids" (p. 1). Roy and Rowland (2003) argue symmetry is significant, as the villain must offer an appropriately difficult task to the hero without being an insurmountable challenge. The use of an Old Testament story that Hays (2005) argues casts the forces of Christianity as disadvantaged, but destined to win, is no accident. By suggesting the TPM and its supporters will become like the fabled king of Israel, Cain cloaks supporters in a mantle of righteous power to concretize identity and re-contextualize contemporary conflicts. To that end, Cain's (2012) use of biblical imagery is supplemented with direct historical and mythic evidence:

> …the colonists got fed up with Old King George and the Brits, and their act of defiance was the Boston Tea Party in 1773. Two years later, we had the start of the American Revolution. Eight years later, we won. We can do it again. (p. 4)

Combining biblical and revolutionary imagery casts a historical enemy, the English monarchy, in a modern drama to articulate an argument against taxation and government regulation in near religious and mythical terms. Similarly, Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT) draws parallels between modern political opponents and the British Crown, describing a "London-based national government that had become too big, too expensive and far too intrusive" (Lee, 2014, p.1) as an analogy for the contemporary political climate. The enemy, in both the mythopoeic and ideological sense, is an entity whose only intent is the destruction of American character.

The core of the American Revolution, according to the TPM, can be reduced to unfair policies levied by a detached government, a circumstance analogous to and indistinguishable from the dogmatism and prescription of neoliberalism. The response to such policies was overthrow; there was no negotiation, no possible redemption of the bloated, tyrannical

monarchy. Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY) directly links modern and historical conflicts, contending, "We will stand up against excessive government power wherever we see it. We cannot and will not allow any President to act as if he were a king" (Paul, 2013, p. 3) in reference to the Obama administration. By recasting modern conflicts in historical terms, the TPM justifies neoliberal policies as an outgrowth of organic political movements, a natural consequence of American character.

Page | 61

Rep. Curt Clawson (R-FL) even goes so far as to recast contemporary global conflicts in Revolutionary terms, drafting longstanding allies into a modern drama against tyranny:

> [T]he Statue of Liberty – a gift from our French partners for independence – shines across the Hudson to the footprint of the Twin Towers. Last week, leaders of the world gathered in Paris – to shine that light of liberty as a TEAM. To our friends in the "City of Lights" I say: You were our allies in America's war for Independence. Now it's our turn to side with you in this global battle against terrorism. (Bondioloi, 2015)

In addition to reinforcing the links between the modern day TPM and the mythic history of the American Revolution, the invocation of globalization serves an ideological purpose. Recasting global conflicts is crucial for the spread of neoliberalism (Harvey, 2005). Only in a world-wide interconnected marketplace is maximized capital acquisition possible. To justify a foreign conflict through a myth of return creates a specific justification for neoliberalism designed to resolve internal contradictions regarding the size of government versus government involvement. Harvey (2005) suggests the role of the neoliberal state is "to facilitate conditions for profit-able capital accumulation on the part of both domestic and foreign capital," (p. 7) often at the cost of another nation's sovereignty. As such, the TPM revisions contemporary political squabbles while justifying future conflicts all through recasting the alliances of the past.

The TPM also casts moral conflicts in both historical and contemporary terms. Eichler (2011), on the Teaparty.org website, argues for a return to our moral foundations, suggesting the Tea Party must act as a "light illuminating the path to the original intentions of our Founding Fathers. We must raise a choir of voices declaring America must stand on the values which made us great" (Eichler, 2011). The website articulates the intentions of the Founding Fathers, and the values that make America great, as a list of fifteen "non-negotiable core beliefs" which include "gun ownership is sacred" and "reducing business income taxes is mandatory." These core beliefs, though certainly beyond the scope of the Founder's intentions for the country, are wrapped in the mythic. Modern conflicts are juxtaposed with the Founding Fathers myth, casting contemporary political disagreements as historical dramas with which the audience is familiar. In those historic dramas, already replete with just assessments of the Founders, speakers establish positive associations and transference of moral certitude in the public mind from the founders to the TPM. Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT) argues the movement is morally righteous because of their connection to the past, as "in America, the test of any political movement is not what that movement is against, but what it is for. The founders made a point at Boston Harbor, but they made history in Philadelphia's Independence Hall" (Lee, 2014). Ultimately, according to the

mythic articulation of neoliberalism, association with the founders' principles is enough to justify adoption of contemporary policies without a need to explain the specifics of those principles.

Furthermore, the TPM appropriates and rearticulates the underlying moral vision of America and the American dream. The website for the Tea Party Patriots, a conservative political action committee, discusses a unique American dream, contending:

> …at its root the American Dream is about freedom. Freedom to work hard and the freedom to keep the fruits of your labor to use as you see fit without harming others and without hindering their freedom. Very simply, three guiding principles give rise to the freedom necessary to pursue and live the American Dream. (Core Principals, para. 3)

The website goes on to list "Personal Freedom, Economic Freedom, and a Debt-Free Future" as the critical tenets underlying the American Dream, pivoting effortlessly from a mythopoeic conception of the American Dream to a material, neoliberal articulation.

As path forward

Finally, political myth is used by the TPM to portent future events. Among the most powerful functions of political myth, according to Bottici (2011), is the capacity to proscribe a path forward. Faced with democratic challenges to their political project, the TPM consults the past to confront the present. Sen. Mike Lee (2014) indicates "we need to do what Americans have always done – come together and press for positive change. Protesting against dysfunctional government is a great American tradition, going back to the original Tea Party in Boston, about 240 years ago" (p. 1). Though faced with insurmountable odds, the TPM can find strength in its exceptionalism. Former Congresswoman Michelle Bachmann (R-MN) argues in her State of the Union response, "America is the indispensable nation of the world. Just the creation of this nation itself was a miracle. Who can say that we won't see a miracle again?" (2011, p. 1). Articulating a path forward based in a mythic past naturalizes the political project, explaining outgrowths of neoliberalism as foundational aspects of the nation. Indeed, Wayne Allen Root links a solution steeped in individualism with the founders, arguing:

> I'm here to take the shackles off the American people. I'm here representing economic and personal freedom. I'm here to shine a light on another way forward that takes power away from government and returns it where the Founding Fathers believed it belonged- with "we the people." (Root, 2016)

Historical myth, in this context, offers a clear path forward and the lens through which the audience ought to view the TPM. History is appropriated to sanitize the political project of the present and recast the conflict as foundational rather than material.

Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY) further explains the contemporary crisis of neoliberalism in terms of the Founding Fathers, arguing:

We will begin to thrive again when we begin to believe in ourselves again, when we regain our respect for our founding documents, when we balance our budget, when we understand that capitalism and free markets and free individuals are what creates our nation's prosperity. (Paul, 2013, p. 4)

The path forward is one that couples historical rejection of tyranny with modern rejection of economic regulation. Foundational philosophical questions of democracy and natural rights are supplanted with a discussion of economic rights, with Rep. Curt Clawson (R-FL) contending in his State of the Union Response, "As we restore the voice of 'we the people' – we need to grow the private sector – and shrink the size and reach of our federal government" (Bondioli, 2015, p. 3). Concrete policy proposals and mythic justifications for action are effortlessly coupled with neoliberalism, presenting modern economic solutions as distinctly American. By articulating the salience of American identity for group members, and recasting current conflicts on a backdrop of historical conflict, the Tea Party is able to situate modern economic neoliberal tensions within a myth of return. Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT) suggests the revolution had been brewing all along, stating:

Now, as in 1773, Americans have had it with our out-of-touch national government. But if all we do is protest, our Boston Tea Party moment will occupy little more than a footnote in our history. Hopefully our leaders, reformers and citizens will join the journey from Boston to Philadelphia – from protest to progress. Together we can march forward and take the road that leads to the kind of government we do want. (Lee, 2014, para. 21)

The past is the path forward, the prior revolution a portent of things to come. In myth, neoliberalism finds a crucible, cast, and forge. In this context, myths "are expressions of a desire to act and not to accurately reconstruct the past. If they look at the past, they do so from the perspective of a 'politics of the past that is directly aimed at producing an action in the present'" (Bottici, 2011, p. 47). Harvey's (2005) democratic crisis between the public and neoliberal ideology is re-created and reformed as a conflict between freedom and tyranny, a historical battle that America has already fought and won.

Discussion: Problematizing "We the People"

The TPM's use of the Founding Fathers myth serves a distinct purpose in their recruitment and political efforts. By appropriating a powerful, shared narrative of American history, the TPM turns a noteworthy political myth into an argument for the expansion of neoliberalism. As argued above, the Founding Fathers myth is used to unify political supporters, to recast modern conflicts, and to suggest a political path forward. In this concluding part of the essay, the impact of coupling political myth and neoliberalism will be discussed. This section will cover three arguments: the significance of the ubiquity of the Founding Fathers in American education, the use of myth to establish moral and argumentative high ground, and finally the use of myth as a possibly flawed means of unification.

First, the coupling of the Founding Fathers and neoliberalism accesses the public's

surface level historical knowledge of the nation's founding, and in doing so reveals the implicit power of articulating myth alongside contemporary goals. The core tenets of the Founding Father myth occupy a central role in the American education system, and are routinely reinforced through popular media and social practices of remembrance. The relative ubiquity of figures such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams in elementary and high school text books creates a body politic whom is quick to understand allusions and narratives, but slow to question the nature of such stories. Interestingly, criticism of Washington, Jefferson, and Adams is conspicuously absent from many discussions of the founders. Often, scholarly contribution that sullies the character of a given founder is framed as controversial, being removed from curriculum or hotly contested by school boards on a yearly basis (Erekson, 2012). In an unchallenged historical narrative, one may find fertile ground for a political myth (Bottici, 2011). The body politic is historically literate enough to respond to a positive retelling of the country's founding, but not so informed as to question the claims made by the mythmaker. As such, articulation of ideology in the context of the myth (or the myth in the context of an ideology) crafts a message that has the appearance of naturalization. To wit, in January 2011, former Congresswoman Bachmann indicated in prepared comments the Founding Fathers of the country "worked tirelessly until slavery was no more in the United States" in response to questions about the historical frames the TPM routinely engaged. When confronted about the inaccuracy of the statement in a later interview, Bachmann responded, "if you look at one of our Founding Fathers, John Quincy Adams, that's absolutely true […]. He tirelessly worked throughout his life to make sure that we did in fact one day eradicate slavery" (Nichols, 2011). Bachmann attempted to recast history to justify unrelated parts of her argument. The historical accuracy, even when pressed, was immaterial to the broader contention made: to have a valid claim to the Founder's vision of the country supersedes historical fact.

The middling historical literacy of many citizens creates space for political myth, as myths recasts known information to serve the purpose of a broader ideology. Crowley (2012) argues, "myth generalizes history in such a way that the moral derived from the event becomes more important than the incidents recounted" (p. 98), thus decoupling the historical record and the justification of a given project. By pairing historical myth and ideology, rhetors craft an argument that forecloses on possible responses. Flood (1996) suggests the historical accuracy of a given myth is significant, but accuracy is difficult to mobilize as an argument. The use of historical myth creates a palatable solution, a resolution of Levi-Strauss's (1972) "logical problem" (p. 193) without the complication of accuracy. Using the Founding Fathers to justify a neoliberal project divorces the complexity of history from claims to "small government" which reinforce and sanitize a neoliberal hegemonic project to mobilize support and preclude objections based on historical evidence.

Second, the use of the Founding Fathers myth has an argumentative function to cast neoliberal principals as unassailable patriotic values. As discussed above, the TPM can use the Founding Fathers to define the boundaries of public sphere discourse to foreclose particular lines of argumentation. Indeed, Esch (2010) argues "language that carries mythical connotations gives

meaning to statements that goes beyond what is actually said. Such mythical connotations often preclude certain response" (p. 363). Wingo (2003) suggests the valorization of historical figures serves multifold purposes in liberal democratic discourse. In addition to unifying the population around a moral purpose, centering the debate on foundational principals sanitizes a position by affording it the maximum amount of credibility. Indeed, adopting the myth of the Founding Fathers is a powerful rhetorical device that gives the TPM the moral high ground as a revolutionary group. In this adoption, the moniker "radical" becomes less an indictment, and more a confirmation of the righteous mission of the organization. After all, the domestic terrorists who propagated the original Boston Tea Party were but forerunners to the broader revolution in the colonies. Rather than enemies of the state, these political visionaries were simply ahead of their time. Ultimately, disagreement with fundamental tenets of the TPM can be construed as disagreement with the founders of the country, fashioning proponents of the myth with the argumentative high ground. Through myth, the TPM is able to interweave venerable national principals into each of their positions. The implicit and assumed patriotism of their positions allows TPM supporters to sidestep any challenge to their ideology as distinctly un-American, and therefore not warranting a response.

Finally, the Founding Fathers myth serves practically as a tool of unification and sanitization. As discussed above (Burghart & Zeskind, 2010; Skocpol & Williamson 2012; Abramowitz, 2011) the Tea Party and its sympathizers are comprised primarily of political outliers who feel alienated or discontent by current policy, and often hold politically unpopular or socially unacceptable attitudes. Unifying under the banner of neoliberalism is, according to Harvey (2005), a losing proposition; the very individuals who support the TPM's neoliberal project are those who stand to lose the most from its realization. As such, the TPM's use of the Founding Fathers serves as a safe and appealing identity tactic to foster support from disparate social groups. Rather than adopt specific political platforms, or frame campaigns exclusively in terms of issues, the TPM establishment has unique incentive to frame their positions as universal.

Social solidarity is significant to the neoliberal hegemonic project, as solidarity is a mechanism to naturalize assumptions. Harvey (2005) argues "common-sense understandings among the populace at large has varied greatly depending on the strength of belief in the power of social solidarities and the importance of traditions of collective social responsibility" (p. 116). Social solidarity, and working towards a common goal, can be facilitated through activation of nationalist identities. Roy and Rowland (2003) suggest nationalist strategies of unification which focus on commonly shared cultural myths are powerful in their ability to sanitize violent and xenophobic positions around an us-them dichotomy based in historic myth. Prior to Trump's ascension to the presidency, if the TPM were to appeal outright to xenophobia, there may be an increase in their membership at the expense of social acceptance. Comparatively, if the candidates running with TPM support stray too close to the ideological center, they have to answer to angry constituents and organizational mouthpieces. The Founding Father myth simplifies this balancing act by being socially palatable, none too rigorous, and fitting the neoliberal project without detailing economic or political realities that would implicate the

groups advocating for those consequences.

Concluding Thoughts

A number of scholars (e. g. Abramowitz, 2011; Zernike, 2010) argue the TPM present a problem for American politics. It is not simply, as Skocpol and Williamson (2012) note, an issue with civility. Certainly, the TPM represents a rougher conservatism, more baldly neoliberal, and more overtly xenophobic. The relative success of the movement also demonstrates that broader, structural features of American politics are vulnerable to reactionary movements, a vulnerability that may have come to a head in the election of Donald Trump. To be sure, the use of historical myth in nationalist, identity based political movements presents a unique challenge to be addressed by future scholarship. Beasley (2001) argues strategies used to create ideological consensus risk alienating dissenting groups and further concretizing group differences. Beasley suggests strategies that appeal to the historic and moral character of America could "inhibit the possibility of good-faith discussions of diversity among the American people. By establishing the passionate identification with distinction as an un-American trait, rhetoric may keep individuals from being able to talk about their own differences" (Beasley, 2001, p. 181). In the context of the TPM, the possibility of such discussion being stifled is magnified by the xenophobic tendencies of both its supporters and the naturalization of neoliberal ideology in the public sphere.

The sanitization of a neoliberal political project through the use of political myth presents an opportunity for scholars to test the limits of particular rhetorical strategies to resolve underlying contradictions within a given ideology. Harvey (2005) suggests neoliberalism to be unwieldy, and at risk of collapsing in on itself, if only the full weight of its contradictions were realized. In light of the overarching power of political myth, however, it is possible the ideological systems that employ it may continue to gain support and power.

References

Abramowitz, A. (2011). Partisan polarization and the rise of the Tea Party movement. In *Annual Meeting of American Political Science Association, Seattle, WA*.

Aravosis, J. (2013, October). Tea Party controls 58% of GOP in Congress. Retrieved from http://americablog.com/2013/10/tea-party-controls-58-percent-gop-congress.html

Bachmann, M. (2011, January 25). Transcript: Bachmann's response to the State of the Union. Retrieved from http://www.cnn.com/2011/POLITICS/01/25/sotu.response.bachmann/

Barthes, R. (1972). *Mythologies*. New York, NY: Hill and Wang.

Beasley, V. B. (2001). The rhetoric of ideological consensus in the United States: American principles and American pose in Presidential Inaugurals. *Communication Monographs. (68)* 2, 169 –183. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03637750128055

Boaz, D. (2009, January 29). Turning the economy over to politicians. Retrieved from https://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/turning-economy-over-politicians

Bondioli, S. (2015, January 20) Text of Tea Party response to the State of the Union. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/01/20/tea-party-response_n_6489066.html

Bottici, C. (2007). *A philosophy of political myth*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Bottici, C. (2011). Towards a philosophy of political myth. *Iris: European Journal of Philosophy and Public Debate*, *3*(5), 31–52.

Bottici, C., & Challand, B. (2006). Rethinking political myth: The Clash of Civilizations as a self-fulfilling prophecy. *European Journal of Social Theory*, *9*(3), 315–336. http://doi.org/10.1177/1368431006065715

Burghart, D., & Zeskind, L. (2010). *Tea party nationalism: A critical examination of the tea party movement and the size, scope, and focus of its national factions*. Kansas City, MO: Institute for Research & Education on Human Rights.

Cain, H. (2012). Tea Party response to the State of the Union. Retrieved from http://www.teapartyexpress.org/tea-party-response-to-the-state-of-the-union-address

Chait, J. (2016, May 19). Donald Trump hasn't killed the Tea Party. He is the Tea Party. *New York Magazine.* Retrieved from http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2016/05/donald-trump-is-the-tea-party.html

Ciandella, M. (2014, February 18). The rant that launched the Tea Party still resonates 5 years later. *CNS News.* Retrieved from http://www.cnsnews.com/mrctv-blog/mike-ciandella/rant-launched-tea-party-still-resonates-5-years-later

Crowley, S. (2012). *Toward a civil discourse: Rhetoric and fundamentalism*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.

DiMaggio, A. (2011). *The rise of the Tea Party: Political discontent and corporate media in the age of Obama*. NYU Press.

Eichler, S. (2011) About Us. Retrieved from http://www.teaparty.org/about-us/

Erekson, K. (Ed.). (2012). *Politics and the history curriculum: The struggle over standards in Texas and the nation*. Springer.

Esch, J. (2010). Legitimizing the "War on Terror": Political myth in official-level rhetoric. *Political Psychology, 31*(3), 357-391.

Flood, C. (1996) *Political myth: A theoretical introduction.* New York: Garland.

Fraser, M. (2014). The end of the (Tea) Party? *New Labor Forum, 23*(2), 103-105. doi:10.1177/1095796014525944

Gilens, M. (1996). Race and poverty in America: Public misperceptions and the American news media. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, *60*(4), 515–541.

Guardino, M., & Snyder, D. (2012). The Tea Party and the crisis of neoliberalism: Mainstreaming New Right populism in the corporate news media. *New Political Science*, *34*(4), 527–548. http://doi.org/10.1080/07393148.2012.729741

Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. OUP Oxford.

Hays, J. D. (2005). Reconsidering the height of Goliath. *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, *48*(4), 701.

Herb, J. (2017, January 1) Trump's tea party budget chief on collision course with GOP hawks. *Politico.* Retrieved from http://www.politico.com/story/2017/01/trump-mulvaney-defense-budget-234077

Jossey, P. H. (2016, August 14). How we killed the Tea Party. *Politico.* Retrieved from http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/08/tea-party-pacs-ideas-death-214164

Jones, D. S. (2014). *Masters of the universe: Hayek, Friedman, and the birth of neoliberal politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Katz, M. (1989) *The undeserving poor: From the War on Poverty to the war on welfare*. New York, NY: Pantheon.

Kerenyi, K. (1963) Prolegomena in Kerényi, K and Jung, C. G., *Essays on a Science of Mythology.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Lee, M. (2014). The text of Sen. Mike Lee's Tea Party State of the Union response. Retrieved from http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/blogsoutofcontext/57463282-64/government-americans-families-inequality.html.csp

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1955). The structural study of myth. *The Journal of American Folklore*, *68*(270), 428-444.

Lowry, R. (2016, May 18) The Trump-Sanders two-step. *Politico.* Retrieved from http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/05/the-trump-sanders-two-step-213903

Malinowski, B. (2011). *Myth in primitive psychology*. London: Read Books Publishing. (Reprinted from *Myth in primitive psychology,* 1926, London: Norton).

Nichols, J. (2011, July 6) The nation: American history 101 for Bachmann. *NPR.* Retrieved from http://www.npr.org/2011/07/06/137645109/the-nation-american-history-101-for-bachmann

Norman, J. (2015). In US, support for the Tea Party drops to new low. *Gallup.* Retrieved from http://www.gallup.com/poll/186338/support-tea-party-drops-new-low.aspx

Our Core Principals (2016) Retrieved from https://www.teapartypatriots.org/ourvision/

Parker, C., & Barreto, M. (2013). *Change they can't believe in: The Tea Party and reactionary politics in America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Paul, R. (2013, February 12). Full text of Rand Paul's Tea Party response to the State of the Union. Retrieved from http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2013/02/12/full-text-of-rand-pauls-tea-party-response-to-state-of-the-union

Root, W. A. (2016) Tea Party SOTU Response on townhall.com by Tea Party Express. Retrieved from http://townhall.com/tipsheet/townhallcomstaff/2016/01/12/tea-party-response-to-the-state-of-union-address-n2103688

Rosenberg, P. (2016, October 30). Donald Trump and the "twin insurgency." *Salon.* Retrieved from http://www.salon.com/2016/10/30/donald-trump-and-the-twin-insurgency-hes-half-plutocrat-half-criminal-and-entirely-ruthless/

Rowland, R. C. (1990). On mythic criticism. *Communication Studies*, *41*(2), 101–116.

Roy, A., & Rowland, R. C. (2003). The rhetoric of Hindu Nationalism: A narrative of mythic redefinition. *Western Journal of Communication*, *67*(3), 225–248.

Scherer, M. (2016). Person of the Year: Donald Trump. *Time.* Retrieved from http://time.com/time-person-of-the-year-2016-donald-trump/

Sharockman, A. (2011, September 26). The facts about Herman Cain's 9-9-9 tax plan. *Politifact.* Retrieved from http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/article/2011/sep/26/facts-about-herman-cains-9-9-9-tax-plan/

Shreckinger, B. (2016, November 16) Trump protesters plan to build 'tea party of the left.' *Politico*. Retrieved from http://www.politico.com/story/2016/11/democrats-trump-protests-tea-party-231450

Skocpol, T., & Williamson, V. (2012). *The Tea Party and the remaking of Republican Conservatism*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

von Hayek, F. (1944). *The road to serfdom.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Weyl, B. (2017, January 5). Rand Paul pushing for GOP budget rebellion. *Politico.* Retrieved from http://www.politico.com/story/2017/01/budget-obamacare-repeal-rand-paul-233229

Williamson, V., Skocpol, T., & Coggin, J. (2011). The Tea Party and the remaking of republican conservatism. *Perspectives on Politics*, 9: 25-44.

Wingo, A. H. (2003). *Veil politics in Liberal Democratic States*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Zernike, K. (2010). *Boiling mad: Inside Tea Party America*. New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company.

Page | 70

Justifying Debate as "Cerebral Gymnastics" and as "Glorification of the Experience of Play": An Alternative to William Hawley Davis's Rejection of the "Debate as Gaming" Vision for Debate

Matthew P. Brigham, Ph.D. -- James Madison University

Matthew P. Brigham, Ph.D. (University of Pittsburgh)

Dr. Brigham is an Assistant Professor in the School of Communication Studies at James Madison University. He teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in a number of areas, including advocacy and rhetoric, and interdisciplinary programs in political communication, environmental communication, and sports communication. He competed in and coached debate at Baylor University, and has coached at the University of Pittsburgh (where he earned his Ph.D.) and at his current university. His research focuses on the use of rhetoric, argument, and debate as lenses for understanding public and academic controversy.

Proper APA citation for this article is:

Justifying Debate as "Cerebral Gymnastics" and as "Glorification of the Experience of Play": An Alternative to William Hawley Davis's Rejection of the "Debate as Gaming" Vision for Debate

Matt P. Brigham

William Hawley Davis's "Is Debate Primarily A Game?" (1916) represents an early, prominent effort to justify academic, intercollegiate debate and also, indirectly, societal debate. Davis sharply rebukes those who would conceptualize and/or practice academic debate as if it were a game, arguing instead for a version of debate that more closely approximates real democratic deliberation and thus cultivates the training necessary for meaningful public participation on serious issues. This essay explores other possible justifications for debate, including those that might re-claim play, game, and/or sport. Such alternatives suggest the importance of conceiving debate beyond tragic frames and Platonic Truth claims, in ways that might better envision the possibilities of debate and therefore provide strong public justifications for debate as academic activity and as democratic practice.

Keywords: Justifying Debate, Gaming and Play, Tragic and Comic Framing, Argumentation, Forensics

From the earliest beginnings, including but not limited to ancient Greece in the time of the Sophists, those connected with practices of academic/intellectual and/or societal debate have sought to conceptualize and justify the value of such activities. Changes in formal academic debate and in the role of debate in broader society have prompted the need, from time to time, to "give an account of oneself" (Butler, 2001; Butler, 2005), or in this case, of debate, both as intercollegiate contest and as societal, democratic activity.

William Hawley Davis's "Is Debate Primarily A Game" (1916) represents one of these prominent historical moments, though neither the first nor the last, where such a justification for the activity of intercollegiate academic debate, and indirectly of debate in American society, is offered. Davis's essay, placed among the earliest pages of what was then the new *Quarterly Journal of Public Speaking* and what is now the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, offers an argument toward fellow debate educators and scholars, and indirectly to the broader academic and American communities, regarding the proper role of debate, and as a corollary, the types of practices that should be valued in such debate. Though Davis is talking about intercollegiate debating contests, his essay cannot be isolated in such neat categories, as he explicitly joins into

---

A previous version of this essay was presented at the 2016 National Communication Association convention in Philadelphia, PA.

a broader public conversation with the likes of Theodore Roosevelt regarding debate's value and role, a conversation that is never only about academic debating contests.

Since the publication of Davis's influential essay, many writings have offered competing justifications for debate, which carry implications for how debate should look and operate, and which are also connected with the popular conversations about debate at the time. Similarly, since Davis's (1916) essay, a number of scholars have explored notions of play and gaming with regard to debate and forensics from historical (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2014, pp. 211-239), sociological (Fine, 2000; Fine, 2001), ethical (Snider, 1992), and many other perspectives. Davis's essay primarily seeks to craft a compelling justification for the activity of academic debating, and his focus is not on conducting any kind of systemic ethnographic or rhetorical analysis of texts, such as specific contest debates. Such aspects are woven into his argument, but his essay is more of an articulation of the value of debate than an empirical examination of particular practices manifesting in contest debates during his time. Similarly, my essay focuses on Davis's vision and justification, as a way of imagining what alternative academic and public justifications for debate might be possible. In part, this essay does so by asking, based on information available, why Davis and others *think* debaters are drawn to the activity, and how that relates to how debaters *themselves report* their motivations for participating in debate. To the degree that the rationale guiding debaters is out of synch with the one crafted in public justifications, such as that provided by Davis, it may suggest the need to explore, re-frame, and re-invent the stories and justifications used to ground and legitimate academic debate. This inquiry may also suggest a need to re-imagine how debate is envisioned on the level of societal debate and how the example of academic debate could suggest another path for justifying a different kind of public, societal debate.

As Gehrke and Keith (2015) note in their history of the National Communication Association, understanding such history is important because "it can illuminate the past as well as the present. . . . at the end of an era, it becomes possible to understand assumptions and patterns invisible to those who made the history" (p. 1). Thus, listening to, working to understand, and critically analyzing and evaluating the words of Davis may help to better survey the range of possibilities, previously utilized and imagined alternatives, in terms of offering visions of the possibilities and justifications for academic debate, including what is entailed by considering whether to conceptualize debate as play, sport, or game.

This essay proceeds in the following steps. First, a number of preliminary definitions and distinctions are advanced, including in terms of definitions of and varieties within gaming, as well as a discussion of types of debate, in order to guide the overall arc of the essay. Second, the major arguments that Davis (1916) delivers are presented and described. Third, Davis's vision of and justification for debate is subjected to critique, considering what his *vision of* and *justification for* debate highlights and downplays, and what other visions and justifications could be developed as alternatives, including whether the language of gaming and the preference for a comic rather than tragic framing might provide a meaningful alternative. While in part such

visions of and justifications for debate are time-dependent, in other ways they possess a relatively timeless appeal. For instance, one could read Davis's essay alongside the arguments of his primary interlocutor, J. M. O'Neill, in 2016, one hundred years later, and observe substantial overlaps between visions of and justifications for debate offered in 1916 and 2016. Indeed, when Llano (2017) examined the debate between Davis and J. M. O'Neill over the role of debate, he reminded us that, "Although competitive debate in 1916 differed in many ways from today's debate, both grappled with many of the same issues," (p. 2) to which might be added, not just practices and issues like judging, as Llano indicates, but similar issues with justifying the activity itself. Finally, implications and contributions are offered.

On Gaming

In considering the varieties of visions of and justifications for debate, as examined through the words of Davis, the role of gaming is important. Thus, this essay explores the various ways that gaming has been understood in the past, and begins to imagine and reflect on the horizon of possibilities in which both gaming and debate could be considered moving forward. To provide some starting points, this section first considers definitions of gaming and the scholarship of gaming, and then differentiates genuine and disingenuous gaming, generally and regarding debate.

Gaming and Play as Areas of Academic Scholarship

Most scholarship today that discusses "games" and/or "play" does so in relation to highly particularized and technological practices, such as video games and computer games (Torner, Trammell, & Waldron, 2014). Such scholarship analyzes computer gaming and video games as, among other things, sites of technological, social, and/or cultural practice (Aarseth, 2001). Potentially lost in this contemporary narrowing of the field is a much older scholarly trajectory that seeks to understand games, play, and often sport as well, not in terms of any particular activity or accompanying technology, but in terms of the functions that they fulfill for the human condition (Mäyrä, 2006). Such scholarship has attended to gaming and play from numerous disciplinary approaches, including psychology, sociology, and anthropology, producing an important and rich body of academic insights (e.g., Sutton-Smith, 1980; Sutton-Smith & Roberts, 1981).

There is not, however, a consensus view about how to define or understand games and play. As Murray (2006) notes, there remains a "notorious difficulty of defining games" (p. 187) while play is an "even more contested category" (p. 187). Indeed, as Murray (2006) reports, the renowned philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein saw "games as exemplary of how messy linguistic categories are" (p. 192). Similarly, Juul (2001) works through a variety of attempts to define games and play, indicating the never-ending problems that such academic clarifications encounter. Nevertheless, Juul (2001) gives particular credit to the work of Sutton-Smith in the area of game and play studies, and Sutton-Smith and Roberts (1981) offer one persuasive account for gaming and play, in this more historically and culturally situated understanding of play, games, and sports:

Play is a subset of voluntary behaviors in which the individual reverses the usual relationships of power (e.g., a child is in charge of a situation), by enacting prototypical behavior patterns in a vivid manner. *Games* are a subset of play, in which a rule-governed system of competitive behavior results in one side winning the competition. *Sports* are a subset of games, in which, in addition to the main participants, other individuals participate vicariously. (p. 426)

In the present essay, justifications for and imaginings of debate are explored, using this full range of meanings. Based on these definitions, a few particularly important characteristics seem to be clearly established. First, play is something that is voluntary, rather than coerced or mandated. Thus, anyone participating has made the choice to spend time on this activity rather than another. Second, play and games offer the opportunity to explore and even re-cast power relationships. For instance, role-playing as institutional agents, as policy debaters often do when acting as though they were representing the United States federal government, offers an opportunity for perspective-taking that exceeds the debater's own subject position and degree of personal and political power. Third, games suggest competition, with an end result that is generally either a win or a loss, and the idea of some type of rules or norms that shape a common experience for those playing. Fourth, as suggested in this essay, play might also be understood as a kind of spirit or motivation that leads people to want to take part in games and sports, even if they know they might not win. For instance, as Poulakos (1995) suggests, the Sophists identified rhetoric as being a form of playfulness: "one plays not only for a victory but also for the pleasure inherent in playing" (p. 65). Finally, those games that have formal audiences and/or "fans," who can vicariously feel as though they are participating from afar, may be termed sports. However, even games like debate, which have very small immediate audiences, can still have other actors (such as other department members and those in university administrations, politicians, and those in the media) following, monitoring, and even possibly surveilling what occurs within debate, ready to intervene should there be concerns. Thus, this work by Sutton-Smith and Roberts, supplemented with accounts by those such as Poulakos, offer a starting point, all while keeping in mind that, since there is no uniformly agreed upon definition for any of these terms, other meanings are also possible.

While the preceding definitions and characteristics provide a broader landscape with which to consider play, games, and sports, additional theorizing is necessary to understand the ways in which these categories, and gaming in particular, become subject to criticism and even scorn. Thus, what follows is an attempt to differentiate *genuine* from *disingenuous* gaming, without at this point narrowing such reflections to any particular game or activity itself.

Genuine and Disingenuous Gaming

The previously stipulated definitions of play, gaming, and sport do not seem to be particularly controversial, though the criticisms of game-based approaches to any number of social activities are plentiful and often delivered forcefully. Thus, what might account for the division between games, which appear good on their own terms, and a gaming model, which

seems fraught with suspicion and potential corruption? In part, such suspicion may relate to the extension of characteristics of games, play, and sports, by way of metaphor and analogy, to other spheres of human activity where they might not neatly and/or appropriately transfer. For instance, discussing politics or war using the language of gaming may strike audiences as an inappropriate over-extension. In part, however, what seems to make such extensions problematic is not necessarily anything tied to the defining characteristics of a "game" itself, but rather to the use and abuse of those who play games.

Page | 75

I account for this phenomenon, of those who undermine the game based on how they approach and play it, by offering a distinction between genuine and disingenuous gaming. Genuine gaming, as defined here, relates to those core characteristics of gaming previously described: *a competition with a clear outcome, a set of rules or norms that provide a basic structure by which to play the game, an activity done by choice that examines and plays with notions of power, and one that may or may not have a fan base, but likely has agents who participate vicariously, if nothing else to monitor and intervene if problems arise, either in day to day competition or in the larger vision/trajectory of the game itself.* And perhaps, most importantly for the purposes of this paper, those who seek to play games *genuinely are characterized by a spirit of play that necessarily includes a sense of anticipation and joy in partaking of the game, regardless of whether or not they amass trophies or win more frequently than they lose.*

What, then, differentiates whether someone plays a game in a disingenuous way? While there is no ultimate, hard and fast distinction, clues reside in implicit contrasts to what makes gaming good. First, whereas genuine gaming may initially attract, and even retain, participants due to competition and more specifically competitive success, defined in the narrowest sense as "winning" the game more frequently than "losing" it, it is only in disingenuous gaming that *all other purposes for gaming are subordinated to the overarching commitment to trophies and competitive success, particularly in such a way that one might regret years of dedication to a game if the final conclusion of one's playing career does not end in instrumental victory.* Because of the unhealthy dependence on victory, *victory often becomes victory at all costs, where cutting corners becomes if nothing else a necessary evil in pursuit of the ultimate goal.* Thus, whether the act be performance-enhancing drugs in athletic competitions, students of law and medical schools hiding readings from one another in the library, or even wiretapping the Watergate Hotel, the maniacal obsession with victory at all costs leads those observing such behavior to react with a feeling that something is very wrong, or at a minimum, bizarrely out of balance. Unfortunately, a certain metonymic relation may emerge, in which those who have abused games and gaming begin to stand in for all of those who participate in games, with the lesson being a strong caution against framing the most "serious" parts of the social world through a gaming metaphor. That is, the worst instances of disingenuous gaming, in arenas such as sports and politics, become so hyper-visible and criticized that people tend to forget that those guilty of such abuses are ultimately but a small subset of those involved in such games.

Debate as Cerebral Gymnastics

If one part of the focus of this essay concerns the nature and abuses of gaming and play, a closely related element relates to what is referred to when "debate" is being analyzed, critiqued, proposed, and justified, in the works of Davis and others.

On Justifying "Debate"

In 1916, the many types of and organizations housing debate were not at all like they are now. Thus, Davis would not have had to specify a particular kind of debate or an organization housing those competitions when making his critique. However, in the century since, an elaborate infrastructure has arisen, with many different kinds of debate and many debate organizations as well, suggesting a substantially changed scene for engaging in, envisioning and justifying, and/or exploring in scholarship aspects of debate.

In another way, though, there are important similarities, including that, whether in 1916 or 2016, the boundaries between public debate and academic competitive debate have always been more permeable than they might at first seem. For instance, in 1916, Davis and his colleagues were still attempting to respond to the forceful critiques made by President Theodore Roosevelt against the practice of "switch sides" debate as had become prominent, in part to make tournament competitions possible. Thus, when Davis (1916) opens his essay with the words, "Debating is under fire" (p. 171), he means not only within the academy, but also throughout society, while his own model for intercollegiate debate, "counterfeit presentment" (Davis, 1916; Llano, 2017), aims to make debate operate as "an approximation of actual conditions, of 'real life,'" (Davis, 1916, p. 173), thus again blurring the tidy distinctions between type of competitive intercollegiate debate and the model for societal debate.

In 1954, the boundaries again blurred, as the national policy debate topic was about whether the U.S. should recognize Communist China, and many universities including the service academies refused to or were not permitted to take part. This became another moment in which intercollegiate debate and societal debate became mutually implicated and where the borders of each became less precise and absolute (English et al., 2007). And most recently, in the 2016 presidential election, the lines attempting to neatly characterize competitive and public/societal debate were crisscrossed. For instance, the debate over whether Ted Cruz had been a "good debater" in college became an enduring *topos* in the election analysis, but despite attempts by those in the debate community to specify the type of debate he did, often to try to disown him, the media and the public were not at all concerned with such distinctions. Moreover, those in various parts of the debate community were called in to advise how one might debate against Donald Trump, under the assumption that what "works" in competitive academic debate has some crossover appeal in the realm of public, societal debate. Thus, contributions to the public conversation began to appear, such as Aaron Kall's edited volume *Debating the Donald* (2016), whose selections were written completely by those with expertise in intercollegiate debate, offering advice to those in the public sphere as to how to engage in societal debate against Trump.

Thus, on the one hand, a study focused on individual debate contests at intercollegiate tournament sites during any time in the last several decades suggests grounded practices that look and sound very different, depending on the sponsoring forensics organization and the type of debate being adjudicated. However, the vision, purposes, and justifications for debate, specifically in the intercollegiate setting but indirectly in terms of societal debate, suggest that for these purposes any such boundaries, of organization or event classification, are substantially de-emphasized in favor of larger discussions whose apparent borders and boundaries are highly permeable and contingent.[1]

Having framed notions of gaming, types of debate, and the purpose driving the kind of justification for debate offered by Davis (1916), the next section offers a detailed description of his overall argument, followed by a critique of his position.

Debate's Purpose as "Dealing with Serious Affairs": Davis's Critique of "Debate as Gaming"

The historical moment surrounding William Hawley Davis's 1916 essay was one of upheaval and change. His is one of the earliest essays in the newly formed academic discipline of speech communication, inaugurated with the teachers of public speaking parting ways in 1914 from their former home discipline to form their own organization—what we would now identify as the National Communication Association. Furthermore, this article was published in the new discipline's original flagship journal, the *Quarterly Journal of Public Speaking*, in just its second year of existence. Just as the academic space for public speaking teachers was very new, including its outlets for publishing scholarship, so too were conceptions of intercollegiate debating. The transition to more and more competitive approaches to debate were growing in Davis's time, and the rise of the tournament model was not far behind, as it "gained popularity among colleges in the 1920s" (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2014, p. 49).

Therefore, amidst an array of academic and organizational change, Davis's essay stands as one of the most well developed and comprehensive of the early accounts to wrestle with this challenge of providing a vision of and justification for debate, particularly as an intercollegiate, academic activity, but more broadly for societal debate his well. His essay provides such a

---

[1] The types of debate analyzed in this essay are, then, three-fold: historical debate (circa 1916), before such divisions of debate had become prominent; societal debate (which might be termed "public debate," were it not the case that public debate is its own specific genre of debate practice in contemporary times); and intercollegiate/academic debate (though at the level of overarching vision, purpose, and justification, rather than as conceived based on particular forensics organization or rules/structures of specific types of debate). Nevertheless, as a basic disclosure, the author's own experiences, as debate competitor, coach, judge, and scholar are grounded in policy debate in the NDT/CEDA tradition, and accordingly, a significant amount of the literature cited in the essay draws from that tradition. To avoid the assumption that any debate tradition, NDT/CEDA or otherwise, represents an unmarked, universal form, future scholarship could examine the ways in which discussions of debate's vision, purpose, and justification might differ, even if only subtly, across numerous debate organizations and types.

Debate as Cerebral Gymnastics

justification by attending, though at times only implicitly, to three different levels of audience: those in debate, those who were the early public speaking teachers in the new discipline, and those in the public sphere, either who were raising ever greater challenges to the legitimacy of intercollegiate debate practices and approaches and/or those trying to figure out the broader role of debate in society. Among the former, Davis specifically references the loudly pronounced condemnations offered by Theodore Roosevelt about debate, particularly in its use of "switch sides" debating practices in which debaters would be asked to alternately argue for and against the same propositions throughout their time in competition. Therefore, while there are many iterations of this debate about debate, including whether it should be understood and practiced as a game, Davis's essay occupies a unique intersection and constellation of competitive, organizational, academic, and political concerns, and his essay is one that has, since its original publication, continued to be cited and referenced in these ongoing debates (Atchison & Panetta, 2009; Cox & Adams, 1993; Llano, 2017; O'Neill, 1916; Panetta et al., 2010).

Davis and Debate's Fork in the Road: Toward What End Should Debate Be Oriented?

Davis (1916) argues forcefully for a shift in debating practices toward the civic, the practical, and the commendable, offering a sharp rebuke of those who would approach activities of intercollegiate debate as a game:

> One thing is certain: that, frankly accepted as a game, debating becomes a monstrous affair. A game is engaged in for fun; practices clearly improper in dealing with serious affairs, actual conditions, become permissible and even important in the realm of the sport; they are 'part of the game.' . . . Where shall the strategy of the debater begin or end if debating is primarily a game? . . . specious structures of argument can hardly be ruled out; the more cunningly specious they are, the more commendable, as the fruit of brilliancy and industry, they become. As participants in a game, debaters may devise artfully misleading arguments or wordings. (p. 175)

Thus, for Davis, the framing of debate alongside other games ensures that it suffers the same troubles, yet with higher stakes, as it opens the floodgates to any tactic, however deceptive, in the pursuit of immediate, instrumental victory.

Davis, throughout his essay, does at times mention specific practices in debate, but these are ultimately not his focus. Instead, vision of and justification for debate seem to be the guiding spirit behind his article: "Debating seems to me most in need of readjustment with regard to its aims, its ideals" (Davis, 1916, p. 172). In fact, Davis (1916) argues clearly that addressing the questions of vision and justification will itself translate into changes in practice: "Changing the ideal will change also the thing itself. But upon that aspect I shall not now enlarge" (p. 172). In that light, he foregrounds two visions of debate that he finds to be ultimately in tension and likely incompatible: debating as a game on the one hand, and debate "as training for the wise disposition of important factors" throughout democratic culture, in which debate is meant to serve as "an approximation of actual conditions, of 'real life'" (Davis, 1916, p. 173), on the other hand. After elaborating the constituent elements and tendencies of each approach, and

acknowledging that these two camps are more about tendencies than pure exemplification of either spirit (and thus are also not mutually exclusive), Davis (1916) suggests that the stakes of this decision could not be higher, for debate and, by implication, for democratic society as well:

> And the leading colleges, and an organization such as this Conference, cannot too promptly begin to revise and improve debating ideals and practices, if this important means of securing effective training in speaking is to be rescued from merely a place in the encyclopedia of ancient and curious games and pastimes, and made what it is capable of being—an enduring and an honorable means of preparing citizens to participate in the work of living and governing, of deciding intelligently and confidently the serious questions which from time to time arise. (p. 179)

Having identified the central elements of Davis's argument, I turn next to a critique of his essay, examining both the potential upsides to a "gaming"-type approach to debate, while also suggesting limits to approaching debate as "an enduring and an honorable means" to investigate "serious questions."

Debate as Something Exhilarating, Joyful, and Fun, and Not Merely Serious and Somber: A Rejoinder to Davis

This section argues that William Hawley Davis's image of debate as serious business causes him to be dismissive of games and sports and ultimately misunderstands both the role and potentiality of debate, game, and sport.[2] Indeed, the focus on gaming neither helps to illuminate debate's situation better nor aids in better conceptualizing games or, relatedly, sports. Ultimately, the somber and serious tone that structures the critique of Davis and those who make similar gestures serves to bracket the humanity of debate's potential participants. As Howe (1982) suggests, "human beings stand alone in the animal kingdom in their ability to laugh" (p. 2). He suggests that "perhaps one of the cardinal sins of American educational debate has been its tendency to take itself too seriously," with "the dry, uninteresting nature of the speeches" needing to "take some of the blame" for the fact that "the appeal of debate has waned in consequence" (Howe, 1982, pp. 1-2).

By way of Davis's (1916) presentation of the seriousness of debate as that which separates it from activities that are more frivolous and trivial, even "notoriously ephemeral" (p. 174) diversions like game and sport, it might be possible to understand why people do not, in general, flock to see debates in action: an inattention to debates as reaching out to the entire human.[3] Whether in 1916 or 2016, one might lament the laziness of the electorate or the short

---

[2] Though the focus in this essay is more about the possibilities of gaming and play, others have sought to expand our considerations of and even rehabilitate sport (and war) as metaphors to think about argumentation (Aikan, 2011).

[3] Though this analysis seems to point to specific changes in debate at different points in American history, I would instead suggest here that the question of seriousness and fun, broached by Davis in 1916, is examined much later by Howe in 1982, and thus contains an important continuity. Of course, in the intervening years, other changes have happened, such as the rate of delivery (in terms of words per

Debate as Cerebral Gymnastics

attention span of young people as reasons for lack of interest and attention to debate, whether academic/intercollegiate or societal, but perhaps instead it might be more fruitful to think about what might be involved in justifying debate as something fun and enjoyable rather than endlessly serious. Should insights from gaming and sport aid in that reconceptualization and re-framing of the activity's justification, those linked with academic trajectories of debate should not regard themselves as superior to or "above" such approaches.

Gaming: Motives and Motivations

As described earlier in this essay, genuine and disingenuous gaming can and should be distinguished. Any game contains participants who "con" it out of an overwhelming desire to win at all costs. But gaming can uniquely spur creative imagination. Indeed, Sutton-Smith (1980) has noted that, whereas in the past, the factory model of society minimized the value of play, "Today where the need for original and innovative thinkers cannot be satisfied at any level of government and economics, we are relatively more open to this ludic domain [play] seeking out new possibilities and new alternatives" (p. 10). Indeed, in this shift that Sutton-Smith (1980) describes, there has begun to be an examination of play's "value in its own right" and to the "glorification of the experience of play" (p. 9). Davis, however, understands games in a different and less positive way.

Davis (1916) makes a series of objections to the gaming model of debate. Unfortunately, more often than not these objections are less supported with evidence than merely assumed by Davis to be held already by the audience. For instance, he asks, "is there anyone . . . who can deny" (Davis, 1916, p. 171) the objections he poses regarding debate, and yet he has already

---

minute), but by stepping back to examine controversies over vision, purpose, and justification of/for debate, it is possible to see more continuity than sharp break across time. In Davis's time, debate was an immensely popular event with a large following: "debating is probably, next to athletics, the most widely practiced educational exercise in the country" (Davis, 1916, p. 171). Since then, audiences for most forms of intercollegiate debate have vanished, as specialization has often crowded out popular appeal. Despite such an apparent shift, there is a broader continuity. Witness, for instance, the excitement that public debates draw even now, in 2016. For instance, visits by debaters on international tours from places such as Great Britain, Japan, and Rwanda tend to draw large audiences on college campuses across the country (in fact, this is part of the context of Howe's [1982] essay, as well as Jones's [1994] essay). And the interest is not limited to international debate tours. On September 8, 2010, a public on-campus debate at the author's home university, James Madison University (JMU), between two JMU undergraduate debaters and Bruce Friedrich, former Vice President of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) on the topic of "Is Eating Meat Ethical?" "was attended by over 1000 members of the JMU, Harrisonburg and Shenandoah Valley communities" ("Past Events", n.d.). Perhaps the fun and exciting nature of these events, and the interlocutors that comprise them, suggest that audiences could be interested in other forms of debate as well. In any case, as previously indicated, the focus of this essay is not to lay out a comprehensive set of particular practices (format, kind of topic, invited audience, etc.), but rather to interrogate visions of and justifications for debate, how those do or do not link with participants' motivations to debate, and how these models/justifications inform broader societal notions of debate.

answered the question, "no sane man" (p. 171). Nevertheless, despite this strategy of argument, the critiques with which he most frequently leverages his criticisms seem not to bear on anything essential to debate itself, which could easily do without these defects and excesses. Many of these references are to practices unique to the time of Davis's essay that are no longer (and perhaps never were) common to debate, such as certain labels for one's debate opponents including "'colleague,' 'preceding speaker,' 'our opponents'" (Davis, 1916, p. 171), using "artfully misleading arguments or wordings" (p. 175) and "postpon[ing] refutation" (p. 175). Even when such practices have continued, at least in some varied form, into the present, it begs the question of whether such practices are in any way part of the essence of rather than merely incidental to a gaming approach to debate, and thus whether the ability to provide a vision of the purpose for debate that can serve as a public justification for the activity rests on such actions being identified as essential to debate when performed as a game. Ultimately, then, the correspondence, or lack thereof, between Davis's justification for and vision of debate and what is actually occurring in debate is not necessarily as important as tracing the terms under which he advocates for the activity.

Page | 81

Particularly because much of the backstory of communication, debate, and argument has foundations in the historical practice and theory of rhetoric, debate scholars should be particularly concerned with this distinction between genuine and disingenuous gaming. As Keith (2007) reminds, regarding those who would dismiss and delegitimize rhetoric, "like any technology, rhetoric can be well employed or abused . . . there are many versions of rhetoric; the question should be which will advance our common causes and which will not" (p. 3). Similarly, and in the context of debate, Rieke (1968) has argued for the need to reflect, with more nuance, on the legitimate and warped varieties of competition. He argues that the element of competition in academic debate is necessary for the "sustained intellectual intensity and depth of research" involved, and in leading students to want to participate in forensics in the first place, noting, then, that "Competition, therefore, will probably remain—and *should*" (Rieke, 1968, p. 68). Moreover, he argues that even addressing the more problematic elements of competition offer an important pedagogical opportunity: "learning to overcome the excesses and undesirable concomitants of competition is a good preparation for later life where the same struggle prevails with greater intensity" (Rieke, 1968, p. 68). Here, too, Rieke (1968) suggests that the problems of disingenuous gaming are no different for forensics than for other forms of gaming:

> As with the football coach who teaches his players to kick and punch in a pile-up, nothing is so disheartening as a teacher of forensics who coaches students to exploit the evils of competition rather than resist them. In such a case, the teacher should be eliminated—not competition itself." (p. 68)

Thus, the fact that there have always been those in games and sports who do vicious, underhanded things to each other is no more of an indictment than misuses of democracy to the concept of democracy, nor than human rights discourses manipulated to in fact deny people basic rights are a fatal indictment about the potential of human rights and its discourses, nor perhaps

Debate as Cerebral Gymnastics

most broadly than those who misuse rhetoric, argumentation, or debate thereby level any true condemnation on such arts.

Additionally, an exclusive or even primary focus on winning need not be intrinsic to a gaming approach, nor potentially even to one rooted in sporting. Jones (1994) set out to explore, in the context of debate, how notions of competition and gaming might be complicated. On the one hand, Jones (1994) points to a set of concerns that, while not the same as those articulated by Davis, are generally included in critiques of the gaming model: "If winning is the sole motivating force behind debate, then the justification of the pedagogical benefits of debate become suspect to budget-conscious administrators" (p. 66). Once he identified this as a perennial concern voiced in the literature, Jones raised a question that would seem to short-circuit the efficacy of this hyper-competitive, winning-focused approach to debate: if students are only motivated based on winning in competition, "why do students who are not continually winning maintain involvement in the activity?" (Jones, 1994, p. 66). In response, Jones (1994) reasons that there must be something more than accumulating trophies: "Since not all debaters can win, some sort of additional motivation to debate must exist" (p. 66).

What, then, helps to account better for such motivation? In what follows, Jones explores a set of motivational forces that, while tied to gaming and competition, are process-oriented rather than product-oriented—namely, such products being ballots with wins and losses. Jones (1994), through the use of surveys and follow-up interviews with debaters, identified a compelling reason for debaters to make the sacrifices of scarce resources, such as time, money, and opportunities to socialize, that are virtual requirements to participate in debate: "apparently few other activities provide the debater the opportunity to engage in the 'cerebral gymnastics' which debate requires. By participating in the cerebral-gymnastic process, debaters receive the rewards necessary to encourage them to continue in the activity" (p. 70).[4] Jones (1994) provides a more complete definition of this idea of "cerebral gymnastics," noting that debate requires significant "intellectual dexterity, flexibility, and diversity" in order to "stretch, adapt, and change with each situation" (p. 74). In so doing, Jones (1994) ultimately ends up blocking the associational logics that have equated gaming with competition with an overwhelming if not exclusive focus on winning:

> While winning is very much a part of debate, this study indicates that winning is a secondary manifestation of other primary motivational factors. Debate offers individuals a chance to engage in an activity which they perceive as involving critical thinking skills which cannot be found through other avenues. . . . cerebral gymnastics may provide a

---

[4] Though there has been a recent study (Mabrey & Richards, 2017) seeking to examine, among other things, attitudes by those in the debate community about why they participate in debate, and though this study developed and envisioned itself in part as an update to Jones' work, the categories they used to explore motivation ("social aspects," "competition," "education," "resume building," and "forms of activism" [p. 44]) did not offer as an option something similar to what Jones found in the 1994 surveys (namely, "cerebral gymnastics").

common denominator among those who chose to debate. . . . Debaters debate for a wide variety of reasons. This study suggested that there is a marked difference between reasons for debating and motivation behind those reasons. . . . Cerebral gymnastics appears to be the motivating force, or reward, behind debaters' willingness to participate in an activity which provides very few tangible rewards. By engaging in cerebral gymnastics, debaters receive reinforcement that they are intelligent . . . [and they] find a great deal of satisfaction in that experience. (pp. 73-74)

Thus, pointing to the worst tendencies of those in games and sports to undermine their various activities, even if at first it seems like their efforts are able to "succeed," is not sufficient to undermine the value of games and sports as metaphor. Similarly, just because "gaming" talk has shown up among debate participants in explaining their motivation for involvement in the activity across time, in 1916 as in 2016, that does not mean that "anything for the win" is the unexpressed warrant for that claim. Instead, something like "cerebral gymnastics," which is a valuing of process rather than a win-loss record or a trophy count, already interrupts the neat, clear-cut distinctions with which Davis and many others have sought to undermine the gaming approach to debate.

Envisioning Debate's Rationale Outside of the Tragic Frame

Gaming may represent what Kenneth Burke and others have termed a comic corrective to the overly dramatic framing of the need for debate in academia and in a democratic society. Davis's reference to debate as being not just "about jest" or "playthings," but about "vitally important business," suggests the tragic frame. Through something like a comic "argument as play," gaming may re-humanize visions of and justifications for debate. Indeed, what Hariman (2007) argued, in defending Jon Stewart, might be capably extended to the need for a comic corrective for debate in society because, although differences in political culture clearly exist between 1916 and 2016, the sense of the precariousness of responsibility over public affairs then and now also suggests a fundamental similarity. Hariman (2007) claims that in contemporary political culture "we need a laugh" that reminds us of our "common fallibility," "the most authentically democratic attitude" (p. 275). The alternative, Hariman (2007) notes, is more problematic, since "democratic politics should never be a search for a Redeemer" as such a quest "can only lead to the wrong candidates in the short run, and authoritarian rule before long" (p. 276). Thus, he concludes, "Frankly, we all need to lighten up a bit, and here's why: only by admitting to absurdity and moving through laughter can one become really serious today" (Hariman, 2007, p. 276).

Davis's essay, in embodying a rhetorical approach that might be termed similar to a diatribe or a polemic, points directly to what the comic corrective was needed for in the first place, according to Burke and as explored by Hariman, as Davis's argument seems bound within the tragic frame. For instance, Davis (1916) suggests a tone of evil/manipulation rather than fallibility and mistakenness on the part of those he implies are his opponents: "If in establishing courses in debating and encouraging debate contests our colleges have simply been indulging the

Page | 83

Debate as Cerebral Gymnastics

sporting instinct, I have been grossly deceived" (p. 174). Moreover, he explains the problems of debate as a game with deeply tragic expressions: "debate becomes a monstrous affair. . . . clearly improper in dealing with serious affairs" (Davis, 1916, p. 175). In contrast, he prefers another vision for debate, because "I am impressed by the *reality* involved in a debating contest, by the inescapable fact that the debate deals with truth rather than jest, with things and not with playthings. . . . [a] method of dealing with pressing and important affairs" (Davis, 1916, p. 177). Holding to the gaming model is, for Davis (1916), even "suicidal" (p. 178), and the way that he rests his case represents a clear-cut preference for the tragic and, following Hariman, for a redeemer, though in this case the savior would be an activity rather than an individual. Such redemption, Davis (1916) argues, is only possible if debate, as something "important," "enduring," "honorable," and meant to decide "serious questions," can be "rescued" from occupying "merely a place in the encyclopedia of ancient and curious games and pastimes" (p. 179).

As indicated previously, overly serious debate, which guts the activity of affect and the human connection, including through humor, might actually be what is likely to relegate the activity to "the encyclopedia of ancient and curious games and pastimes" (Davis, 1916, p. 179). Notably, Burke made clear that the comic is not identical to the comedic, but perhaps conceptualizing and justifying debate might require some of both. I argue that is necessary to characterize politics, and for the purposes of this essay, debate practices and approaches to debate, as being about fallibility, mistakes, and errors, rather than evil sins, fools who are mistaken rather than villains who are challenging the ability for our society and for debate, as part of that society, to achieve its potential (Smith & Voth, 2002). It is also important, though, to be able to laugh, whether as described by Howe or by Hariman, rather than assuming that foolish and exaggerated practices in debate are worthy of scorn and derision, as Davis's essay as a whole performs more often than not. Indeed, as Burke (1937/1984) famously suggests, "The progress of human enlightenment can go no further than in picturing people not as *vicious*, but as *mistaken*" (p. 41). Such mistakenness is not a partisan challenge toward those with whom one disagrees, but an awareness that "people are *necessarily* mistaken, that *all* people are exposed to situations in which they must act as fools, that *every* insight contains its own special kind of blindness," allowing one to "complete the comic circle, returning again to the lesson of humility that underlies great tragedy" (Burke, 1937/1984, p. 41). Indeed, as just one illustration from a modern context: judging by the times when this essay's author has introduced video clips of "speed reading" to undergraduate students, such moments generally tend to produce laughter, a feeling like such activity is foolish and a foible among these otherwise intelligent people, rather than derision, scorn, and anger that such practices are going to undermine democratic deliberation that is so *seriously* needed and cannot be delayed.

Moreover, while Hariman's (2007) defense of Stewart is often grounded in the idea that his cynicism, so to speak, is deployed in relation to the flawed democratic culture it parodies and challenges, Davis's approach, as described by Llano (2017), uneasily negotiates a fundamental tension, regarding the value of a copy when what is being copied is deeply problematic. In

Llano's (2017) view, the virtue of Davis's "counterfeit presentment" is to be found in its "idea of verisimilitude": "Debate pedagogy was to be judged by how closely a contest debate resembled a real deliberation," because for debate to "serve as a mode of training for citizenship in a democracy, it had to represent a real deliberation as closely as possible" (p. 7). In this way, the counterfeit transitions to the real. However, Llano (2017) also points to Davis's model as being more explicitly normative, in seeing debate as a way to "teach good practices in crafting arguments for civil society" such that there should be "no distinction" between "'good debate' in educational settings" and "good argumentation in the civic arena" (p. 6). Though Llano (2017) dismisses O'Neill's objections, saying that the counterfeit did not need to "be a copy of bad practices in the public sphere" but could instead "help improve the 'real thing'" (p. 9), there seems to be a real risk that, should a democratic culture be flawed, debate as counterfeit may be too focused on reproduction of what is already present rather than offering viable counterfactuals of what could become a better civic space.

Page | 85

Advancing Truth or Self-Risk/Vulnerability?

While Davis advocates shifting debate from game to truth, most scholars studying arenas such as debate, argument, rhetoric, and communication, now reject Platonic Truth, even though many individuals who inhabit formal debate spaces as well as society as a whole continue to believe in and aspire toward this impossible achievement. Instead, it might be more useful to re-conceptualize debate around the values and goals of self-risk and mutual vulnerability, transforming Davis's "debater's argument" into a praiseworthy model that is capable of cultivating democratic habits. In imagining alternative possibilities for justifying debate, including in times like the present moment, when polarization seems to be everywhere, and social media and other technologies of communication and deliberation allow people to avoid and in fact refuse to speak across differences, cultivating democratic habits such as encouraging "self-risk" might be more urgent and fruitful than trying to force a particular notion of Truth on a highly pluralistic, diverse culture.

Davis's essay seems constantly attached to a larger intellectual mission grounded in a Platonist conception of Truth, making it difficult to reconcile with those who have identified Davis's advocacy as being in line with the project of the Sophists (Llano, 2017). For instance, he says that his approach "will tend to render futile brilliancy and industry, however great, when employed in advocating falsehood" (Davis, 1916, p. 173), which seems to read directly from Plato in his advocacy for dialectic as opposed to rhetoric. He also calls his approach one that involves a "'search for truth' aspect" (Davis, 1916, p. 173), and elsewhere suggests debate's role to be in "converting to truth" as opposed to simply recognizing "superiority in debating" (p. 175). Indeed, Davis (1916) disparages the gaming approach, conceding that perhaps it would be "superb fun," but then asking, "But will it not be despicable? Would any of us be proud of having a share in producing it?" (p. 176). Such a moment recalls, in Plato's *Phaedrus*, Socrates berating young Phaedrus for enjoying the creation and hearing of speeches on love without any reference to whether the arguments they make tend toward the True or Good or Beautiful.

Debate as Cerebral Gymnastics

The examples of Davis's reliance on a truth-centered model for debate could extend indefinitely. The point is that this model is one that many in the newly formed academic discipline (at that time, of public speaking and speech) would have already rejected, and one that most would be even more wary of now. A Platonic foundation for academic debate reduces debate to eliminating error and falsehood in the pursuit of discovering and uncovering Truth, in a way not dissimilar to Vatz's (1973) observation that the objectivism in Bitzer relegates rhetoric as a discipline to the bottom of the academic ladder. Such an approach begs the question as to why public speaking, rhetoric, debate, and argumentation are even necessary, and why they cannot already be accounted for by philosophers.

Debate could offer an underpinning that did not rest on notions of objective Truth claims. For instance, the work of two debate luminaries, Wayne Brockriede (1972) and Douglas Ehninger (1970), proposed that argumentation and debate should be about self-risk and vulnerability toward one's co-arguer. Dowling (1983), building on Brockriede's three-fold metaphor structure of arguer as rapist, seducer, or lover, suggests that the former two approaches are far too common in debate. By incorporating Brockriede's insights, Dowling (1983) "provides forensics educators with valuable guidance in improving the development of competitive debaters" (p. 237). Perhaps these dangerous tendencies as revealed in the approaches of rapist and seducer, rather than gaming itself, might better characterize the situation for which debate should feel compelled to change, just as inappropriate humor, rather than humor itself, might better focus our conversation about improving debate and its possibilities. Howe (1982) notes, in his call for humor and "wit" in debate, that such tactics should be enjoyable for all involved and "not be embarrassing or personally derogatory to anyone in the room" (p. 2). Therefore, the combination of self-risk and wit/humor help to create a situation whereby weaknesses of debate in its current form might be explored, thus beginning to set an avenue for reform that does not confine itself to the lowest hanging fruit, in this case an obsession with critiquing and condemning the gaming approach to debate.

Does Gaming Justify Debate As It Is Or Can It Be Used to Challenge and Transform It?

Davis (1916) claims that debate's leaders should regard debate as "an improvable, not a finished, product" (p. 172). In Burke's *Attitudes Toward History* (1937/1984), he opens by reflecting on his title: "Though the tendency is to pronounce the title of this book with the accent on *history*, so far as meaning goes the accent should be on *attitudes*" ("Introduction," para. 1). As an analogue, when talking about debate as a game, it is often assumed that the meaning of the word *game* is fixed, and that what is being addressed is whether *debate* as it exists now or could exist is or is not like a game. And this is misleading, in part because games as well as sports are not nearly as static and fixed as may be suggested in this equation. Even competitive, intense games have evolved, and in an interrelated sense, the vision of and justification for them has as well. Basketball has changed the shot clock's length, football has outlawed hits to the head, while in baseball, where tradition is sacred and thus such a radical change was never thought possible, instant replay now exists. But what does this mean for the way that debate is envisioned

and justified, regardless of particular historical occasion, governing association, type of debate, or more particularly still, specific practices within any given type or tradition of debate?

Universities always and unavoidably implicate debate, while benefiting in many ways from having debate programs (Hingstman et al., 2010, pp. 127-128). Debate programs, with rare exception, cannot and do not exist without an institutional home, one that can provide funding and legitimacy (Hingstman et al., 2010, p. 135). Debate, then, is closely interrelated with the university structure, to the point that both sides might find opportunities for mutual benefit, but might also instead find this relationship to be a nuisance or, at a minimum, an inconvenience at times (Mitchell et al., 2010). As its institutional host, universities at times make requests of what debate should become on their campuses (Hingstman et al., 2010, p. 137). And, the ways in which universities approach debate may too be "improvable and not finished," potentially to the gain of debate programs and their respective universities (Louden, 2010). But to work, I would argue that both spheres must be seen as dynamic, unfinished, and capable of modification. When debate programs request higher budgets and more coaches, without any given and take, the implicit assumption being conveyed appears to be that debate is fixed and unchangeable, and thus that debate as an activity should just stick with the "status quo" (Keith, 2010, pp. 22-23). Universities might question why debate itself cannot change: less travel, reducing the coaching and card-cutting "arms race," and/or adopting a "comprehensive" program including public debate, debate outreach, and debate in the curriculum (Newman, 1970). Thus, I argue that those in both academia and debate should see their own and each other's practices as dynamic and revisable. And since those in debate have less direct access to structures of university administration writ large, I believe that a first step might be to work a vision of debate as being about self-risk and vulnerability into the way that relations with universities occur. How, then, in crafting justifications for debate, might the vision of debate be crafted in a way that is not purely internally-focused, toward fellow members of the debate community, and not already fully constituted/defined in terms of its goals and practices? That is, can meaningful calls for critique and improvement be made toward debate if debate is grounded in justifications rooted in play, game, sport, and fun and joy?

In Burke's *Counter-Statement* (1931/1968), he explained the reason for its title as follows: "We have chosen to call it *Counter-Statement* solely because—as regards its basic concerns and tenets—each principle it advocates is matched by an opposite principle flourishing and triumphant today. Heresies and orthodoxies will always be changing places, but whatever the minority view happens to be at any given time, one must consider it as 'counter'" (p. 7). Though the names of the players change, and the battle lines are drawn differently, there is much to recommend a reading of continuity from Davis's day to the present. While Davis (1916) envisioned his own argument as going against the consensus of the time, regarding the proper attitude toward debate, in many ways the majority opinion by scholars currently writing about debate appears to be that the game and/or sports metaphor for debate is problematic. For instance, a recent essay by Kaylor (2015) concludes that, "as a result of the game metaphor's potential pedagogical problems, it should not be used as a primary way of depicting competitive

Debate as Cerebral Gymnastics

debate" (p. 43). Conversely, within the debate community, there may be more acceptance of this gaming metaphor, in terms of day to day practice if not in overarching justifications for the activity. In that role, it may serve as a tool of legitimation for what is already occurring in debate, rather than as a challenge to it. Thus, this essay takes up the challenge offered by Davis (1916) in the form of a double counter-statement: challenging the predominance of the critique and rejection of the "debate as game" metaphor in scholarship while simultaneously resisting debate's adoption of the game metaphor as a justification for maintaining and continuing its current practices, individually or as a whole. One exemplar that makes this double move can be found in Jones (1994), who both makes a scholarly argument for a type of gaming, while also challenging debate as it is conceptualized and justified. Rather than merely legitimizing current debate practices, Jones (1994), after challenging competition as being merely about "winning," suggests the potential to incorporate cerebral gymnastics into a debate program, without focusing solely on the tournament mode:

> A final conclusion regarding this study involves the possible need to rethink present program orientation. Programs required to justify budgets in terms of dollars spent and students serviced may want to explore providing non-competitive cerebral gymnastics opportunities as a means of attracting more students. Not long ago, I watched as two members of the traveling British debate team "beat up" on a good American open debate team, although the British team members never had competed in an intercollegiate debate competition. They were products of English debating "societies" which meet periodically, usually over a meal, to discuss and debate current events. On-campus activities offering cerebral gymnastics opportunities, without the required travel and competitive environment, might provide greater numbers of program participants for year-end reports. (pp. 73-74)

Note that this justification does not require a serious, even tragic orientation to the grave importance of debate in society, but instead embodies more of the unending, playful spirit characterizing the Sophists (Poulakos, 1995).

As this example from Jones (1994) illustrates, this essay is not meant to simply endorse debate in its current form. Indeed, there is much in debate that is in need of systematic reflection and change, though the list of such concerns is beyond the scope of this essay, just as Davis avoided making his 1916 essay into a comprehensive catalogue of the ills of debate at that time. The point of my critique is that gaming does not seem like it is or has ever actually been the primary cause or even a highly significant contributing factor in debate's argued weaknesses. Framing debate as needing ever more serious and sober analysis, particularly by divorcing it from gaming, sport, and fun, seems as likely, perhaps more likely, to turn people away from debate rather than toward it. And a model that emphasizes playfulness and affect, including joy, better suggests a public sphere role and relevance and attractiveness for debate. Conversely, writing out of public discussion those who would be the equivalent of spectators in the stands of mass sporting events is ultimately justification for technocratic rule by the few, if one decides

that people will not or cannot engage "intelligently and confidently the serious questions which from time to time arise" (Davis, 1916, p. 179). The question, then, facing those invested in debate, as competitor, judge, coach, and/or debate scholar, is whether they want people to come back to watch and participate in academic and/or societal debate, and if so, which mechanism is most likely to produce that change? Perhaps such inquiry might begin by observing that the problems of debate might spring from the ways in which it has potentially become banal, untheorized, and decontextualized, and that what is identified as "gaming" is more a reflection of that highly insulated model.

Page | 89

Returning to this essay's start, perhaps what matters, and what is needed, is for debate to, in the words of Butler (2001, 2005), give an account of itself as a way of justifying debate in and to society. A gaming or sports accounting of debate, if executed well, could be persuasive, such as with the focus on cerebral gymnastics as a guiding justification for the activity. And perhaps, in exonerating the spaces of game, play, and sport, it might be possible and even desirable to stop ceding the space for such activities in a democratic culture such that they get taken over by primetime television, including news networks, passing off some of the truly slimy as if it adequately embodied any of academic debate's conceptions of debate and argument and rhetoric. There are many ways to account for debate's goals and purposes in the 21st Century, and the possibility need not be ruled out, in advance, that game and sport could operate persuasively in debate's favor without cheapening it or causing it to go forever off course. As Sutton-Smith (1980) has argued, there may be much more possibility and richness to gaming and play than has been previously admitted:

> [R]ecreative behaviour is a cultural domain more likely to be open to change. . . . a people's play is a commentary on their kind of society and their management of that society. It tells us . . . about our own contradictions and compromises. At the same time it gives us imagined solutions. . . . Gathering people together into larger communities for festivals and games may generate the kind of community feeling, which is later institutionalized in a more enduring way. At the very least it is a commentary on our desire. When different groups celebrate together . . . they bring to their lives the kinds of vividness which we have earlier called play or flow. These have in them the seeds of a life which is more interesting and more connected in an age when many of the older forms of connection no longer seem so available or so meaningful. (p. 10)

Thus, gaming and play, understood as sites of cultural longing and human community, of who a people has been and who they could and would like and aspire to be, creates an open space in which questions can be asked and explored that could radically re-make and re-mobilize democratic and civic space. Rather than dismissing such a large sphere of human activity and becoming out of hand, those invested in debate, as a formal academic, intercollegiate set of practices, or in debate, as a way of societal exchange in the public sphere, would do well to make use of the spaces of play and gaming in order to argue for an academic activity and a democratic

Debate as Cerebral Gymnastics

society more in line with their visions of the joyous and the just than what is available in the current moment and what was available for Davis in 1916 as well.

Debating the "Serious Affairs" of the Day: Must We Be So Serious?

Were one to grant, following Davis, that the vital affairs of the day demand that debate serve as a positive force in engaging in democratic discussion and decision-making regarding current events of momentous importance, does this indicate that the proper attitude must be somber, angry, and/or serious as regards the importance and role of debate, rhetoric, and advocacy? I would argue, based on insights from other arenas of social activism, that we should not pin our hopes on this strategy, that is, on treating the serious seriously. Indeed, social justice activist and writer Michael Albert (2002/2015a) opens his advice to would-be advocates by invoking a comparison to games, and more specifically, sports, by arguing, "We might not like it, but we, too, have to try to win just like professional athletes do. That's the currency of success in social struggle" (p. 324). Despite the many serious issues that he argues must be addressed by those advocating for social and economic justice, or perhaps because of it, Albert (2002/2015b) specifically calls attention to the vital function of joy and levity if the revolutionaries he seeks to empower are to succeed in their instrumental goals:

> Trying to revolutionize society because it is fun is no joke. That is to say, if social change isn't fun, the probability that people will keep trying to do it through hard time and over the long haul is vastly reduced. So, it's actually important that people are engaged in activism because it's preferable to doing other things, which means again that we need a movement that does not involve perpetually going through a gauntlet of debilitating criticism that makes us feel rotten. Not that we can't be critical when appropriate, but we can't allow life in the movement to be so depressing that it's worse than working in a factory. Life in the movement can't be more boring, more negating, than life out in the real world. If we have a movement like that, what is the probability that it's going to win? (pp. 328-329)

The purpose of this essay is not to provide a blueprint for what debates filled with fun would look like. That is most likely dependent on the particular context and moment in which any given debate occurs. Instead, my overriding argument, in analyzing Davis alongside other possible, potential and imagined, visions of and justifications for debate, is that those enunciating such visions and defenses should consider couching the activity in a framework of joy and "cerebral gymnastics" rather than exclusively as something meant for the very serious tasks of attending to the grave state of democratic deliberation with serious approaches to engaging one another. Not only does a playful, joyous, and gaming-inflected model of debate affect who seeks to participate, and thus who constitutes the community, but it also suggests a vision for debate in democratic society that offers an alternative to being and becoming ever more serious and even tragic about those serious issues facing society.

References

Aarseth, E. (2001). Computer game studies, year one. *Game Studies*, 1(1). Retrieved from http://gamestudies.org/0101/editorial.html

Aikin, S. (2011). A defense of war and sports metaphors in argument. *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 44 (3), 250-272.

Albert, M. (2015a). Stop whining, start winning. In E. Ammons & M. Roy (Eds.), *Sharing the earth: An international environmental justice reader* (pp. 324-328). Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press. (Original work published 2002)

Albert, M. (2015b). Sustaining radicalism. In E. Ammons & M. Roy (Eds.), *Sharing the earth: An international environmental justice reader* (pp. 328-329). Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press. (Original work published 2002)

Atchison, J. & Panetta, E. (2009). Intercollegiate debate and speech communication: Historical developments and issues for the future. In A. A. Lunsford (Ed.), *The SAGE handbook of rhetorical studies* (pp. 317-333).

Bartanen, M. D., & Littlefield, R. S. (2014). *Forensics in America: A history*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Brockriede, W. (1972). Arguers as lovers. *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, 5(1), 1-11.

Burke, K. (1968). *Counter-statement*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (Original work published 1931)

Burke, K. (1984). *Attitudes toward history* (3rd ed., with a new afterword). Berkeley: University of California Press. (Originally published 1937)

Butler, J. (2001). Giving an account of oneself. *Diacritics*, 31(4), 22-40.

Butler, J. (2005). *Giving an account of oneself*. New York: Fordham University Press.

Davis, W. H. (1916). Is debating primarily a game? *Quarterly Journal of Public Speaking*, 2 (2), 171-179.

Dowling, R. E. (1983). "Arguers as lovers": Implications for forensics education. *Communication Education*, 32 (2), 237-241. DOI: 10.1080/03634528309378534

Ehninger, D. (1970). Argument as method: Its nature, its limitations and its uses. *Speech Monographs*, 37, 101-110.

English, E., Llano, S., Mitchell, G. R., Morrison, C. E., Rief, J., & Woods, C. (2007). Debate as a weapon of mass destruction. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 4(2), 221-225. DOI: 10.1080/14791420701296646

Fine, G. A. (2000). Games and truths: Learning to construct social problems in high school debate. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 41(1), 103-123.

Fine, G. A. (2001). *Gifted tongues: High school debate and adolescent culture*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Hariman, R. (2007). In defense of Jon Stewart. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 24 (3), 273-277.

Hingstman, D., Hahn, T., Cram Helwich, D., Harris, S., Lain, B., Thompson, J., Lowry, S. (2010). Development and advancement in the coaching profession: A report on professional debate coaching positions and benchmarks for the profession. In A. D. Louden (Ed.), *Navigating opportunity: policy debate in the 21st century* (pp. 127-46). New York, NY: International Debate Education Association.

Howe, J. H. (1982). Debate should be a laughing matter. *CEDA Yearbook*, 3, 1-3.

Jones, K. T. (1994). Cerebral gymnastics 101: Why do debaters debate? *CEDA Yearbook*, 15, 65-75.

Kall, A. (Ed.). (2016). *Debating the Donald*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

Kaylor, B. (2015). It's all fun and games until someone loses the idea: Implications of the 'game' metaphor for competitive debate. *The Forensic of Pi Kappa Delta*, 100, 33-44.

Keith, W. (2010). Keynote address: A new golden age—intercollegiate debate in the twenty-first century. In A. D. Louden (Ed.), *Navigating opportunity: policy debate in the 21st century* (pp. 11-26). New York, NY: International Debate Education Association.

Keith, W. M. (2007). *Democracy as discussion: Civic education and the American Forum Movement*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Llano, S. M. (2017). The counterfeit presentment: An early 20th century model of intercollegiate debate as civic education. *Argumentation and Advocacy*, 53(2), 90-102. doi: 10.1080/00028533.2017.1304983

Louden, A. D. (Ed.). (2010). *Navigating opportunity: policy debate in the 21st century*. New York, NY: International Debate Education Association.

Mabrey, P. E., & Richards, K. (2017). Evidence based decision making and assessment for the Cross Examination Debate Association. *Contemporary Argumentation & Debate*, 36, 1-45.

Mäyrä, F. (2006). A moment in the life of a generation (why game studies now?). *Games and Culture*, 1(1), 103-106. doi: 10.1177/1555412005281912

Mitchell, G. R., Woods, C. S., Brigham, M., English, E., Morrison, C. E., Rief, J. (2010). The debate authors working group model for collaborative knowledge production in forensics scholarship. *Argumentation and Advocacy*, 47, 1-24.

Newman, R. P. (1970). The tournament in a balanced debate program. In J. H. McBath (Ed.), *Essays in forensics* (pp. 101-104). Hannibal, MO: Standard Printing Company.

O'Neill, J. M. (1916). Game or counterfeit presentment. *Quarterly Journal of Public Speaking*, 2(2), 193-197.

Panetta, E., Mosley-Jensen, W., Fitzmeier, D., Hall, S., Kuswa, K., Lee, E., Steinberg, D., Sternhagen, F., & Turner, J. (2010). Controversies in debate pedagogy: Working paper. In A. D. Louden (Ed.), *Navigating opportunity: Policy debate in the 21st Century*. New York, NY: International Debate Education Association.

Past events: Fall semester 2010. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.jmu.edu/debate/madison-debate-society/past-events/fall-2010.shtml

Poulakos, J. (1995). *Sophistical rhetoric in classical Greece*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press.

Rieke, R. D. (1968). A philosophy of forensics. In D. F. Faules & R. D. Rieke (Eds.), *Directing forensics: Debate and contest speaking* (pp. 33-78). Scranton, PA: International Textbook Company.

Smith, C., & Voth, B. (2002). The role of humor in political argument: How 'strategery' and 'lockboxes' changed a political campaign. *Argumentation and Advocacy*, 39, 110-129.

Snider, A. C. (1992). Ethics in academic debate: A gaming perspective. In D. A. Thomas & J. P. Hart, *Advanced debate: Readings in theory, practice & teaching* (4th ed.). Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

Sutton-Smith, B. (1980). Play as flow and innovation: the new meanings. In J. Shallcrass, B. Larkin, & B. Stothart (Eds.), *Recreation reconsidered into the Eighties* (pp. 9-12). Auckland, NZ: Auckland Regional Authority and New Zealand Council for Recreation and Sport.

Sutton-Smith, B., & Roberts, J. M. (1981). Play, games, and sports. In H. C. Triandis (Ed.), *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology: 4. Developmental psychology* (pp. 425-471). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Torner, E., Trammell, A., & Waldron, E. L. (2014). Reinventing analog game studies. *Analog Game Studies*, 1(1). Retrieved from http://analoggamestudies.org/2014/08/reinventing-analog-game-studies/

Vatz, R. E. (1973). The myth of the rhetorical situation. *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, 6 (3), 154-161.

Page | 93

Framing the President: Franklin D. Roosevelt, Participatory Quests, and the Rhetoric of Possibility in World War II Propaganda

James J. Kimble – Seton Hall University

James J. Kimble (PhD , University of Maryland)

James J. Kimble is Associate Professor of Communication & the Arts at Seton Hall University. He researches domestic propaganda, war rhetoric, and visual imagery. He is the author of *Mobilizing the Home Front: War Bonds and Domestic Propaganda* (2006) and *Prairie Forge: The Extraordinary Story of the Nebraska Scrap Metal Drive of World War II* (2014), as well as a co-editor, with Trischa Goodnow, of *The 10¢ War: Comic Books, Propaganda, and World War II* (2016). He thanks the editor and anonymous reviewers for their helpful suggestions on the manuscript.

Proper APA citation for this article is:

Kimble, J. J. (2017). Framing the president: Franklin D. Roosevelt, participatory quests, and the rhetoric of possibility in World War II propaganda. *Speaker & Gavel*, *54*(1), 94-112.

Framing the President: Franklin D. Roosevelt, Participatory Quests, and the Rhetoric of Possibility in World War II Propaganda

James J. Kimble

This essay examines The Life of Franklin D. Roosevelt, a comic book distributed internationally by the Office of War Information (OWI) in late 1942, as a creative form of international propaganda. Drawing from existing research in comic scholarship, narrative theory, and visual inquiry, this case study suggests that OWI's booklet represented a fusion of verbal and visual appeals, which together worked to produce a potent depiction of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's character traits and exceptionality. The analysis concludes that this depiction ultimately presented the president as the protagonist of a romantic quest narrative, one that actively invited foreign readers to envision an Allied victory in the ongoing war.

Keywords: propaganda, visual rhetoric, quest narratives, comic books, World War II

President Franklin D. Roosevelt increasingly became a primary target for Joseph Goebbels's Nazi propaganda machine throughout 1942. Adolf Hitler had reportedly long feared FDR the "most of all the United Nations leaders" (Shirer, 1942, p. B7). The surprise American victory at Midway in June and the successful Allied invasion of North Africa in November demonstrated to the world that the president's leadership was wresting the initiative on the war fronts away from Axis forces. Goebbels's propaganda thus began to proclaim that FDR was a warmonger, a "servant of the Jews" (Herf, 2006, p. 165), a marionette, and, echoing his Führer's own words, little more than "the half-Jew Roosevelt" (p. 170). The derisive attacks, wrote journalist William L. Shirer, were proof that the president had "become 'world enemy number one' to the Nazi propagandists" (p. B7).

The Roosevelt administration was aware of the personal barbs. The Office of War Information (OWI), the government organization responsible for managing the nation's worldwide impression, noted internally that "the increasing Axis propaganda attacks on his [FDR] personality show that our enemies clearly recognize the influence of the President of the U.S. over the minds and hearts of men" (OWI, Overseas Operations Branch, 1942, p. 3). The issue, of course, was how to respond to them. At length, OWI recommended that its international propaganda operation "should make greater use of the personality of the President as a symbol of high ideals and of the coming liberation of mankind" (p. 3). President Roosevelt, as OWI saw it, needed to become a worldwide propaganda symbol in his own right.

Such a strategy would not necessarily be easy to undertake. OWI was already producing poster images of FDR, which were visually simple, inexpensive to print, and suitable for dissemination in places across the globe. Yet the agency could hardly expect simple poster portraits, however compelling the artistry, to make a persuasive case to international viewers that the president was not a villainous warmonger but instead a worthy leader who would be instrumental in liberating humankind from Axis tyranny. Conversely, the more argumentatively complex appeals that the organization typically disseminated to Americans on the home front (e.g., OWI, 1942, 1943) would have been overwhelmingly difficult to adapt to an international, multilingual context.

OWI's primary response to this conundrum was as creative as it was eye catching. Taking a cue from the Treasury Department — which had recently tried to motivate American children to participate in its war bond program by producing a full-length comic book full of cartoon characters scheming ways to purchase war stamps and bonds (U.S. Treasury Department, 1942) — OWI's propagandists crafted a comic book biography of the president for international distribution. It was called *The Life of Franklin D. Roosevelt: The 32nd President of the United States of America* (OWI, [1942]; hereinafter *Life of FDR*). By January 1943, the organization's linguistic team had translated the comic book manuscript into nearly a dozen languages. Some 365,000 copies were soon on their way to a worldwide audience ("Publications," ca. 1943/1986, frame 455).[1]

Even a casual reading of *Life of FDR* (OWI, [1942]) suggests that OWI's propagandists were up to the task of promoting Roosevelt as a potent international symbol.   OWI chose to offer a graphic depiction of Roosevelt's life story in hopes that it would be readily transferable across cultures. This seemingly straightforward approach had its advantages, for as Chris Murray points out, "people don't work, fight and die for complex ideologies" but rather "are motivated by . . . myths that simplify and package ideology into forms that are emotionally stirring" (2000, p. 151). Indeed, because it appeared to be little more than a simple narrative portrait in cartoon form, OWI's comic book was unlikely to have come across as either imposing or incomprehensible.

Nonetheless, a more sustained scrutiny of *Life of FDR* (OWI, [1942]) reveals that it was not as transparent as it might have seemed to be at first glance. Rather, it was actually a sophisticated appeal that harnessed all of the strategic elements of "sequential art," as Will Eisner defines the comic book genre (2008, p. 7). In fact, as I will demonstrate, the booklet was a surprisingly potent propaganda vehicle whose form and content were perfectly suited to OWI's needs as well as to its target audience. While the comic book was just one of countless initiatives in the war's various propaganda fronts, its prominent role in defending FDR before a worldwide audience amid the greatest war in history makes it particularly noteworthy.

One of my goals in this essay, then, is to reanimate *Life of FDR* (OWI, [1942]), an important wartime appeal that has received little attention from propaganda scholars.[2] Specifically, this case study of that key propaganda artifact proceeds through a rhetorical and

visual criticism of the comic book's strategic approach. I situate the case study within the context of the so-called "cartoon war," Steve M. Barkin's term for OWI's "concerted and intense effort" to study and, at least occasionally, to deploy "cartoon portrayals of soldiers and war, of the enemy and the homefront" (1984, p. 113). Here, the project joins a growing scholarly interest in the colorful collision of comic art and World War II (e.g., Goodnow & Kimble, 2016; Hirsch, 2014; Husband, 2013; Lent, 2014; Murray, 2011; Ribbens, 2010). Such scholarship, to borrow Cord A. Scott's phrasing in *Comics and Conflict* (2014), focuses both on "depictions of war" and on "the propagandistic endeavor of the comic book" form itself (p. xv).

In contributing to that body of literature, this article contends that *Life of FDR* (OWI, [1942]) adopted an approach that capitalized on the comic book genre's constant interplay of words and pictures — a dynamic that Scott McCloud describes as the mingling of "*partners* in a dance" (1994, p. 156) — to defend FDR from Goebbels's attacks by crafting a participatory quest. It further argues that the booklet's quest was narratively incomplete and thus invoked a rhetoric of possibility. Ultimately, the essay concludes that this ploy tacitly invited the booklet's international readers to envision the American president and his nation's cause as being not just worthy of victory but also inevitably victorious in the struggle against the Axis powers. In what follows, I develop these arguments in three sections: 1) *Life of FDR*'s verbal construction of the president's character; 2) its visual depictions of his exceptionality; and 3) the resulting participatory quest and its invocation of a compelling rhetoric of possibility.

Words, Claims, and Character

Comic books are not just a visual phenomenon. While the medium's colorful superheroes, dynamic depictions of violence, and artistic splash pages tend to catch the eye, it simultaneously relies heavily on verbal elements to complement those visual appeals. The relatively recent term *graphic novel* neatly captures this dynamic, suggesting that the essence of the genre lies in its unification of the visual and the verbal into a hybrid format. According to Eisner, one of the industry's most heralded storytellers, comic books present "a montage of both word and image," requiring readers "to exercise both visual and verbal interpretive skills" (2008, p. 2). Thus, even as the visual aspects of a typical comic book capture the reader's imagination, its less flashy verbal aspects contribute at every turn.

True to form, *Life of FDR* (OWI, [1942]) showcases extensive verbal appeals amid its comic frames. One might, at first glance, assume that the comic book's eighteen pages contain a relatively small amount of verbal text. To the contrary, a closer examination reveals that the booklet provides ample room for its discursive aspects. The editors begin with a brief introduction on the inside front cover (72 words) and close with a quick afterword inside the back cover (51 words). In between, the comic book's omniscient narrator uses captions to speak in nearly every one of the 66 separate frames, for a total of 1,717 words. If one adds in the occasional remarks uttered by characters in the story line, as well as selected portions of one of the president's speeches (p. 12) — and even a few drawings of newspaper headlines scattered throughout the publication — one finds that (the English version of) the booklet uses 2,197

words to tell its story. To put this sum in context, the comic book's verbal appeals are roughly the equivalent of over six pages of double-spaced text.[3]

The comic book's (OWI, [1942]) combination of narration and character utterances comprises several rational arguments and supporting data. The booklet's introduction presents its central claim: the United States will soon free millions of people worldwide who have been conquered by the Axis powers. Invoking the synecdochal, body politic relationship between nations and their leaders (Kantorowicz, 1957, p. 7), *Life of FDR* further contends that "assurance that this promise will be kept may be found in ample measure" in President Roosevelt's "life record" (inside cover). The remainder of the comic's text then uses a narrated chronology to provide amplifying detail on three vital aspects of FDR's character: benevolence, determination, and leadership. Each quality functions within the context of the president's life story to support the publication's premise that the United States, under Roosevelt's guidance, will rescue the world's enslaved millions.

Initially, *Life of FDR* (OWI, [1942]) offers ample evidence that Roosevelt's character is *benevolent*. In his trips to Europe as a boy, for instance, the future president resists the temptation to isolate himself from foreigners, instead joining his tutor on bicycle tours, "learning the languages and customs of many countries" (p. 2). The learned youth quickly recognizes the importance of advocating for the needs of others. While at Harvard, the comic book shows, Roosevelt witnesses a fire in a dormitory and vows to militate for safer fire escapes. In his later political career, he frequently embraces a variety of "social reforms." It is a quality, claims the booklet, "which has always characterized Roosevelt" (p. 5). The text then describes the positive results of the president's many beneficial reforms during the Depression, including new bridges, productive dams, and electrical service to remote farm houses.

Internationally, Roosevelt is similarly benevolent. Touring Europe after the destruction of World War I, the comic book FDR comments that his "greatest hope in life is to put an end to such horror and devastation" (OWI, [1942], p. 7). In his first inaugural address he dedicates the United States "to the policy of the good neighbor" (p. 10). Later, after averring "I hate war," he suggests that under his leadership the nation has "sought steadfastly to assist international movements to prevent war" (p. 12). "We seek to dominate no other nation," the cartoon president concludes. "We believe in freedom; we believe in peace" (p. 12).[4] In using such language, the comic's textual appeals defend Roosevelt from Goebbels's attacks by returning again and again to what it portrays as the president's wholly benevolent qualities — admirable qualities indeed if one is truly aiming to free enslaved millions.

The comic book also suggests numerous ways in which Roosevelt's character is driven by the quality of personal *determination*. As soon as he is old enough, relates the narrator, the future president announces that he wants to join the Navy as part of his life-long devotion to sailing and the sea. Undeterred by his father's insistence that he attend Groton Preparatory School instead, Roosevelt devotes his free time to the exhaustive study of "books on navigation and naval history" (OWI, [1942], p. 3). Later, as Assistant Secretary of the Navy in World War

I, he is similarly undeterred by President Woodrow Wilson's decision that he should not be allowed to leave his administrative post to fight. "Always a man of action," intones the narrator, FDR shows a fierce resolve to be part of the war effort, ultimately using his influence within the Navy to succeed "in being sent on a destroyer to Europe through the dangerous war zone" so that he can inspect naval facilities (p. 7).

That admirable level of determination, though, pales in comparison to the tenacity with which Roosevelt faces his dismaying encounter with polio at the age of 39. Here the narrator proudly notes that "Roosevelt's courage was supreme" (OWI, [1942], p. 8). What follows is a "seven-year uphill battle against the terrible affliction." FDR's "determined fight," continues the comic book, "amazed physicians," and "his recovery became almost complete" (p. 9). Such powerful words work to provide assurance to international readers that the wartime leader of the United States will never surrender, and will not give up until the completion of his task. Given that the comic book is arguing that Roosevelt's personal characteristics demonstrate the certainty of an Axis defeat — not to mention the certainty that the United States will subsequently free the subjugated millions — its consistent portrayal of the president's determination is a savvy tactic.

Finally, OWI's graphic booklet [1942] provides several examples to demonstrate that Roosevelt's character has also fostered excellent *leadership* skills. On one level, the comic book works to associate him with other powerful leaders. While FDR is at Harvard, for example, his famous relative, the newly-elected President Theodore Roosevelt, makes an impromptu appearance in the dormitory to meet his younger fifth cousin. A few pages later, FDR finds himself campaigning for another president, Woodrow Wilson. Later, during his inspection trip to the European war zone, the young FDR makes time to meet privately with King George V. Then, after the war, Roosevelt manages to borrow some of Wilson's reputation as architect of the League of Nations when he acquires the table on which the earlier president had drafted the league's covenant. Hence, on page after page, the comic book associates FDR with some of the world's best-known figures of authority.

On another level, FDR shows his own mettle at several points. As a new Secretary of the Navy, his leadership quickly increases the level of production in American shipyards, allowing new ships to begin "rolling down the ways and to sea at the greatest rate in history" (OWI, [1942], p. 6). After the Pearl Harbor attack he demonstrates a similar style of leadership, challenging the nation's industries to produce "60,000 planes, 45,000 tanks, 20,000 anti-aircraft guns, and 8,000,000 tons of shipping" in just one year (p. 5).[5] However, lest foreign readers of the booklet wonder if such ardent wartime leadership betrays the heart of a warmonger, as Goebbels had alleged, the narrator makes it clear that the president and his fellow citizens are fighting not for glory or for personal gain, but so "that liberty's light may once again shine over the entire world" (p. 16). Here, then, the comic book depicts another positive character trait of this uncommonly powerful man, one whose leadership has changed the world for the better and whose conduct in the ongoing war is wholly virtuous.

Taken together, these three qualities construct a candid composite of President Roosevelt's character. Keeping in mind that OWI [1942] distributed the comic book to foreign readers — at least some of whom would have known little about the president beyond his name and nationality — FDR comes across in the verbal descriptions as the ideal international leader. Yet as the publication's introduction makes clear, the qualities of benevolence, determination, and strong leadership apply to more than just Roosevelt; they transfer via synecdoche to the entire nation, to its citizens, and to its armed forces. From an argumentative standpoint, then, these qualities serve as verbal evidence bolstering the publication's primary claim about rescuing those under Axis domination. To be sure, the words alone might not have been sufficient in drawing OWI's prospective readers into its defense of the president. For that reason, as the next section explains, the comic book complemented its words with compelling visual elements, providing more evocative ways to make its case for FDR and his nation.

Pictures, Visualization, and Exceptionality

While OWI had proven to be adept at wielding the written word in its propaganda, the organization was also well aware of the power of visuality. Consider that one of its most prominent personalities was Gardner Cowles Jr. As a young publisher at the *Des Moines Register* in the 1930s, Cowles had once teamed up with George Gallup, then a doctoral student at the University of Iowa. Gallup's research at the time focused on readership surveys in an effort to determine what features in a newspaper story prompted subscribers to read or to ignore it. He found that readers preferred illustrated stories by a wide margin (Friedricks, 2000, p. 7). In subsequent years, Cowles integrated Gallup's finding into the *Register*'s pages, commenting that "pictures are easy to read. They tell the story at a glance." "The world's news in The Register" he concluded, is "fully illustrated" (cited in Friedricks, 2000, pp. 86-87). In 1937, Cowles re-emphasized his belief in the power of visual appeals when he co-founded *Look* magazine, a publication that unabashedly emphasized imagery.

OWI's *Life of FDR* [1942] was an excellent fit for Cowles's visually intensive approach. Indeed, to complement its verbal appeals, the booklet offers what a mounts to a graphic visualization of the various stages of the president's life. Again and again these pictures depict Roosevelt as an exceptional individual. Throughout the story line, then, the comic book invites the reader to become a visual witness to FDR's potential greatness, and to see how he fulfills that promise as he leads the United States out of the Depression and, though he tries to avoid it, into World War II. Of the publication's many visual appeals that portray this dynamic of exceptionality, two are especially prominent: the initial presentation of Roosevelt's heroic compassion and the lengthier depiction of his perceived fitness.

Heroic Compassion

Readers' initial encounter with the president in the comic book (OWI, [1942]) would have been the oversized likeness on its cover (see Figure 1). This central image features FDR in a spotlighted white foreground, in harsh contrast to a garish red-and-black backdrop. Although the drawing's colors make it somewhat disagreeable in an aesthetic sense, the overall

composition is eye-catching. Moreover, the anonymous artist worked carefully to depict the president as having admirable and vital personal qualities that were easily discernible. Here, I suggest that this rendition of the president presents a vision of what I will call *heroic compassion*. One useful way to examine this vision is through a direct comparison of the comic book's cover with a well-known contemporary war bond poster by N. C. Wyeth (1942, see Figure 2); although they were aimed at different audiences, the two artifacts emerged from the same visual culture at approximately the same moment (see Finnegan, 2005, p. 34).

Figure 1. The front cover of OWI's *Life of FDR* [1942]

Life of FDR's cover image of the president (OWI, [1942]) and Wyeth's militant Uncle Sam (1942) exhibit two visual parallels that together suggest a heroic nature.[6] One parallel is the positioning of the viewer relative to the figures. For his part, Roosevelt appears behind a podium, the scene suggesting that he is standing on a raised pl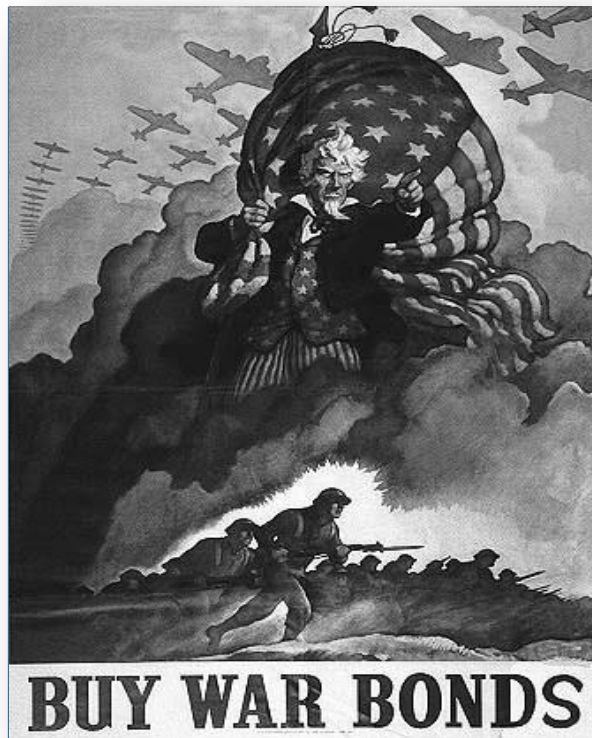atform on a vast stage. Uncle Sam appears, literally, in a cloudy sky, directing the fighting from above. In both cases the viewer gazes up at the leader from a low angle. Numerous studies have concluded that the relationship implied in this kind of positioning is hierarchical, indicating the depicted individual's exalted status. Lynda Lee Kaid and Anne Johnston, for example, point out that when one views subjects from such a low angle, they "appear stronger, more dominant, and more imposing" (2001, p. 31). Richard Herskowitz elaborates on this finding, confirming that "a low angle shot is 'fitting' for a powerful hero" (1979, p. 183). In this way, to echo Evan Lieberman and Kerry Hegarty, subjects like FDR and Uncle Sam "are imbued with the qualities of nobility and strength," since the viewer's perspective "looks up to them, heightening their stature and status" (2010, p. 42). If OWI's artists

Figure 2. N. C. Wyeth's "Buy War Bonds," Official U.S. Treasury Poster [1942]

were aiming to depict FDR in a heroic pose to create an awe-inspiring first impression, then, the low angle on the cover was a suitable choice.

A second visual parallel between the two figures involves their eye behavior. Both Roosevelt (OWI, [1942]) and Uncle Sam (Wyeth, 1942) are looking into the middle distance at something the viewer cannot see. In part, their fixed eyes reinforce the notion that these are powerful individuals since this look is typical of the "archetypal heroes" found in propaganda imagery (Judd, 1973, p. 32). Viewers are attracted to figures with such a distant gaze because it "can create a powerful sense of empathy or identification" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 66). In a more profound sense, however, the eye behavior suggests that neither character is distracted by their immediate surroundings (Goffman, 1979, p. 64). Rather, the behavior is reminiscent of what Elisabeth J. Croll has referred to as the "rhetorical glaze." Here, the figures' "stare, fixed pointedly on some distant undefined object beyond the horizon," functions to show that each is gazing into a "distant . . . dream of the future" (1991, p. 7). This visionary quality complicates the relationship between leader and viewer. On the one hand, because each leader can seemingly see what is yet to come, his power and authority appear to be all the greater. On the other hand, because viewers cannot clearly see the same vision, they are vulnerable, even dependent on the figure. Both perspectives ultimately reemphasize that FDR and Uncle Sam embody a heroic stature.

There are, of course, some important differences between the two illustrations, and it is in these differences that the depicted president's compassion becomes evident. At first glance, the fact that both FDR and Uncle Sam are enveloped in the apparatus of warfare appears to present another parallel. Squadrons of bombers fly over both figures, while Uncle Sam (Wyeth, 1942) also directs charging infantry troops. FDR, for his part, adds ships, tanks, anti-aircraft weapons, and even an armament factory to his bombers (OWI, [1942]). Yet the lines created by the destructive forces in each image differ. Such lines — "vectors," to use Gunther R. Kress and Theo van Leeuwen's (1996, p. 44) term — offer vital clues to the propositional aspects of an image. In Wyeth's poster, the vector emerges as a series of converging lines following the flight of the bombers, Uncle Sam's pointing finger, and the charging infantry platoon. These lines merge off stage to the viewer's right, making the unseen battle zone a "goal" and Uncle Sam himself the primary "actor" (p. 57). The image thus portrays its figure in the midst of a thoroughly militarized activity, the instruments of war in action at his command and the battle itself in progress or nearly so. Rather than a judicious figure of mercy, then, here is a depiction of righteous, wartime fury being unleashed even as the viewer watches.

The comic book's cover, in contrast, presents a differing vector, one that suggests a gentler quality in the president (OWI, [1942]). The image's primary lines converge on FDR himself. The bombers, ships, tanks, and anti-aircraft weapons point the way not to the battlefield, but to their commander-in-chief. At the same time, the president's gaze and his extended arm create a secondary vector, this one presumably aimed at the war zone itself. Roosevelt is, then, both the primary goal *and* the actor in this image. The presence of warfare is

implied, but it remains out of sight as a secondary goal. The focus is instead on the president and his personal qualities. Consequently, unlike the Uncle Sam figure (Wyeth, 1942), the comic book draws attention not to a vengeful warrior directing immediate violence but to a reflective yet powerful man carefully and deliberately contemplating his next move.

FDR's visage and personal presence specifically amplify that perspective by calling attention to his compassionate facial expression (OWI, [1942]). His intent look, as opposed to Uncle Sam's scowl (Wyeth, 1942), appears to be concerned, even judicious. Although he is clearly prepared for battle, he seems to be hesitating before committing his forces to irreversible violence. His cautious demeanor in the face of crisis implies that he is capable of grace and sufferance. The presence of several microphones in the midst of so many engines of war suggests that his preference is to favor communication over belligerence. In addition, the president is much closer in proximity to the viewer than Wyeth's figure. Whereas Uncle Sam is distant literally and emotionally, FDR is both near and approachable, akin to the presence and thus the protection of a father figure. While the forces at his command are formidable, the commander-in-chief's evident thoughtfulness and his very immediacy connote the demeanor of a reluctant warrior who is also a compassionate leader.

This initial visual exposure to Roosevelt on the cover of *Life of FDR* (OWI, [1942]) presents a potent first impression. Even international readers who knew little about the president could conclude at a glance that the American leader commanded respect even as he was much more humane than Goebbels's propaganda was proclaiming. Indeed, given its heavy reliance on visual elements, the cover drawing was suitable for literate as well as illiterate auditors. In the end, like any comic book producer, OWI wanted to capture the attention of its target audience and to encourage its constituents to look further into the story behind the cover. By immediately presenting FDR as an exceptional man of heroic compassion, the comic book was arguably well on the way to doing so.

Perceived Fitness

FDR's engaging exceptionality appears somewhat more subtly in the comic book's graphic visualization of his *perceived fitness*. Although *Life of FDR* (OWI, [1942]) targeted a foreign audience, many such readers were aware that some twenty years earlier the president had had a fearsome encounter with what was known at the time as infantile paralysis. Even before Roosevelt won his first presidential election, for instance, the *Manchester Guardian* noted his struggle with the affliction, emphasizing that "the first thing asked of a President of the United States is that he should be sound in wind and limb" ("Sound in Wind," 1931, p. 10). Yet international audiences, like most Americans, were under the impression that Roosevelt had beaten the disease, or at least that he had few remaining symptoms — a notion that the White House and the president himself actively supported (Houck & Kiewe, 2003, p. 115).

Life of FDR (OWI, [1942]) offered an intriguing visual approach in support of this perceived fitness. The approach took advantage of the attributes of the comic book genre by continually fostering two prominent rhetorical strategies — composition (Harvey, 1979) and

closure (McCloud, 1994). Both worked together to create a composite visual depiction of FDR as being victorious in his struggle with polio. Although the two strategies are in evidence throughout the comic book I will focus here on four consecutive frames in its center (pp. 8-9), as they are particularly crucial to the development of the artifact's visual narrative (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Four consecutive panels from OWI's *Life of FDR* ([1942], pp. 8-9)

To set the context for the four panels: by this point in the story line (OWI, [1942]), readers have come to see the future president's life as unusually active. His sailing, horseback riding, football playing, and other activities promote a robust image not unlike that of his presidential cousin. The first frame in Figure 3 continues this active theme (p. 8). It is the summer of 1921 and FDR is enjoying an energetic vacation at the family's summer home. After accidently falling from a yacht into icy water, he joins his companions in a spirited struggle against a wildfire. This frame depicts FDR and his friends in the aftermath of their firefighting. Despite his exhaustion, Roosevelt appears in a dominant central position in the tableau. His masculine stance and rugged appearance offer a virile impression; even among his vigorous companions, his physical nature stands out. The second frame, in contrast, shows a markedly different FDR (p. 8). Here the protagonist is no longer the central figure, nor is he in the foreground. Instead, a doctor and Eleanor Roosevelt are now most prominent in the frame, their discussion about infantile paralysis making it clear how suddenly the future president has fallen ill.

These two frames draw heavily (OWI, [1942], p. 8) on *visual composition* for their dramatic resonance. Comic books offer limited space for artists to present their narratives. According to Robert C. Harvey (1979, p. 650), cartoonists must therefore carefully plan the composition of their frames, choosing not only what specific scenes they will depict, but also what constituent elements they will highlight or de-emphasize within those scenes. The narrative's jump from the aftermath of the fire to the doctor's diagnosis clearly reveals the artist's selectivity, since numerous events are absent from the chronology. Readers do not, for example, see Roosevelt's return to the vacation house, his expressions of discomfort, the initial crisis in the morning, or the doctor's examination. The transition from robust health to stigmatized illness is thus stunningly abrupt. At the same time, FDR's visual presence diminishes from the first frame to the second. He transforms from an active, engaged protagonist into a passive bystander in his own story. The cartoonist, in other words, has carefully shaped the frames' composition so that they provide just enough information to move the story forward even as they produce a visceral narrative impact.

The comic book's next two frames (OWI, [1942]) also rely on a strategic use of composition. The third one (p. 8) features FDR's sudden return to a central subject position. Though still wearing bed clothes, he is seated, not prone. His fist-in-hand gesture connotes formidable willpower even as his gaze looks ahead to a difficult recovery. The artist's tight focus emphasizes Roosevelt's intensity in the face of his affliction. In the fourth frame (p. 9), the future president's active nature reappears. Not only are his physical prowess and determination again on display, but he has also returned to his life-long love of water activities. As in the previous frame, Roosevelt's image grabs the reader's eye, the drawing's watery vector lines leading toward his focused gaze. The chronological gap between these two images is also strategic, placing FDR's active therapy in immediate proximity to his decision to fight.

The movement of events across all four frames in Figure 3 (OWI, [1942], pp. 8-9) is seemingly quick. Despite their rapid succession, however, the frames represent a seven-year span. Each is effectively a snapshot of time, with the underlying chronological gaps being left to the reader's imagination. McCloud contends that this task is typical of the comic book genre. Readers, he suggests, make sense of such chronological leaps without conscious thought, effortlessly using the cognitive process of *closure* to "connect these moments and mentally construct a continuous, unified reality" (1994, p. 67). Indeed, adds Eisner, the ability to piece together such visual narratives "enables us to recognize and be empathetic to surprise, humor, terror and the whole range of human experience" (2008, p. 24). In this way, the frames allow readers to identify with their inanimate depiction and to supply the narrative's absent elements, investing the cartoon drawings with a life of their own. There is no need to show FDR's return to the vacation house since the reader's mind provides as much of that detail as is needed. Similarly, there is no need to use dozens of frames to depict him in physical therapy for seven grueling years, since the reader's imagination readily supplies a picture of the intervening effort and time. Thus, although the four frames actually present static moments, readers are able to use closure to fuse those isolated threads, a process that is automatic, unnoticed, and, at times, visceral.

Working in concert, the artist's compositional choices and the reader's closure process inevitably help to portray FDR's personal health as a victorious narrative. In this narrative the reader views Roosevelt being struck down by a dreaded disease but then witnesses his stunning use of willpower to overcome the affliction and ably lead the nation and the world. The comic book's visual depictions (OWI, [1942]) provide consistent cues that would lead readers to draw such a conclusion. There is, for instance, a striking similarity between the pre-polio FDR and the post-polio FDR. Although he ages through the years, of course, the cartoon Roosevelt's physical vibrancy and visible enthusiasm change little from beginning to end. He also appears in a majority of the booklet's frames — and in most of them he is the primary visual element. Finally, the comic book's cover image echoes on the last page, where a heroic President Roosevelt shakes hands with Winston Churchill against a backdrop of the entire world. Viewing such patterns could easily lead a reader to assume that FDR's encounter with polio ended in a complete victory for the future president. The resulting impression of perceived fitness, built on visual composition and reaffirmed through closure, was surely powerful in its resonance.

Intriguingly, the only major change in the booklet's depictions of FDR from beginning to end is the abrupt (though subtle) concealment of his legs (OWI, [1942]). Before the polio encounter, the future president's legs appear in numerous active situations, as well as when he is merely standing, or at rest. The post-therapy FDR, in contrast, *never* displays his legs in the comic book. While readers do see him swimming, speaking, sailing, and taking the oath of office, they never again see him below the waist. This absence, however, would probably have been unremarkable to the typical reader of the time. Indeed, the cartoon FDR's active life as a politician fighting the Depression and in the earliest stages of the war creates the appearance of more vigor, not less. Much like the real FDR — who managed a convincing show of perceived

fitness despite rarely displaying his legs in public (Houck & Kiewe, 2003) — the comic FDR's apparent physical abilities benefited from dramatic misdirection.

Life of FDR's presentation of Roosevelt's heroic compassion on the one hand and its clever depiction of his perceived fitness on the other thus rely heavily on the comic book's visual construction of exceptionality (OWI, [1942]). Specifically, the drawings provide compelling imagery to suggest heroic and compassionate qualities in Roosevelt even as they lead the reader to reach positive conclusions about his stunning recovery from polio. At the same time, they provide additional support for the booklet's verbal elements, consistently bolstering OWI's claims that FDR embodied the qualities of benevolence, determination, and leadership. Considered together, the comic book's words and pictures offered international readers an attractive and dramatic glimpse into the president's life story. Arguably, it was a perceptive and highly fitting response to Goebbels's attacks on FDR. Most critically, though, as the concluding section of this essay contends, it was also a clever means of reconstructing the president's life as a narrative quest, one whose unfinished nature tacitly invited readers to participate in envisioning the certainty of an eventual Allied victory.

FDR's Participatory Quest and

the Rhetoric of Possibility

To this point, I have contended that *Life of FDR*'s (OWI, [1942]) skillful use of the comic book genre's intimate interaction between the visual and the verbal was well suited for its worldwide audience. After all, as Bonny Norton observes in her study of multilingual readers, "comic books can be seen as innovative in seeking to convey meaning through multimodality" (2003, p. 143). In the context of the World War II era perhaps only moving pictures offered a similar synthesis of appeals.[7] To be sure, film was much less portable than soft cover booklets in 1942, and the process of supplying dubbed audio translations in a number of regional languages was more challenging. OWI's comic book, in contrast, was able to fairly quickly place a simple, yet visceral propaganda message into the hands of hundreds of thousands of people in locales across the globe. Thus, at least for the propaganda context of the 1940s, *Life of FDR* represented a unique mix of potent elements.

Still, *Life of FDR* (OWI, [1942]) is much more than the sum of its parts. To wit, from a narrative perspective, it goes beyond its defense of FDR against Goebbels's propaganda attacks by featuring an intriguing variation on the mythic form of the romantic quest. According to Northrop Frye, in such stories the archetypal hero triumphs over a formidable foe in the course of an adventurous journey (1957, p. 187). As Martha Solomon (1979) has demonstrated, this basic formula can serve as a useful rhetorical template in political discourse, showcasing the hero's destiny in defeating the adversary and in fulfilling the quest. For the cartoon Roosevelt, the initial journey from relative obscurity into political power is indeed marked by a ferocious struggle with an inanimate foe: polio. Tellingly, however, the evident victory over that foe leads not to the plot's denouement but to the introduction of the Axis powers as a *second* foe. Had the comic book's narrative come to a halt after FDR faced down his affliction, the romantic quest

would have been mythically complete with polio's defeat at the hands of the strong-willed hero. Yet *Life of FDR* goes on from that initial victory, bringing readers into the midst of the still-unresolved world war of late 1942.

FDR's romantic quest is thus structurally incomplete (OWI, [1942]). Rather than ending with the traditional vanquishing of a foe, his tale ends with a struggle still in progress.[8] Of course, by that point Roosevelt's initial defeat of polio has already prompted readers to anticipate the ultimate defeat of the Axis. In narrative terms, that is, the first victory foreshadows a second victory, thereby encouraging readers to anticipate it as well. Roosevelt, the comic book suggests, survived the first foe after a terrific struggle, hence he will also inevitably prevail against the second foe. In fact, as the war begins in earnest in the comic book's closing pages, the narrator affirms that "Franklin Roosevelt is a man who never shirked a task and *will not lose this, the greatest battle of his life*" (p. 16, emphasis added). While the ultimate fulfillment of the second quest is narratively assured, then, it necessarily remains in the future, requiring readers to imagine its successful outcome on their own.

This participatory element harkens back to McCloud's notion of closure (1994). If readers mentally enact closure on a small scale from frame to frame, then the analogical connection between Roosevelt's two struggles (OWI, [1942]) essentially asks them to go a step further by invoking a version of the rhetoric of possibility. To do so, it first invites them to "envision an absent reality" (Poulakos, 1984, p. 223) and then shows that future reality as "not merely conceivable, but *attainable*" (Kirkwood, 1992, p. 9). The eventual Allied victory, in this vision, is certain. Readers can follow Roosevelt's narrative quest and draw for themselves OWI's desired conclusion: that his character, willpower, and personal history ensure an Axis defeat even as they guarantee that the United States will free the world's enslaved. In the ongoing worldwide struggle, the establishment of such a belief in the hearts and minds of countless international readers would have been an ideal means of defending Roosevelt from Goebbels's propaganda jibes. Indeed, a successful worldwide launch of the comic book's mythic story, complete with its participatory version of narrative possibility, would have been a priceless propaganda victory in the larger course of the war.

In the end, of course, it would be impossible all these years later to accurately measure *Life of FDR*'s success at using its clever romantic quest to woo a foreign audience during World War II (OWI, [1942]). However, an account of the booklet's reception in Turkey — a neutral country at the time — has survived, providing some insight into the comic book's appeal to international readers. Writing from Istanbul in 1943, W. H. Mullen wrote to OWI headquarters that the release of *Life of FDR* had "startled, thrilled, astounded Turkey" (p. 13). "Our entire supply of 30,800 copies," continued the report, "was completely sold out within a day," as "crowds mobbed the newsboys. Scuffles broke out in front of news-stands. Street cars came to a standstill. Automobile traffic was paralyzed. It seemed as if everybody in Istanbul was determined to buy a copy within the first half hour" (p. 14). Mullen added that the next day, "on his way by boat up the Bosphorus one of our boys counted 19 passengers out of 30 clutching the

cartoon books. They were reading carefully, showing each other the pictures, discussing eagerly and earnestly" (p. 15). Most importantly from OWI's perspective, though, was the report's assessment of how the comic book might have shaped local opinions of the U.S. war effort. "Along with the success in Tunisia and our bombing raids all over the map," Mullen concluded, the booklet was taken seriously by Turks as another "indication that the Americans were definitely on their way here" (p. 16).

This report's finding, though necessarily anecdotal, provides compelling testimony regarding the appeal of OWI's *Life of FDR* [1942]. The publication might have been only a comic book, but its humble package concealed both a pointed defense of FDR on the international stage as well as a particularly alluring quest myth that invited foreign readers to participate in envisioning an Allied victory. In form and content it was, at the very least, an intriguing propaganda vehicle during the early stages of World War II. Not surprisingly, then, the propaganda team within OWI felt that the booklet was an overwhelming success. As staffer Armitage Watkins wrote (1943, p. 1), "we have received from our foreign missions unqualified praise for this publication and requests for additional similar publications." In its wake, he added, "there is an enormous demand for facts in cartoon form."

Ironically, however, *Life of FDR* appears to have been OWI's [1942] last comic book project. At the time of its publication several similar ventures were in the planning stages. Archival records mention, among others, "Bombs Away," the cartoon story of the crew of a Flying Fortress, "Wings of America," a cartoon history of U.S. aviation, and an untitled comic book project featuring the life of an anonymous Marine (OWI, [1943], p. 5). But by early 1943 the agency was suffering from internal power struggles and simultaneously struggling to appease overtly hostile members of Congress (Weinberg, 1968). Goebbels, it turned out, was not the agency's only enemy. By that summer, then, punitive budget cuts had foreclosed the possibility of any more comic book projects. "OWI's cartoon war," writes Barkin, "had come to an end" (1984, p. 117).

References

Barkin, S. M. (1984). Fighting the cartoon war: Information strategies in World War II. *Journal of American Culture, 7,* 113-117. doi: 10.1111/j.1542-734X.1984.0701_113.x

Campbell, J. (1968). *The hero with a thousand faces.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1949)

Croll, E. J. (1991). Imaging heaven: Collective and gendered dreams in China. *Anthropology Today, 7*(4), 7-12.

Eisner, W. (2008). *Comics and sequential art: Principles and practices from the legendary cartoonist.* New York, NY: W. W. Norton.

Finnegan, C. A. (2005). Recognizing Lincoln: Image vernaculars in nineteenth-century visual culture. *Rhetoric & Public Affairs, 8,* 31-57. doi: 0.1353/rap.2005.0037

Friedricks, W. B. (2000). *Covering Iowa: The history of the* Des Moines Register *and Tribune company, 1849-1985.* Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.

Frye, N. (1957). *Anatomy of criticism: Four essays.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Goffman, E. (1979). *Gender advertisements.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Goodnow, T., & Kimble, J. J. (Eds.). (2016). *The ten cent war: Comic books, propaganda, and World War II.* Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

Harvey, R. C. (1979). The aesthetics of the comic strip. *Journal of Popular Culture, 12,* 640-652. doi: 10.1111/j.0022-3840.1979.1204_640.x

Herf, J. (2006). *The Jewish enemy: Nazi propaganda during World War II and the Holocaust.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Herskowitz, R. (1979). The Shell answer man and the spectator. *Social Text, 1,* 182-185.

Hirsch, P. (2014). "This is our enemy": The Writers' War Board and representations of race in comic books, 1942-1945. *Pacific Historical Review, 83,* 448-486. doi: 10.1525/phr.2014.83.3.448

Houck, D. W., & Kiewe, A. (2003). *FDR's body politics: The rhetoric of disability*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press.

Husband, T. (Ed.). (2013). *Cartoons of World War II.* London, UK: Arcturus Publishing.

Judd, D. (1973). *Posters of World War Two.* New York, NY: St. Martins.

Kaid, L. L., & Johnston, A. (2001). *Videostyle in presidential campaigns: Style and content of televised political advertising.* Westport, CT: Praeger.

Kantorowicz, E. H. (1957). *The king's two bodies: A study in mediaeval political theory.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Page | 109

Kirkwood, W. G. (1992). Revealing the mind of the sage: The narrative rhetoric of the *Chuang Tzu*. *Rhetoric Society Quarterly, 22*(3)*,* 6-19. doi: 10.1080/02773949209390956

Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (1996). *Reading images: The grammar of visual design.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Lent, J. A. (2014). Allied, Japanese, and Chinese propaganda cartoon leaflets during World War II. *International Journal of Comic Art, 16,* 258-301.

Lieberman, E., & Hegarty, K. (2010). Authors of the image: Cinematographers Gabriel Figueroa and Gregg Toland. *Journal of Film and Video, 62,* 31-51. doi: 10.1353/jfv.0.0055

McCloud, S. (1994). *Understanding comics: The invisible art.* New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Mullen, W. H. (1943, June 18). Report to George Barnes. RG 208, Records of the Office of War Information, Records of the Office of the Director and Predecessor Agencies, Records of the Director, 1942-1945 (Box 8, Folder "Releases - 2 1943"). National Archives & Records Administration, College Park, MD.

Murray, C. (2000). *Pop*aganda: Superhero comics and propaganda in World War Two. In A. Magnussen & H. Christiansen (Eds.), *Comics & culture: Analytical and theoretical approaches to comics* (pp. 141-155). Copenhagen, Denmark: Museum Tusculanum Press.

Murray, C. (2011). *Champions of the oppressed? Superhero comics, popular culture, and propaganda in America during World War II.* Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Norton, B. (2003). The motivating power of comic books: Insights from Archie Comic readers. *The Reading Teacher, 57,* 140-147.

Office of War Information. [1942]. *The life of Franklin D. Roosevelt: The 32nd president of the United States of America.* [Washington, DC: OWI]. RG 208, Records of the Office of War Information, New York Office, Publications for Overseas Distribution (Box 8, Folder "'Roosevelt Cartoon Book,' English"). National Archives & Records Administration, College Park, MD.

Office of War Information. (1942). *The unconquered people.* Washington, DC: GPO.

Office of War Information. (1943). *Battle stations for all: The story of the fight to control living costs*. Washington, DC: GPO.

Office of War Information. [1943]. Overseas branch, publications issued, June 1942 - March 1943. RG 208, Records of the Office of War Information, Records of the Office of the Director and Predecessor Agencies, Records of the Director, 1942-1945 (Box 7, Folder "Publications, Domestic and Overseas, 1942-1943"). National Archives & Records Administration, College Park, MD.

Office of War Information, Overseas Operations Branch. (1942, December 18-25). Central directive. RG 208, Records of the Office of War Information, Director of Overseas

Operations, Record Set of Policy Directives for Overseas Programs, 1942-1945 (Box 817, Folder "Record Central Directives, 1942"). National Archives & Records Administration, College Park, MD.

Poulakos, J. (1984). Rhetoric, the sophists, and the possible. *Communication Monographs, 51,* 215-226. doi: 10.1080/03637758409390196

Publications, domestic and overseas, 1942-1943. (1986). In David H. Culbert (Ed.), *Information control and propaganda: Records of the Office of War Information* [microfilm]. Reel 8, frames 434-475. Frederick, MD: University Publications of America. (Original work published ca. 1943)

Ribbens, K. (2010). World War II in European comics: National representations of global conflict in popular historical culture. *International Journal of Comic Art, 12,* 1-33.

Roosevelt, F. D. (1938). "I have seen war . . . . I hate war" — Address at Chautauqua, N. Y. August 14, 1936. In S. I. Rosenman (Ed.), *The public papers and addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt: Vol. 5. The people approve* (pp. 285-292). New York, NY: Random House.

Roosevelt, F. D. (1950). "The militarists of Berlin and Tokyo started this war. But the massed, angered forces of common humanity will finish it" — Address to the Congress on the state of the union. January 6, 1942. In S. I. Rosenman (Ed.), *The public papers and addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt: 1942 volume. Humanity on the defensive* (pp. 32-42). New York, NY: Harper & Brothers.

Scott, C. A. (2014). *Comics and conflict: Patriotism and propaganda from WWII through Operation Iraqi Freedom.* Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press.

Shirer, W. L. (1942, September 13). The propaganda front. *Washington Post,* p. B7.

Solomon, M. (1979). The "positive woman's" journey: A mythic analysis of the rhetoric of STOP ERA. *Quarterly Journal of Speech, 65,* 262-274. doi: 10.1080/00335637909383478

Sound in wind and limb. (1931, July 25). *Manchester Guardian,* p. 10.

U.S. Treasury Department. (1942, Summer). *War Victory Comics.* Odegard Papers (Box 8, Folder 1). Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, NY.

Watkins, A. (1943, March 19). Letter to George T. Balch. RG 208, Records of the Office of War Information, General Records of Ruth Ames, 1943-1946, NC-148 (Box 1720, Folder "Requests for - Correspondence on THE LIFE OF FDR"). National Archives & Records Administration, College Park, MD.

Weinberg, S. (1968). What to tell America: The writers' quarrel in the Office of War Information. *Journal of American History, 55,* 73-89. doi: 10.2307/1894252

Wyeth, N. C. (1942). Buy war bonds [poster]. Item #320678. Pritzker Military Museum & Library, Chicago, IL.

Page | 111

Footnotes

1. Numerous translations of the comic book (OWI, [1942]) are preserved in the same National Archives box as the English version (which was destined for locations such as Capetown, Dublin, London, and Hawaii). The repository possesses versions printed in Afrikaans, Arabic, Chinese, French, Hebrew, Icelandic, Persian, Spanish, Swedish, and Turkish. OWI also created a version in Portuguese, but no such copy remains in the archives. The publication's print run was actually 561,739, so it is possible that there were later stages of distribution whose records have not survived (OWI, Overseas Operations Branch, 1942, p. 1).

2. From the perspective of American scholarship, at least, *Life of FDR* remains obscure, probably due to its domestic lack of accessibility. Although the comic book was printed in numbers that exceeded many of OWI's other publications, all but a handful were shipped abroad, making it much less available in the United States, even within most of the largest research libraries.

3. To offer another perspective, the number of words in the comic book's textual appeals is 63% more than the number of words used in the Declaration of Independence.

4. The comic book here quotes FDR's 1936 Chautauqua address. The three paragraphs of the quotation, however, are presented out of order. The second paragraph, moreover, adds a few clarifying words not in the speech's official text (Roosevelt, 1938).

5. Here the comic book paraphrases FDR's 1942 Message to Congress. It misstates FDR's figure for shipping tons in 1942, which was 10 million, not 8 million (Roosevelt, 1950).

6. Another parallel is the obvious echo in body placement (in mirrored stances, each figure is upright, extends one arm while holding back the other, and holds his head in a similar pose).

7. OWI seems to have been aware of the potency of the comic book genre. As staffer Armitage Watkins later explained (1943, p. 1), "the cartoon device [in *Life of FDR*] is employed in order to appeal to a mass audience of all classes of literacy."

8. I should clarify that, like Solomon (1979), I mean here to invoke Frye's (1957) version of the heroic quest. Joseph Campbell (1949/1968) offers another well-known treatment of such quests. The many stages of the hero's journey in Campbell's so-called monomyth might make for a slightly different analysis of *Life of FDR* (OWI, [1942]), although it makes sense to suggest that FDR's defeat of polio belongs to Campbell's category of "preliminary victories," with the larger "crisis at the nadir" still to come (p. 109).

Alumni Corner

Suzanne Miller-McFeeley: What Forensics Did For Me
Concordia College (Moorhead MN) Forensic Alumni
(2005-2009)

Suzanne Miller-McFeeley

Suzy is a Business Development Officer at Counterpart International, an international NGO that builds capacity in leaders, organizations, and the social sector in the developing world, where she manages and writes funding proposals for work with the US government and international community. Suzy competed for Concordia College in Moorhead, MN from 2005-2009, and her favorite event was After Dinner Speaking. Her favorite memory is the AFA-NIET tournament her sophomore year where she competed in ADS and Persuasion and helped Concordia take 14th place.

Proper APA citation for this article is:

Miller-McFeeley, S. (2017). Suzanne Miller-McFeeley: What forensics did for me. *Speaker & Gavel*, *54*(1), 113-114.

Suzanne Miller-McFeeley:
What Forensics Did for Me

Suzanne Miller-McFeeley
Business Development Officer
Washington, DC

Page | 113

ALUMNI CORNER: *The forensic community is filled with alumni who will tout the benefits they received through their participation in intercollegiate speech and debate activities. As directors of forensics programs face battles for budgets and sometimes for their program's very existence, having a collection of published testimonies about the positive influence of forensics can be a tremendous help. To that end, Speaker & Gavel is setting aside space in each issue for our alumni to talk about how forensics has helped them in their professional life. These are our alumni's stories.*

Keywords: forensics, benefits of forensics, Alumni Corner

When I left my last job for a new opportunity, my team took me out to lunch to celebrate our time together and wish me well. They took turns going around the table and sharing their favorite "Suzanne moments." They spoke about the fun and stressful moments we'd had together working on challenging proposals, and person after person came back to their appreciation of what they described as my "unflappable" demeanor and ability to remain calm and capable even under extreme pressure. Our Deputy Director said, "I remember one proposal where our support from programs fell through and I had to ask you for 20 pages of inputs that were due in 3 days. Most people would have freaked out, but you just smiled and said 'I'll get it done'… and then you did." The ability to face stress and pressure calmly and competently has served me well throughout my career, and I gained the confidence and skills to make it possible through competitive forensics. As a Global Studies major who has pursued a career in International Development, the benefits of competing in forensics may not be as readily apparent in my professional life as it is for my former teammates and competitors who have gone into careers in communications or related fields, but the skills I developed through competitive forensics have served me well, and I know I would not be where I am today without them.

> *The ability to face stress and pressure calmly and competently has served me well throughout my career, and I gained the confidence and skills to make it possible through competitive forensics.*

Competing in forensics taught me what it took to be truly prepared. To be a successful competitor I needed to have written a solid piece and to know the content and subject so well that even when the inevitable memory slip occurred, I could seamlessly cover until I was back on

track. Being prepared for the forensics season was different than what I needed for my classes where I prepared for a single paper or presentation because it was ongoing. Writing a good speech and memorizing it before the first meet was not good enough, it had to be ready and polished for every performance, every time. Limited prep events like extemporaneous and impromptu speaking called for a different kind of practice where continuously prepared research and technique were key. Knowing how to maintain this level of preparation across skill sets has served me well in the professional world where I have to be prepared not just for one-off big projects, but continuously prepared for whatever my job throws at me. These skills have enabled me to succeed in a wide variety of tasks ranging from navigating medical emergencies and transportation crises during my field work in Guatemala to managing daunting last minute writing assignments.

Another invaluable skill I developed through competitive forensics is the ability to analyze and adapt. I poured my heart and soul into the pieces I wrote and performed, but success in forensics required not only good first versions, but continuously adapting and improving through analysis of judges' critiques, feedback from coaches, and suggestions from teammates. I learned how to assess my pieces, performances, and the feedback I was getting to identify what was working and what was not and to adapt what I was doing accordingly. I have had to analyze and adapt every day of my professional life and have heard time and time again from supervisors and coworkers that it is something I do better than most. Competitive forensics taught me to take criticism and feedback and use it to improve my performance, a skill which I successfully implement today across the wide variety of roles I play in my career, whether it's facilitating program design sessions, setting up data management systems, or improving my managerial techniques with those I supervise.

I could fill pages upon pages with the many skills competitive forensics helped me develop and hone: public speaking, writing, critical thinking, tackling deadlines, not to mention the incredible lifelong friends I made along the way. The culmination of all of these skills, however, has proven the most valuable to me—the confidence that I am capable of successfully tackling daunting tasks. This confidence shows in my work, in my "unflappable" demeanor as my coworkers described it, and in turn instills confidence in my abilities in those with whom I work. I know how to prepare, analyze, and adapt so even when the unexpected is thrown at me I can address it with a level-headed professionalism I developed from my time in competitive forensics.

Suzy's Advice
"Pick topics that you're passionate about, not just because they can win. Your audience can tell when you really care, and when else will you get the opportunity to address a captive audience about something that's important to you?"

Alumni Corner

Darron Devillez: What Forensics Did For Me
Grossmont Community College/
San Diego State University
Forensic Alumni
(2011-2015)
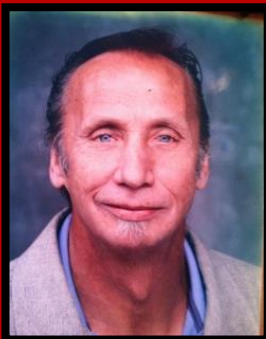
Darron Devillez

Darron Devillez is a member of the *Project Rebound* staff and Adjunct Faculty member at San Diego State University. He competed for Grossmont Community College and San Diego State University from 2011-2015. As a competitor his favorite event was prose and his favorite comment on a ballot was "You are the complete package." His greatest forensics accomplishment was helping his team take 8th place at AFA Nationals his senior year.

Proper APA citation for this article is:

Devillez, D. (2017). Darron Devillez: What forensics did for me. *Speaker & Gavel*, *54*(1), 115-116.

Darron Devillez: What Forensics Did for Me

Darron Devillez

Project Rebound staff / Adjunct

San Diego State University

ALUMNI CORNER: *The forensic community is filled with alumni who will tout the benefits they received through their participation in intercollegiate speech and debate activities. As directors of forensics programs face battles for budgets and sometimes for their program's very existence, having a collection of published testimonies about the positive influence of forensics can be a tremendous help. To that end, Speaker & Gavel is setting aside space in each issue for our alumni to talk about how forensics has helped them in their professional life. These are our alumni's stories.*

Keywords: forensics, benefits of forensics, Alumni Corner

For me, there is a direct link between my forensic involvement and my success in college. Six years ago, I was a non-traditional student. I was a 57 year old homeless veteran diagnosed with PTSD but I was fortunate to get help and the opportunity to go to college where my counselor enrolled me in a public speaking class.

One of my speeches was on homeless veterans. I sought to convince my classmates to think of these people with empathy and to assist them in finding homes, free health clinics, and, most importantly, their families with whom they may have lost touch. I asked them to listen to the stories of veterans and the hardships they suffered. By doing so, I suggested, we might reduce the devastating 22 lives lost each day in this population. After my speech, my professor asked me to join the forensic team. I accepted her invitation and that year I took a third place trophy at Phi Rho Pi, the community college national championship tournament.

Validated for the first time in my adult life, I was hooked. After community college, I transferred to San Diego State University. The first thing I did was to introduce myself to the Director of Forensics. Before the season officially started, I had

> For me, validation came from the competitive speaking activity called forensics.

three events ready for competition and was working on a fourth. The Director was impressed but reminded me of the grade point requirement needed to be on the squad.

Using the Toulmin formula I learned in forensics – claim, data, warrant – I started receiving A grades on my papers. Additionally, I transferred the same work ethic demanded in forensics to my other academic courses. As a result, I repeatedly made the dean's list, received multiple scholarships, while winning numerous forensic awards at both the state and national levels.

As my undergraduate studies came to an end, I applied to the master's program and was accepted. For my thesis, I wrote about something near and dear to me – veterans with PTSD.

Six years has passed since I became involved in forensics. I am no longer homeless, drug-dependent, or on the verge of joining the 22-a-day crisis. If you would have told me that my validation would come in the form of a competitive public speaking activity; I would have scoffed at you.

Today I am living with my family, free from any drug dependency, legal or illegal. I have traveled all over the world with forensic teams, and have just completed my master's degree. Forensics changed me. It highlighted my potential. It taught me how to research. It taught me structure, both oral and written. It taught me about the importance of community.

Darron's Advice:
The most important part of any speech, is that walk to the podium.

Page | 116

I am determined to find a teaching job in a community college where I can extol the benefits of forensics and its many applications. Forensics helped return me to the man I once was and I know it can aid others as well.