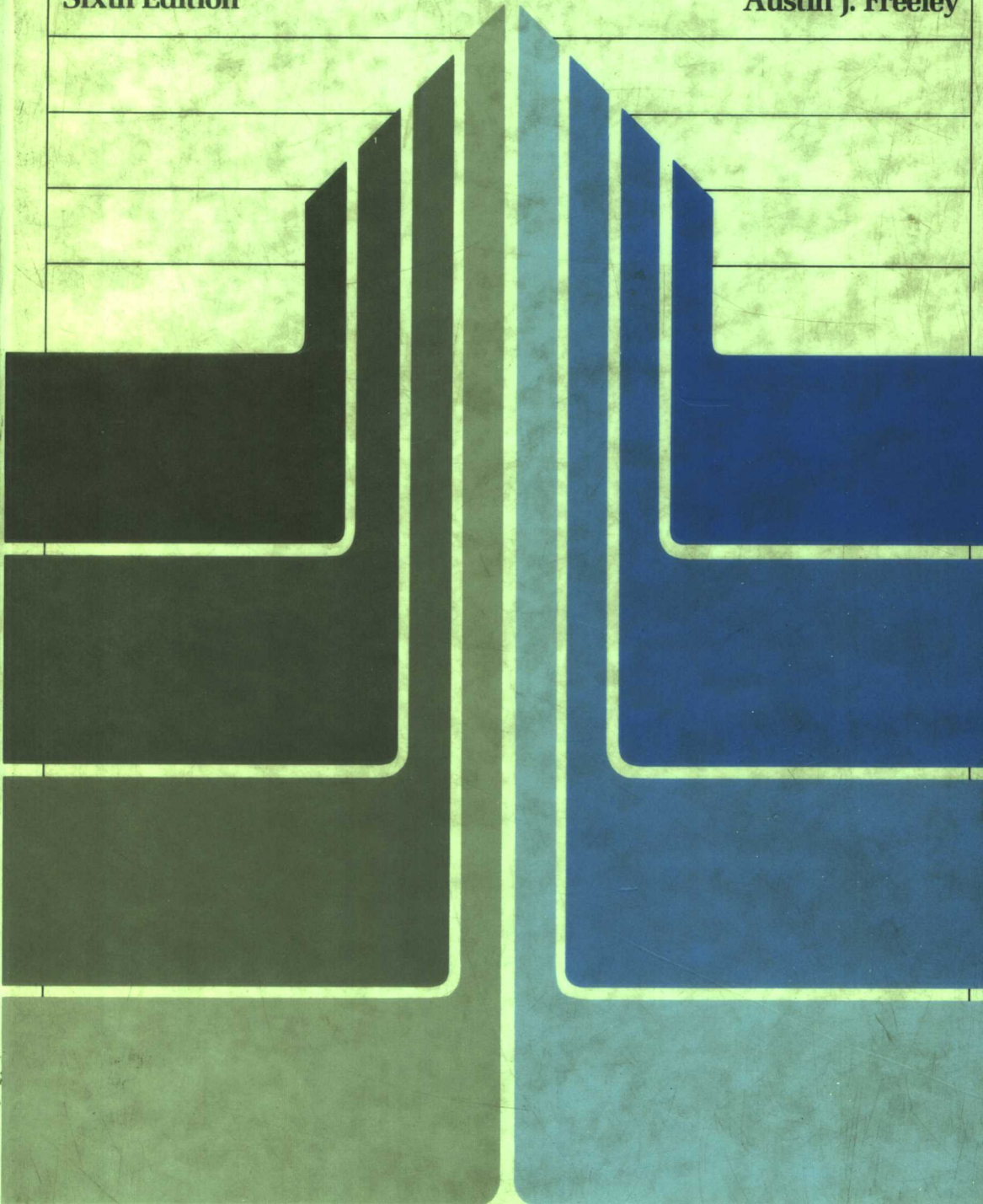


# ARGUMENTATION & DEBATE

Critical Thinking for Reasoned Decision Making

Sixth Edition

Austin J. Freeley



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SIXTH EDITION

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# **Argumentation and Debate**

CRITICAL THINKING FOR  
REASONED DECISION MAKING

AUSTIN J. FREELEY

John Carroll University

**Wadsworth Publishing Company**

Belmont, California

A Division of Wadsworth, Inc.

*Communications Editor:* Kris Clerkin  
*Production:* Mary Forkner, Publication Alternatives  
*Text Designer:* Janet Bollow  
*Copy Editor:* Patricia Cain  
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Printed in the United States of America

3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10—90 89

ISBN 0-534-05526-5

**Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data**

Freeley, Austin J.

Argumentation and debate.

Includes index.

1. Debates and debating. 2. Decision-making.

I. Title.

PN4181.F68 1986

808.53

85-20392

ISBN 0-534-05526-5

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## Preface

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Today's students readily recognize the need for new editions of textbooks, for they have grown up in the greatest era of change in all human history. The world's store of knowledge doubled from 1750 to 1900. It doubled again from 1900 to 1950 and again from 1950 to 1960. Since 1960 the sum total of knowledge has doubled every five years. By the year 2000 there will be more than one thousand times more knowledge than there was in 1900. Today's students—who will be mature adults entering into major decision-making positions as we begin the twenty-first century—will be called upon to face problems we cannot even imagine and to reach decisions based on evidence that does not now exist. Ninety-seven percent of everything known at the start of the twenty-first century will have been discovered since today's students were born. We live in an information society. Peter Drucker noted, "Knowledge has already become the primary industry, the industry that supplies the economy the essential and central resources of production." New knowledge and its application come unevenly. Had the automobile industry developed and applied knowledge as the computer industry has done in the last thirty years, a Rolls-Royce would cost \$2.50 and get two million miles to the gallon. Uneven though change may be, no phase of our lives is untouched by what some see as the rise of a new civilization, The Third Wave, which will profoundly challenge our old assumptions, ways of thinking, formulas, dogmas, and ideologies. To deal with this fast-emerging clash of new values, technologies, geopolitical relation-

ships, life styles, and modes of communication, we will need a means of critical thinking to arrive at reasoned decisions on the complex, urgent, and unprecedented issues that will confront us.

Knowledgeable teachers of argumentation recognize that the accelerated rate of change has had a marked impact on the field of argumentation and debate. In many important ways we no longer analyze arguments, conduct research, build cases, or conduct debates the way we did ten or even five years ago. Indeed, we no longer write books the way we used to. The first edition of this text, published in 1961, was written on a manual typewriter; subsequent editions were written on electric typewriters, and much of this 1986 edition was written on a word processor. Today, students routinely turn in term papers written on word processors; debaters write cases and briefs on word processors, and they prepare data files of evidence and do research on computers. Some of the debaters who study this text will, no doubt, take personal computers with them to tournaments. Not only is more knowledge available today than ever before, it is also more accessible. In the field of argumentation and debate, each new academic year brings change as newly emerging theory and practice come to the fore. While the change in any one year is relatively small, the incremental growth of change over a few years mandates a new edition.

This sixth edition of *Argumentation and Debate*, it is hoped, retains and reinforces those features that have led to its wide use for a quarter of a century by six "generations" of college students and, at the same time, brings before today's students the significant changes of our constantly developing field of study. This edition draws on the Summer Conferences on Argumentation at Alta, Utah, and the 1984 Second National Developmental Conference on Forensics at Evanston, Illinois. It also draws on the proceedings of major professional conventions, research from the related fields of behavioral science and communication theory, and the "shop talk" of tournaments. These sources have provided new material on recent developments in argumentation theory and changes in debate practices that are added to the foundation of classical and modern principles. For example, this edition, in keeping with contemporary practice, focuses on *critical thinking* and *reasoned* decision making. This edition provides extensive new treatment of value debating, designed to give students insight to the vastly expanded field of CEDA debate. The section on cross examination has been expanded to help both CEDA and NDT debaters. New material on the importance of debate in developing essential proficiencies will be of special interest to the professor who wants to emphasize the value of argumentation and debate in the liberal arts and in developing critical thinking. The treatment of ethical standards for debate has been greatly expanded to meet the strongly felt need that many professors have expressed.

Additional changes in this edition include new material designed to provide students with improved insights and criteria on the often difficult and complex problem of providing the best definition in the debate. The chapters on the case include new information on stock issues for propositions of value. The section on research has been substantially expanded, and this important subject is considered in greater depth. The emerging field of data base use is explored in detail. A section on the elements of any

argument (illustrated with diagrams utilizing arguments from an actual intercollegiate debate) will help students understand some of the recent scholarship in this field. The basic plan format has been found to be useful in helping students as they begin the task of plan building for policy debate. The sample debate case has been expanded and has been proven helpful to students.

The sample flow sheets have been revised and may be used in connection with the sample debate case and the basic speaker responsibilities as students study this important and often difficult concept. Throughout the text there are many changes and updating of examples to facilitate the students' understanding of argumentation and to enhance their ability to use critical thinking to reach reasoned decisions.

This book is designed for all who are interested in using critical thinking to reach reasoned decisions. It is designed specifically for the undergraduate course in argumentation and debate, but it may be used in any broadly liberal course for students who seek self-realization and who desire to prepare themselves for effective participation in a democratic society.

The instructor may assign the chapters in any order adapted to the needs of the students. If the students have limited experience in speech communication, these chapters may be introduced early; if the students have had considerable experience in speech communication, these chapters may be reviewed briefly or omitted. Some instructors may prefer to assign the chapters on case and refutation early in the course and begin promptly with full-scale debates.

I wish to record my thanks to Jack H. Howe of California State University, Long Beach; Karen King Lee of Indiana University; Jack Parella of Santa Rosa Junior College; Kenneth M. Strange of Dartmouth College who offered thoughtful, practical advice for the sixth edition; and Barbara Warnick of the University of Washington who provided insightful suggestions. I also wish to record my thanks to Kristine Clerkin of Wadsworth Publishing Company, whose editorial work on this edition is sincerely appreciated. Over the years many of my students, too, have contributed to this edition as well as to earlier editions. By their questions and discussions in class and in briefing sessions as we prepare for debates, they have helped me refine my thinking and develop more cogent statements on many matters.

Austin J. Freeley

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## Critical Thinking

An ever-growing number of colleges and universities are establishing the requirement that their students study critical thinking. Competency in critical thinking is rightly viewed as a requisite intellectual skill for the pursuit of higher education and for the highly competitive world of business and the professions. Debate is today, as it has been since classical times, one of the best methods of learning and applying the principles of *critical thinking*.

Many of the most significant and critical communications of our lives are conducted in the form of debates. These may be intrapersonal communications, where we weigh the pros and cons of an important decision in our own minds; or they may be interpersonal communications, where we listen to a debate conducted to secure our decision or participate in a debate to secure the decision of others.

Success or failure in life is largely determined by our ability to make wise decisions for ourselves and to secure the decisions we want from others. Much of our significant, purposeful activity is concerned with making required decisions. Whether to join a campus organization, go to graduate school, accept a certain job offer, buy a car or house, move to another city, invest in a certain stock, or vote for Smith—these are just a few of the thousands of decisions we may have to make. Often, intelligent self-interest or a sense of responsibility will require us to secure certain decisions from others. We may want a scholarship, a particular job, a customer for our product, or a vote for a certain candidate.

Some people make decisions by flipping a coin. Others act on the whim of the moment or respond unthinkingly to the pressures of the “hidden persuaders.” If the problem is trivial—the movies tonight?—the use of these methods is of no consequence. For important matters, however, mature adults require a reasoned means of decision making. They seek the greatest possible assurance that their decisions are justified by good reasons based on true evidence and valid reasoning.

*Argumentation* is reason giving in communicative situations by people whose purpose is the justification of acts, beliefs, attitudes, and values. This definition is based on a definition adopted at the National Developmental Conference on Forensics.<sup>1</sup> Toulmin makes a similar point when he asks, “What kind of *justificatory activities* must we engage in to convince our fellows that these beliefs are based on good ‘reasons’?”<sup>2</sup> The debater’s task is to discover the justificatory activities that the decision renderers will accept and to develop the good reasons that will lead them to agree with the desired conclusion—or, of course, to reject those reasons advanced by an opponent.

First we will consider debate as a method of critical thinking. Then we will consider some other methods of decision making and see how they relate to argumentation and debate.

## I. Debate

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*Debate* is the process of inquiry and advocacy, the seeking of reasoned judgment on a proposition. Debate may be used by the individual to reach a decision in his or her own mind, or it may be used by an individual or a group seeking to secure a decision from others.

As debate specifically provides reasoned arguments for and against a given proposition, it also provides opportunities for critical thinking. Society, as well as the individual, must have an effective method of reaching reasoned decisions. A free society is so structured that many of its decisions are reached through debate. Our law courts and our legislative bodies are specifically designed to create and perpetuate debate as the method of reaching decisions. In fact, any organization that conducts its business according to parliamentary procedure has selected debate as its method. Debate pervades our society at decision-making levels.

From the earliest times to the present, thoughtful people have recognized the importance of debate for the individual and society. Plato, whose dialogues were an early form of cross-examination debate, defines rhetoric as “a universal art of winning the mind by arguments, which means not merely arguments in the courts of justice, and all other sorts of public councils, but in private conference as well.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>James H. McBath, ed., *Forensics as Communication* (Skokie, Ill.: National Textbook Co., 1975), p. 11.

<sup>2</sup>Stephen Toulmin, *Knowing and Acting* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1976), p. 138.

<sup>3</sup>Plato, *Phaedrus*, 261. Cooper and Jowett use slightly different terms in translating this passage. This statement draws from both translations.

Aristotle lists four values for *rhetoric*.<sup>4</sup> First, it prevents the triumph of fraud and injustice. Aristotle argues that truth and justice are by nature more powerful than their opposites. When decisions are not made as they should be, speakers with right on their side have only themselves to blame for the outcome. Thus, it is not enough to know the right decision ourselves; we must be able to argue for that decision before others.

Second, rhetoric is a method of instruction for the public. Aristotle points out that situations exist wherein scientific arguments are of no avail; the speaker must then instruct the audience by framing arguments with the help of common knowledge and commonly accepted opinions. Congressional debates on arms limitations or tax policies are examples of this. The general public, and indeed the majority of the Congress, lacks the specialized knowledge to follow highly sophisticated technical arguments. Skilled partisans who have the expertise to understand the technical data must reformulate their reasons in ways that can be comprehended by both Congress and the public.

Third, rhetoric makes us see both sides of a case. By arguing both sides, no aspect of the case will escape us, and we will be prepared to refute our opponents' arguments.

Fourth, rhetoric is a means of defense. Often a knowledge of argumentation and debate will be necessary to protect ourselves or our interests. Aristotle states: "If it is a disgrace to a man when he cannot defend himself in a bodily way, it would be odd not to think him disgraced when he cannot defend himself with reason. Reason is more distinctive of man than is bodily effort."

Similarly, in the nineteenth century, John Stuart Mill placed great emphasis on the value of debate:

If even the Newtonian philosophy were not permitted to be questioned, mankind could not feel as complete assurance of its truth as they now [1858] do. The beliefs which we have the most warrant for, have no safeguard to rest on, but a standing invitation to the whole world to prove them unfounded. If the challenge is not accepted, or is accepted and the attempt fails, we are far enough from certainty still; but we have done the best that the existing state of human reason admits of; we have neglected nothing that could give the truth the chance of reaching us; if the lists are kept open, we may hope that if there be a better truth, it will be found when the human mind is capable of receiving it; and in the meantime we may rely on having attained such approach to truth as is possible in our day. This is the amount of certainty attainable by a fallible being, and this is the sole way of attaining it.<sup>5</sup>

In 1957, the United States Senate designated, as Senate Immortals, five senators who had shaped the history of our nation by their ability as debaters: Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, John C. Calhoun, Robert M. La Follette, Sr., and Robert A. Taft. The triumvirate of Webster, Clay, and Calhoun towered over all others and were the near unanimous choice of senators and scholars alike. These commanding figures might well be included in a list of the world's great debaters. As John F. Kennedy, then a freshman senator, pointed out, "For over thirty years they dominated the Congress and the country, providing leadership and articulation on all the great issues of the growing nation."<sup>6</sup> La Follette

<sup>4</sup>See: Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, I, 1.

<sup>5</sup>John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (New York: A. L. Burt Co., n.d.), pp. 38-39.

<sup>6</sup>John F. Kennedy, Speech in the Senate, May 1, 1957, from a press release.

and Taft were selected as the outstanding representatives of the progressive and conservative movements in the twentieth century. In honoring these “immortals,” the Senate recognized the importance of debate in determining the course of American history. John Quincy Adams considered Webster’s reply in his debate with Hayne to be “the most significant act since the founding of the Constitution.”<sup>7</sup> Indeed, it would be impossible to understand the history of the United States without a knowledge of the great debaters and their debates.

Our laws not only are made through the process of debate but are applied through debate as well. The famous attorney Joseph N. Welch has stated:

America believes in what lawyers call “the adversary system” in our courtrooms, including our criminal courts. It is our tradition that the District Attorney prosecutes hard. Against him is the lawyer hired by the defendant, or supplied by the court if the defendant is indigent. And the defendant’s lawyer defends hard. We believe that truth is apt to emerge from this crucible. It usually does.<sup>8</sup>

We need debate not only in the legislative assembly and the courtroom but in all areas of human activity, since most of our liberties are directly or indirectly dependent upon debate. As Walter Lippmann has pointed out, one of our most cherished liberties, freedom of speech, can be maintained only by creating and perpetuating debate:

Yet when genuine debate is lacking, freedom of speech does not work as it is meant to work. It has lost the principle which regulates and justifies it—that is to say, dialectic conducted according to logic and the rules of evidence. If there is no effective debate, the unrestricted right to speak will unloose so many propagandists, procurers, and panderers upon the public that sooner or later in self-defense the people will turn to the censors to protect them. It will be curtailed for all manner of reasons and pretexts, and serve all kinds of good, foolish, or sinister ends.

For in the absence of debate unrestricted utterance leads to the degradation of opinion. By a kind of Gresham’s law the more rational is overcome by the less rational, and the opinions that will prevail will be those which are held most ardently by those with the most passionate will. For that reason the freedom to speak can never be maintained by objecting to interference with the liberty of the press, of printing, of broadcasting, of the screen. It can be maintained only by promoting debate.<sup>9</sup>

Not only do we need debate to maintain freedom of speech but also to provide a methodology for innovation and judgment about matters related to contemporary problems. As Chaim Perelman, the Belgian philosopher-rhetorician whose works in rhetoric and argumentation have become increasingly influential among the forensic community, has pointed out:

If we assume it to be possible without recourse to violence to reach agreement on all the problems implied in the employment of the idea of justice we are granting the possibility of

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph N. Welch, “Should a Lawyer Defend a Guilty Man?” *This Week* magazine, December 6, 1959, p. 11. Copyright 1959 by the United Newspapers Magazine Corporation. Reprinted by permission of *This Week* magazine and Joseph N. Welch.

<sup>9</sup> Walter Lippmann, *Essays in the Public Philosophy* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1955), pp. 129–130. Reprinted by permission.



formulating an ideal of man and society, valid for all beings endowed with reason and accepted by what we have called elsewhere the universal audience.<sup>10</sup>

I think that the only discursive methods available to us stem from techniques that are not demonstrative—that is, conclusive and *rational* in the narrow sense of the term—but from argumentative techniques which are not conclusive but which may tend to demonstrate the *reasonable* character of the conceptions put forward. It is this recourse to the rational and reasonable for the realization of the ideal of universal communion that characterizes the age-long endeavor of all philosophies in their aspiration for a city of man in which violence may progressively give way to wisdom.<sup>11</sup>

Thus we see the age-long concern of philosophers and statesmen with debate as an instrument for dealing with the problems of society. It is easy, then, to understand why debate is pervasive in our society. It is in the interest of the individual to know the principles of argumentation and debate and to be able to apply them in reaching and in securing decisions. It is in the interest of society to encourage debate both to protect the individual and to provide a means whereby society may reach reasoned decisions.

## II. Individual Decisions

Whenever the conditions necessary to the solution of a problem are within the control of the individual, the problem may be solved by personal decision. If the problem is "Shall I go to the basketball game tonight?" and if the price of admission and a means of transportation are at hand, the decision can be made individually. If, however, a friend's car is needed to get to the game, then his or her decision to furnish the transportation must be secured.

Complex problems, too, are subject to individual decision. When the Ford Motor Company discontinued production of its famous Model T, millions of dollars, hundreds of dealers, and thousands of workers were involved. Henry Ford was in effective control of his company, and by individual decision he determined what type of automobile would be produced. When Eisenhower sent the Marines into Lebanon, when Kennedy and Johnson escalated the war in Vietnam, when Nixon sent troops into Cambodia, when Carter called for the curtailment of the sale of wheat to the USSR following its invasion of Afghanistan, and when Reagan sent troops into Grenada, they used different methods of decision making, but the ultimate decision was each President's alone.

Whenever we have to make an individual decision of any importance, we may find it advantageous to debate the matter. This debate may take place in our minds as we weigh the pros and cons of the problem, or we may arrange for others to debate the problem for us. For instance, many governmental decisions can be made only by the

<sup>10</sup> Chiam Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, *Traité de l'argumentation, La nouvelle rhétorique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1958), Sec. 7.

<sup>11</sup> Chiam Perelman, *The Idea of Justice and the Problem of Argument*, trans. John Petrie (New York: Humanities Press, 1963), pp. 86–87.