

# The Aims of Argument

A Text and Reader

EIGHTH EDITION



Timothy W. Crusius • Carolyn E. Channell

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## A Text and Reader

Timothy W. Crusius

*Southern Methodist University*

Carolyn E. Channell

*Southern Methodist University*



THE AIMS OF ARGUMENT: TEXT AND READER, EIGHTH EDITION

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This book is printed on acid-free paper.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 DOC/DOC 1 0 9 8 7 6 5 4

ISBN 978-0-07-759220-2

MHID 0-07-759220-4

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Designer: *Jana Singer*

Cover Image: *Don Smith/Photodisc/Getty Images*

Content Licensing Specialist: *Shawntel Schmitt*

Compositor: *Laserwords Private Limited*

Typeface: *9.5/12 Sabon Garamond*

Printer: *R. R. Donnelley*

All credits appearing on page or at the end of the book are considered to be an extension of the copyright page.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Crusius, Timothy W., 1950-

The aims of argument: a text and reader/Timothy W. Crusius, Southern Methodist University;

Carolyn E. Channell, Southern Methodist University.—Eighth Edition.

pages cm

Includes index.

ISBN 978-0-07-759220-2—ISBN 0-07-759220-4 (hard copy) 1. English language—Rhetoric—

Problems, exercises, etc. 2. Persuasion (Rhetoric)—Problems, exercises, etc. 3. Report writing—

Problems, exercises, etc. 4. College readers. I. Channell, Carolyn E. II. Title.

PE1431.C78 2014

808'.0427—dc23

2013021209

The Internet addresses listed in the text were accurate at the time of publication. The inclusion of a website does not indicate an endorsement by the authors or McGraw-Hill Education, and McGraw-Hill Education does not guarantee the accuracy of the information presented at these sites.

*For W. Ross Winterowd*

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## NEW TO THIS EDITION

Now in its eighth successful edition, *The Aims of Argument: A Text and Reader* presents a unique approach to studying and teaching argument. Focusing on the aims (or purposes) of argument—to inquire, to convince, to persuade, and to mediate—the book emphasizes rhetorical contexts, helping students become experts in reading, analyzing, and writing arguments.

In addition to retaining the essential elements that make *The Aims of Argument* a comprehensive argument textbook, the eighth edition now includes:

- *Twenty-five new readings* on such topics as consumerism, immigration, civility, and global warming
- *Expansion of readings chapters to include more options for assignments*
- Significant revisions of the first five chapters to strengthen content on *reading arguments, analyzing arguments, and using visual appeals in convincing and persuading*
- *Additional Activities and Collaborative Activities throughout all chapters* to provide more options for assignments and provide self-reflection points for students
- *Connect Composition Essentials Plus 3.0* provides instructors and program administrators with the tools to assess students, sections, courses, or entire writing programs based on learning outcomes. McGraw-Hill offers simple LMS integration with one-click access and grade sync to Connect Composition from any campus learning management system.

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UNIT	TOPIC	
THE WRITING PROCESS	The Writing Process Generating Ideas Planning and Organizing	Writing a Rough Draft Revising Proofreading, Formatting, and Producing Texts
CRITICAL READING	Reading to Understand Literal Meaning Evaluating Truth and Accuracy in a Text	Evaluating the Effectiveness and Appropriateness of a Text
THE RESEARCH PROCESS	Developing and Implementing a Research Plan Evaluating Information and Sources	Integrating Source Material into a Text Using Information Ethically and Legally
REASONING AND ARGUMENT	Developing an Effective Thesis or Claim Using Evidence and Reasoning to Support a Thesis or Claim	Using Ethos (Ethics) to Persuade Readers Using Pathos (Emotion) to Persuade Readers Using Logos (Logic) to Persuade Readers
MULTILINGUAL WRITERS	Helping Verbs, Gerunds and Infinitives, and Phrasal Verbs Nouns, Verbs, and Objects Articles	Count and Noncount Nouns Sentence Structure and Word Order Subject-Verb Agreement Participles and Adverb Placement
GRAMMAR AND COMMON SENTENCE PROBLEMS	Parts of Speech Phrases and Clauses Sentence Types Fused (Run-on) Sentence Comma Splices Sentence Fragments Pronouns	Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement Pronoun Reference Subject-Verb Agreement Verbs and Verbals Adjectives and Adverbs Dangling and Misplaced Modifiers Mixed Constructions Verb Tense and Voice Shifts
PUNCTUATION AND MECHANICS	Commas Semicolons Colons End Punctuation Apostrophes Quotation Marks Dashes	Parentheses Hyphens Abbreviations Capitalization Italics Numbers Spelling
STYLE AND WORD CHOICE	Wordiness Eliminating Redundancies Sentence Variety Coordination and Subordination	Faulty Comparisons Word Choice Clichés, Slang, and Jargon Parallelism

*LearnSmart Achieve can be assigned by units and/or topics.*



## ABOUT THE AIMS OF ARGUMENT APPROACH

This book is different from other argument texts because it focuses on four aims, or purposes, of argument:

- Arguing to inquire
- Arguing to convince
- Arguing to persuade
- Arguing to mediate

### Central Tenets of the Approach

- *Argumentation is a mode or means of discourse, not an aim or purpose for writing.* Consequently, we need to teach the aims of argument.
- *The aims of argument are linked in a learning sequence so that convincing builds on inquiry, persuasion on convincing, and all three contribute to mediation.* Consequently, we offer a learning sequence for conceiving a course or courses in argument.

### FAQs about the Approach

Here are the questions we are most frequently asked about this approach:

- *What is the relative value of the four aims? Because mediation comes last, is it the best or most valued?* No aim is “better” than any other aim. Given needs for writing and certain audiences, one aim is more appropriate than another for the task at hand. Mediation comes last because it integrates inquiry, convincing, and persuading.
- *Must inquiry be taught as a separate aim?* No. It *may* be taught as a separate aim, but we do not intend this “may” as a “must.” Teaching inquiry as a distinct aim has certain advantages. Students need to learn how to engage in constructive dialogue, which is more disciplined and more focused than most class discussion. Once they see how it is done, students enjoy dialogue with one another and with texts. Dialogue helps students think through their arguments and imagine reader reaction to what they say, both of which are crucial to convincing and persuading. Finally, as with mediation, inquiry offers avenues for assignments other than the standard argumentative essay.
- *Should inquiry come first?* For a number of reasons, inquiry has priority over the other aims. Most teachers are likely to approach inquiry as prewriting, preparatory to convincing or persuading. And commonly, we return to inquiry when we find something wrong with a case we are trying to construct, so the relationship between inquiry and the other aims is also recursive.

Moreover, inquiry has psychological, moral, and practical claims to priority. When we are unfamiliar with an issue, inquiry comes first psychologically, as a felt need to explore existing opinion. Regardless of what happens in the “real world,” convincing or persuading without an open, honest, and earnest search for the truth is, in our view, immoral. Finally, inquiry goes hand in hand with research, which requires questioning the opinions encountered.

- *Isn't the difference between convincing and persuading more a matter of degree than kind?* Convincing and persuading do shade into one another so that the difference is clearest at the extremes. Furthermore, the “purest” appeal to reason—a legal brief, a philosophical or scientific argument—appeals in ways beyond the sheer cogency of the case. Persuasive techniques are submerged but not absent in arguing to convince.

Our motivation for separating convincing from persuading is not theoretical but pedagogical. Case-making is complex enough that attention to logical appeal by itself is justified. Making students conscious of the appeals to character, emotion, and style while they are learning to cope with case-making can overburden them to the point of paralysis.

Regardless, then, of how sound the traditional distinction between convincing and persuading may be, we think it best to take up convincing first and then persuasion, especially because what students learn in the former can be carried over intact into the latter. And because one cannot make a case without unconscious appeal to character, emotional commitments (such as values), and style, teaching persuasion is a matter of exposing and developing what is already there in arguing to convince.

## About the Readings

- We have avoided the “great authors, classic essays” approach. We try instead to find bright, contemporary people arguing well from diverse viewpoints—articles and chapters similar to those that can be found in better journals and trade books, the sort of publications students should read most in doing research.
- We have not presented any issue in simple pro-and-con fashion, as if there were only two sides.
- Included in the range of perspectives are arguments made with both words and images. We include a full chapter examining visual arguments, such as editorial cartoons, advertisements, public sculpture, and photographs.



## LET CUSTOMIZABLE RESOURCES HELP YOU TO ACHIEVE YOUR COURSE'S GOALS

A CREATE edition of *The Aims of Argument: A Brief Guide* is available. With McGraw-Hill CREATE, you can easily arrange and customize material from a variety of sources, including your own. You can choose your format (print or electronic) and what you want from

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You can benefit from all of the customization listed above with a ready-made version that contains Parts One and Two plus the Appendixes.

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Our goal in this book is not just to show you how to construct an argument but also to make you more aware of why people argue and what purposes argument serves. Consequently, Part Two of this book introduces four specific aims that people have in mind when they argue: to inquire, to convince, to persuade, and to mediate. Part One precedes the aims of argument and focuses on understanding argumentation in general, reading and analyzing arguments, writing a critique, doing research, and working with such forms of visual persuasion as advertising.

The selections in Parts One and Two offer something to emulate. All writers learn from studying the strategies of other writers. The object is not to imitate what a more experienced writer does but to understand the range of strategies you can use in your own way for your own purposes.

Included are arguments made with words and images. We have examples of editorial cartoons, advertisements, and photographs.

The additional readings in Part Three serve another function. To learn argument, we have to argue; to argue, we must have something to argue about. So we have grouped essays and images around central issues of current public discussion.

People argue with one another because they do not see the world the same way, and they do not see the world the same way because of different backgrounds. Therefore, in dealing with how people differ, a book about argument must deal with what makes people different, with the sources of disagreement itself—including gender, race/ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, and religion. Rather than ignoring or glossing over difference, the readings in this book will help you better understand it.

This book concludes with two appendixes. The first is on editing, the art of polishing and refining prose, and finding common errors. The second deals

with fallacies and critical thinking. Consult these resources often as you work through the text's assignments.

Arguing well is difficult for anyone. We have tried to write a text no more complicated than it has to be. We welcome your comments to improve future editions. Write us at

**The English Department  
Dallas Hall  
Southern Methodist University  
Dallas, Texas 75275**

or e-mail your comments to  
cchannel@mail.smu.edu  
tcrusius@mail.smu.edu



Timothy W. Crusius is professor of English at Southern Methodist University, where he teaches beginning and advanced composition. He's the author of books on discourse theory, philosophical hermeneutics, and Kenneth Burke.



Carolyn E. Channell taught high school and community college students before coming to Southern Methodist University, where she is now a senior lecturer and specialist in first-year writing courses.

## Acknowledgments

The authors are grateful for the comments of professors and students who have used this book over the years. Reviewers of the current edition include the following: Joanna Brooks, San Diego State University; Xiongya Gao, Southern University at New Orleans; Jennifer G. Herbert, University of Akron; Matthew Hollrah, University of Central Oklahoma; Anne Marie Reid, Colorado State University, Fort Collins; Eileen B. Seifert, DePaul University; Catherine Vieira, University of Wisconsin, Madison; and Lawrence White, Tacoma Community College.



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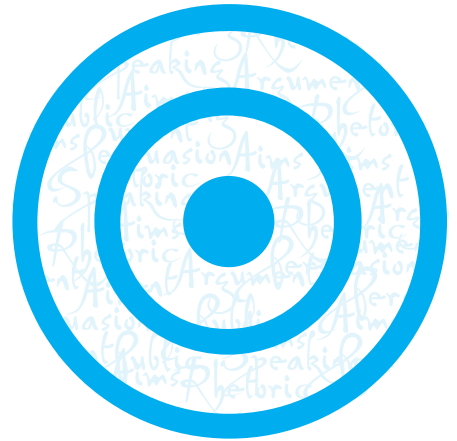
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# Understanding Argument

For some people, the word *argument* suggests conflict and heated debate; however, it has a much broader and more positive meaning, as the following pages will explain. College writing classes include argument as a key feature of critical thinking because most academic writing, by professors and students, takes the form of argument.

The perception of argument as verbal combat should not overshadow the positive role of reasoned argument in conducting human affairs. Through arguments based on good reasons and evidence, scientists advance our understanding of the world, citizens improve their communities, business leaders make decisions, and families work out compromises when interests conflict.

## WHAT IS ARGUMENT?

*The Aims of Argument* is based on two related concepts: *argument* and *rhetoric*. We will define **argument** very simply, as *reasoned thinking*. The essence of an argument is a **claim**, which is also called a *thesis* because it is what an argument attempts to prove, and a *reason* that supports the claim. A **reason** is a *sentence telling why the claim should be accepted as true*. An example of the minimal



kernel of an argument would be Steven Johnson's case in favor of playing video games, as found in his book *Everything Bad Is Good for You*:

Claim: Video games are intellectually stimulating.

Reason: Video games force players to weigh evidence, analyze situations, and quickly make correct decisions.

To be convincing, however, arguments need much more: Reasons need to be supported with evidence, facts, examples, expert testimony, and so on. And claims usually need the support of more than one reason. However, the basic relationship of a claim and a reason underlies all self-aware rational thinking.

Besides a reasoned case, real-life arguments need another crucial ingredient: an audience. No one argues into the air; arguments are intended to influence others' beliefs, opinions, and behavior. For example, Steven Johnson wrote his book to convince critics of video games and TV shows that these forms of popular entertainment are not some kind of wasteland where brains go to rot. The need to win over a skeptical audience brings us to the other important concept of this book, rhetoric.

## WHAT IS RHETORIC?

Like the word *argument*, *rhetoric* has a common negative meaning today, as it is often used to describe the empty promises and demagoguery common in political speeches. You hear people dismiss a candidate's words as "mere rhetoric." This meaning of *rhetoric* confers a judgment, and not a positive one. In this book, we define **rhetoric** in a positive way, as *the art of effective persuasion*.

In ancient Greece, where rhetoric was invented about 2,500 years ago, *rhetoric* referred to persuasive public speaking, as theirs was an oral culture. The Greeks had a goddess of persuasion (see Figure 1.1), and they respected the power of the spoken word to move people. Oral argument dominated their law courts, their governments and their public ceremonies and events.

Since the time of Aristotle, teachers of rhetoric have taught ways of reasoning well and arguing persuasively. The study of rhetoric, therefore, includes both what we have defined as reasoned thinking, the appeal through logic, and other ways of appealing to an audience. What are some other ways?

In addition to reasoning, which the Greeks called the appeal through *logos*, a speaker could persuade by presenting himself as a person of good, or ethical, character (*ethos*). The ancients put a high value on good character. Not just sounding ethical but being ethical contributed to a speaker's persuasive power. They also studied how to use emotional appeals (*pathos*) to move the audience. Obviously, emotional appeals can be abused, but they are, and have always been, a legitimate part of the art of rhetoric. Because the ancient Greeks made their arguments orally, the presentation or delivery of the speech was also part of the art of rhetoric for them. In written arguments today, we might see the style and written voice of the writer as an equivalent kind of appeal.

## Defining Rhetoric

Rhetoric is the art of argument as responsible reasoning. The study of rhetoric develops self-conscious awareness of the principles and practices of responsible reasoning and effective arguing.

This old, highly valued meaning of rhetoric as oratory survived well into the nineteenth century. In Abraham Lincoln's day, Americans assembled by the thousands to hear speeches that went on for hours. For them, a good speech held the same level of interest as a big sporting event does for people today. In this book, we are interested primarily in various ways of using *written* argument, but the rhetorical tradition informs our understanding of all kinds of arguments.

Today, rhetoric has become so broadly defined as to include almost any kind of communication or symbol that has the potential to influence people.



**Figure 1.1**

*Peitho, the goddess of persuasion, was often involved in seductions and love affairs. On this piece (a detail from a terra-cotta kylix, c. 410 BCE), Peitho, the figure on the left, gives advice to a dejected-looking woman, identified as Demonassa. To the right, Eros, the god of love, stands with his hand on Demonassa's shoulder, suggesting the nature of this advice.*



## CONCEPT CLOSE-UP

### Defining Responsible Reasoning

Argument as responsible reasoning means

- Defending *not the first position* you might take on an issue *but the best position*, determined through open-minded inquiry
- Providing reasons for holding that position that can earn the respect of an audience

A classic textbook, *The Rhetoric of Popular Culture*, by Barry Brummett of the University of Texas, argues that almost anything in popular culture, from blue jeans to hairstyles to shopping malls, can be rhetorical. He means that anything we find meaningful has the potential to influence us. This is an interesting view of the power of rhetoric; however, in this book we will focus on rhetoric and reasoned thinking in purposefully crafted arguments, whether written, spoken, or visual.

### AN EXAMPLE OF ARGUMENT

Most books are long arguments, containing many smaller arguments, such as the passage below, which is excerpted from Steven Johnson's book on popular culture, *Everything Bad Is Good for You*. In this excerpt Johnson anticipates that his audience might associate video games with stupid and socially unacceptable content. He claims that the content is not relevant to the educational value of the game. As you read, consider how he uses reasoning and other rhetorical appeals to persuade readers to see the value of video games.

#### From *Everything Bad Is Good for You*

STEVEN JOHNSON

- 1 De-emphasizing the content of game culture shouldn't be seen as a cop-out. We ignore the content of many activities that are widely considered to be good for the brain or the body. No one complains about the simplistic, militaristic plot of chess games. ("It always ends the same way!") We teach algebra to children knowing full well that the day they leave the classroom, ninety-nine percent of those kids will never again directly employ their algebraic skills. Learning algebra isn't about acquiring a specific tool; it's about building up a mental muscle that will come in handy elsewhere. You don't go to the gym because you're interested in learning how to operate a Stairmaster; you go to the gym because operating a Stairmaster does something laudable to your body, the benefits of which you enjoy the many hours of the week you're not on a Stairmaster.

- 2 So it is with games. It's not *what* you're thinking about when you're playing a game, it's the *way* you're thinking that matters. The distinction is not exclusive to games, of course. Here's John Dewey, in his book *Experience and Education*: "Perhaps the greatest of all pedagogical fallacies is the notion that a person learns only that particular thing he is studying at the time. Collateral learning in the way of formation of enduring attitudes, of likes and dislikes, may be and often is more important than the spelling lesson or lesson in geography or history that is learned. For these attitudes are fundamentally what count in the future."

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the point, or claim, Johnson is attempting to get his readers to accept?
2. What reason does he give to support this claim? What evidence supports the reason?
3. Besides the reason and evidence, do you see any other kind of rhetorical appeals operating in this passage?
4. Do you find this argument convincing? Why or why not?

## ARGUING RESPONSIBLY

By now it has probably occurred to you that argument is something that everyone does all the time. After all, we are usually expected to offer reasons for our opinions, such as why we think Lady Gaga is a great performing artist or a shallow publicity stunt, or whether the Red candidate or the Blue one would make a better governor. In addition to making our own arguments, we hear them all the time, from the candidates who want our vote, from businesses who want our dollar, from friends who want us to think the way they do on an issue. The point to remember is that the intelligent person is one who can distinguish good arguments from bad ones—whether he or she agrees with the argument or not.

In fact, responsible argument is not a one-way street, as Walter Lippmann said in his classic 1939 essay "The Indispensable Opposition." He wanted to correct the common notion that freedom of speech simply means that all opinions can be expressed. Lippmann calls the opposition "indispensable" because a free society depends not only on the right of free speech but also on the responsibility to actually listen to (and not just tolerate), those with opposing views. In Lippmann's words, "If we truly wish to understand why freedom is necessary in a civilized society, we must begin by realizing that, because freedom of discussion improves our own opinions, the liberties of other men are our own vital necessity."

Too often people do not think about whether an argument shows good reasoning. People tend to approve of arguments that align with their opinions and dismiss those that do not. They also tend to be convinced by arguments that appeal to their fears, their egos, their family's political views, and so on. In this book, we will use the term **responsible argument** to distinguish those that show responsible reasoning from those that show poor, or careless, reasoning.



## CONCEPT CLOSE-UP

### Four Criteria of Responsible Reasoning

#### **RESPONSIBLE REASONERS ARE WELL-INFORMED**

Their opinions develop out of knowledge and are supported by reliable and current evidence.

#### **RESPONSIBLE REASONERS ARE SELF-CRITICAL AND OPEN TO CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM FROM OTHERS**

They balance their passionate attachment to their opinions with willingness to evaluate and test them against differing opinions, acknowledge when good points are made against their opinions, and even, when presented with good reasons for doing so, change their minds.

#### **RESPONSIBLE REASONERS ARGUE WITH THEIR AUDIENCES OR READERS IN MIND**

They make a sincere effort to understand and connect with other people and other points of view because they do not see differences of opinion as obstacles to their own point of view.

#### **RESPONSIBLE REASONERS KNOW THEIR ARGUMENTS' CONTEXTS**

They recognize that what we argue about now was argued about in the past and will be argued about in the future, that our contributions to these ongoing conversations are influenced by who we are, what made us who we are, where we are, what is going on around us.

Responsible arguments can be forceful but never are rude or insult the opposition. More than half of Americans today disapprove of Congress because the members on both sides of the aisle would rather demonize the opposition than listen to each other's arguments and reason together to pass legislation. The media, especially talk radio, is full of irresponsible arguments aimed at stirring up the speakers' followers. These are fake arguments, not even intended to change opponents' thinking.

### **FOUR CRITERIA OF RESPONSIBLE REASONING**

If you read the letters to the editor in almost any daily newspaper, you will see many short arguments by citizens. You might notice that some of them sound more intelligent than others. Whether you agree or disagree with the author's point, you may find yourself respecting some of the letters and dismissing others as laughable or at least not deserving any serious consideration. In this book, we will stress qualities of arguments that deserve respect. Such arguments display what we call responsible reasoning. Some criteria, or standards, for responsible reasoning are listed below.

## Responsible Reasoning Is Well Informed

To argue responsibly, a person must support his or her opinions with reliable and current evidence. If the author has not made any effort to dig up and include some specific knowledge on the topic, the reader will dismiss the argument as having no weight or force.

You may have noticed that people have opinions about all sorts of things, including subjects they know little or nothing about. The general human tendency is to have the strongest opinions on matters about which we know the least. Ignorance and inflexibility go together because it is easy to form an opinion when few or none of the facts get in the way and people can just assert their prejudices. Conversely, the more we know about most topics, the harder it is to be dogmatic. We find ourselves changing or at least refining our opinions more or less continuously as we gain more knowledge and learn from well-argued opposing views.

## Responsible Reasoning Is Open to Constructive Criticism from Others

We have opinions about all sorts of things that do not matter much to us, but we also have opinions in which we are heavily invested, sometimes to the point that our whole sense of reality, right and wrong, good and bad—our very sense of ourselves—is tied up in them. These opinions we defend passionately.

On this count, popular argumentation and responsible reasoning are alike. It is not a fault to be passionate about our convictions. A crucial difference, however, separates the fanatic's argument from that of the responsible person. The fanatic is all passion; the responsible person is willing to step back and ask himself or herself, "I may have believed this for as long as I can remember, but is this conviction really justified? Do the facts support it? When I think it through, does it really make sense? Can I make a coherent and consistent argument for it?" These are questions that do not concern the fanatic and are seldom posed in the popular argumentation we hear on talk radio or TV.

In practical terms, being open to well-intended criticism boils down to this: the ability to change our minds when good reasons to do so are presented. In popular argumentation, changing one's mind can be taken as a weakness, as being wishy-washy, and so people tend to go on advocating what they believe, regardless of what anyone else says. But there is nothing wishywashy about confronting the facts and realizing that our point of view is not supported by available evidence. In such a case, changing one's mind is a sign of intelligence and responsible reasoning.

## Responsible Reasoning Considers the Audience

Nothing drains energy from an argument more than the feeling that it will accomplish nothing. As one student put it, "Why bother? People just go on thinking what they want to." This attitude is understandable. Popular, undisciplined argument often does seem futile: Minds are not changed; no progress