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Media Argumentation

Dialectic, Persuasion, and Rhetoric

Media argumentation is a powerful force in our lives. From political speeches to television commercials to war propaganda, it can effectively mobilize political action, influence the public, and market products. This book presents a new and systematic way of thinking about the influence of mass media in our lives, showing the intersection of media sources with argumentation theory, informal logic, computational theory, and theories of persuasion. Using a variety of case studies that represent arguments that typically occur in the mass media, Douglas Walton demonstrates how tools recently developed in argumentation theory can be usefully applied to the identification, analysis, and evaluation of media arguments. He draws on the most recent developments in artificial intelligence, including dialogical theories of argument, which he developed, as well as speech act theory. Walton provides a structural analysis not only of individual types of argument commonly employed in the mass media, but also of pragmatic frameworks (models of goal-directed conversation) in which such arguments are used. Each chapter presents solutions to problems central to understanding, analyzing, and criticizing media argumentation.

Douglas Walton is professor of philosophy at the University of Winnipeg. An internationally known scholar and author of more than thirty books in the areas of argumentation, logic, and artificial intelligence, he has received major research grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Isaak Walton Killiam Memorial Foundation. Dr. Walton also received the ISSA Prize from the International Society for the Study of Argumentation for his contributions to research on fallacies, argumentation, and informal logic.

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DOUGLAS WALTON
University of Winnipeg

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For Karen, with love

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