

combination was left where another person discovered it, someone failed to lock the safe, or an employee of the company manufacturing the safe robbed it.

A second problem with argument by division is that sometimes debaters present phony alternatives—options that are not mutually exclusive. A debater might, for example, say, “You have a choice between upholding the Second Amendment to the Constitution *or* requiring the registration of handguns. We have shown you many reasons why you should choose to uphold the Second Amendment.” An opposing debater should ask why one has to choose between these two alternatives. It is certainly possible to do what the Second Amendment says (have a well-regulated militia) while also requiring the registration of handguns.

A final problem with argument by division is that sometimes mistakes are made in the rejection of alternatives. Consider our earlier argument about the reasons Iran wants to produce highly enriched uranium. The debater argued that it is unreasonable to believe that Iran wants to support nuclear power because it has an abundance of oil. Yet environmentalists have been predicting for the past quarter century that the world oil supply will run dry. Why is it unreasonable that Iran should choose to use some of its oil wealth to prepare for the world beyond fossil fuels?

ARGUMENT FROM ANALOGY

Another method of reasoning uses *analogy*—a figurative comparison. Some theologians have argued for the existence of God based on the analogy of the watchmaker—the belief that the complexity of the universe speaks of a creator. Astronomers explain their theories of the universe by comparing it to spots on the surface of an expanding balloon. Philosopher John Rawls explained his notion of justice by using the analogy of standing behind a veil (he called it a “veil of ignorance”). Supreme Court Justice William Brennan used the analogy of the “slippery slope” to warn that a seemingly innocuous step down the slope of restricting civil liberties could result in a slide all the way to the bottom.

Analogies also find a place in political debates. A February 16, 2007, article in *USA Today* by Darlene Superville detailed the ways that members of the U.S. Congress have used analogies in debating U.S. policy with respect to Iraq. Republican Representative Ric Keller of Florida offered the following analogy:

Imagine your next-door neighbor refuses to mow his lawn and the weeds are all the way up to his waist. You decide you are going to mow his lawn for him every single week. The neighbor never says thank you, he hates you, and sometimes he takes out a gun and shoots at you. Under these circumstances, do you keep mowing his lawn