Creative Refutation

- Generate a single set of objective, measurable criteria to evaluate the two sides of an argument

- Highlight the most critical contrast(s) between competing positions and then defend your choice

- Use your opponents' evidence to make your case

- Exploit their contradictions and inconsistencies

- Accept your opponents' core values or criteria when you can use them for your own purposes – thereby avoiding the comparison of apples and oranges

- Agree on ends, but focus the argument on means

- Question the (long-term?) "goodness" of the effects your opponents aspire to achieve

- Transform your opponents' disadvantages into advantages by switching perspectives

- Leave inessential arguments un-refuted – or even concede them – to save time and energy for the crucial issue(s)

- Refute the following potential weak points of your opponents' argument:

  o Its relevance
  o The logic it's based on
  o The evidence to support it
  o The link between evidence and argument
  o The principle behind it

  (with thanks to Robert Branham, *Debate and Critical Analysis*)

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