

Excerpt from *Remarks on Women's Economic
Cooperation Women and the World*
HILLARY CLINTON

Integrating women more effectively into the way businesses invest, market, and recruit also yields benefits in terms of profitability and corporate governance. In a McKinsey survey, a third of executives reported increased profits as a result of investments in empowering women in emerging markets. Research also demonstrates a strong correlation between higher degrees of gender diversity in the leadership ranks of business and organizational performance. The World Bank finds that by eliminating discrimination against female workers and managers, managers could significantly increase productivity per worker by 25 to 40 percent. Reducing barriers preventing women from working in certain sectors would lower the productivity gap between male and female workers by a third to one half across a range of countries.

Hillary Clinton served as Secretary of State for President Barack Obama from 2009 to 2013. The speech was given in September 2011.

Reading and Discussion Questions

1. What is the major premise in this passage from Clinton's speech?
2. What is the relationship between the first sentence and the rest of the paragraph?

Common Fallacies

In this necessarily brief review it would be impossible to discuss all the fallacies listed by logicians, but we can examine the ones most likely to be found in the arguments you will read and write. Fallacies are difficult to classify, first, because there are literally dozens of systems for classifying, and second, because under any system there is always a good deal of overlap. It's helpful to remember that even if you cannot name the particular fallacy, you can learn to recognize it and not only refute it in the arguments of others but avoid it in your own as well.

We all like to think that if information is in print, it is reliable. Unfortunately, that is not always the case. People with unjust biases and even those who want to sow hatred often find a way to get their opinions into print. In general, works that appear in print go through a much more extensive vetting process than what appears online, but there are so-called vanity presses that will publish pretty much anything

if the author will pay the cost. There are also all of periodicals that express slanted — and often conflicting — points of view, some of them offered to many of us. That's what comes of freedom of the press. Whether in print, online, or in audio sources, you should always look for well-known, credentialed authors and speakers who employ logical reasoning and avoid inflammatory language.

Hasty Generalization

Many of our prejudices are a result of **hasty generalization**. A prejudice is literally a judgment made before the facts are in. On the basis of experience with two or three members of an ethnic group, for example, we may form the prejudice that all members of the group share the characteristics that we have attributed to the two or three in our experience.

Superstitions are also based in part on hasty generalization. As a result of a very small number of experiences with black cats, broken mirrors, Friday the thirteenth, or spilled salt, some people will assume a cause-and-effect relation between these signs and misfortunes. *Superstition* has been defined as “a notion maintained despite evidence to the contrary.” The evidence would certainly show that contrary to the superstitious belief, in a lifetime hundreds of such “unlucky” signs are not followed by unfortunate events. To generalize about a connection is therefore unjustified.

Any generalization based on too few particular instances is a hasty generalization. Since we seldom have the chance to observe every possible instance before arriving at a generalization, we have to interpret what “too few” means in a particular context.

- I got a parking ticket for parking on the street before I got my permit and another ticket for parking facing the wrong way on the street. These police in Columbia are just out to make money off of college students!
- That driver who cut me off was an old lady. Old people shouldn't be allowed to drive.
- I studied for my first two statistics tests and still failed. I'm not going to even bother to study for the final because I'm going to fail it anyway.
- I've got to wear my lucky Clemson shirt! We never lose when I wear it!
- It made me really nervous having that family of Muslims on my flight.

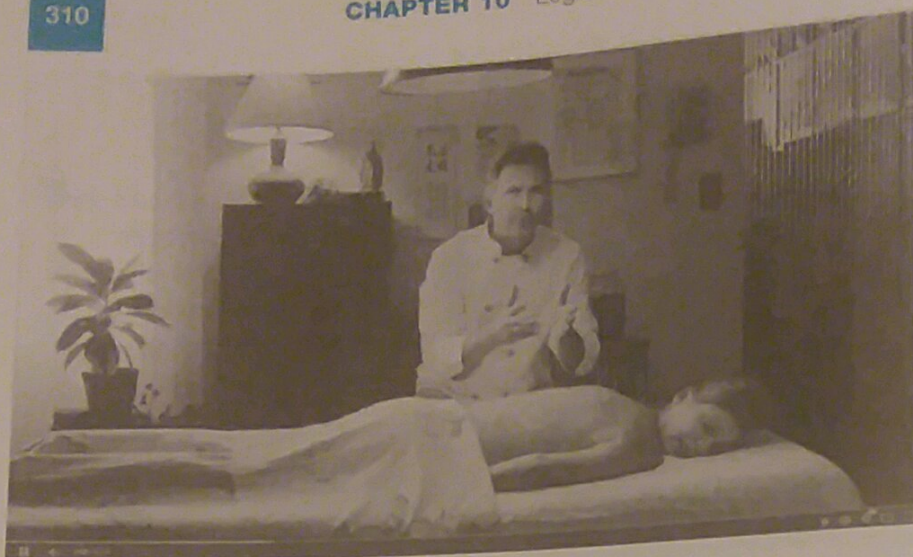


FIGURE 10.1 Holiday Inn Express commercial. Holiday Inn

Faulty Use of Authority

The use of authority—the attempt to bolster claims by citing the opinions of experts—was discussed in Chapter 6. Experts are a valuable source of information on subjects we have no personal experience with or specialized knowledge about. Properly identified, they can provide essential support. The **faulty use of authority** occurs when individuals are presented as authorities in fields in which they are not. An actor who plays a doctor

on television may be hired to advertise the latest sleep medicine but actually has no more expertise with medications than the average consumer. The role that he plays may make him appear to be an authority but does not make him one. No matter how impressive credentials sound, they are largely meaningless unless they establish relevant authority.

Vintage ads are a rich source of false use of authority:

- More doctors smoke Camels than any other cigarettes. (1949)
- For Sun Giant Raisins: Horror film star Vincent Price says, “Around my kitchen this is raisin time of year . . . because raisins are good, and good for you.” (1974)
- The Soda Pop Board of America claimed that laboratory tests have proven that babies who start drinking soda early have a much higher chance of gaining acceptance and “fitting in” during the preteen years. (2002 parody)

In a series of popular television commercials for Holiday Inn Express that ran for eleven years starting in 1998 and then were started again in 2013, ordinary people step in to perform the role of professionals. When it is discovered that they are not professionals as others assumed, the retort is always the same: “But I stayed at a Holiday Inn Express last night.” In one of the ads a woman relaxes under what she assumes to be the talented hands of a skilled acupuncturist, only to find that his sole claim to authority is what hotel he stayed at the night before. (See Figure 10.1.)

Post Hoc or Doubtful Cause

The entire Latin term for this fallacy is *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*, meaning “After this, therefore because of this.” The arguer infers that because one event

follows another event, the first event must be the cause of the second. But proximity of events or conditions does not guarantee a causal relation.

- The rooster crows every morning at 5:00 and, seeing the sun rise immediately after, decides that his crowing has caused the sun to rise.
- A month after A-bomb tests are concluded, tornadoes damage the area where the tests were held, and residents decide that the tests caused the tornadoes.
- After the school principal suspends daily prayers in the classroom, acts of vandalism increase, and some parents are convinced that failure to conduct prayer is responsible for the rise in vandalism.

In each of these cases, the fact that one event follows another does not prove a causal connection. The two events may be coincidental, or the first event may be only one — and an insignificant one — of many causes that have produced the second event. The reader or writer of causal arguments must determine whether another more plausible explanation exists and whether several causes have combined to produce the effect. Perhaps the suspension of prayer was only one of a number of related causes: a decline in disciplinary action, a relaxation of academic standards, a change in school administration, and changes in family structure in the school community.

In the social sciences, cause-and-effect relations are especially susceptible to challenge. Human experiences can seldom be subjected to laboratory conditions. In addition, the complexity of the social environment makes it difficult, even impossible, to extract one cause from among the many that influence human behavior.

False Analogy

Many analogies are merely descriptive and offer no proof of the connection between the two things being compared. An analogy is called a **false analogy** when two things are compared to each other on the basis of superficial similarities while significant dissimilarities are ignored.

- Bill Clinton had no experience of serving in the military. To have Bill Clinton become president, and thus commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the United States, was like electing some passer-by on the street to fly the space shuttle.
- Students should be allowed to look at their textbooks during examinations. After all, surgeons have X-rays to guide them during an operation; lawyers have briefs to guide them during a trial; carpenters have blueprints to guide them when building a house. Why, then, shouldn't students be allowed to look at their textbooks during an examination?
- Education cannot prepare men and women for marriage. Trying to educate them for marriage is like trying to teach them to swim without allowing them to go into the water. It can't be done.
- People are like dogs. They respond best to clear discipline.

Ad Hominem

The Latin term *ad hominem* means “against the man” and refers to an attack on the person rather than on the argument or the issue. The assumption in such a fallacy is that if the speaker proves to be unacceptable in some way, his or her statements must also be judged unacceptable. Attacking the author of the message is a strategy of diversion that prevents the reader from giving attention where it is due — to the issue under discussion.

You might hear someone complain, “What can the priest tell us about marriage? He’s never been married himself.” This ad hominem accusation ignores the validity of the advice the priest might offer. In the same way, an overweight patient might reject advice on diet by an overweight physician. In politics, it is not uncommon for antagonists to attack each other for personal characteristics that may not be relevant to the tasks they will be elected to perform. They may be accused of infidelity to their partners, homosexuality, atheism, or a flamboyant social life. Even if certain accusations should be proved true, voters should not ignore the substance of what politicians do and say in their public offices.

- I wouldn’t vote for Higgins because he left his wife and three kids to run off with his secretary.
- The CEO of that company is gay, so I wouldn’t buy its products.
- She shouldn’t serve on the school board; she had her first child before she was married!

Ad hominem accusations against the person do *not* constitute a fallacy if the characteristics under attack are relevant to the argument. If the politician is irresponsible and dishonest in the conduct of his or her personal life, we may be justified in thinking that the person will also behave irresponsibly and dishonestly in public office.

False Dilemma

As the name tells us, the **false dilemma**, sometimes called the “black-white fallacy,” poses an either-or situation. The arguer suggests that only two alternatives exist, although there may be other explanations of or solutions to the problem under discussion. The false dilemma reflects the simplification of a complex problem. Sometimes it is offered out of ignorance or laziness, sometimes to divert attention from the real explanation or solution that the arguer rejects for doubtful reasons.

You may encounter the either-or situation in dilemmas about personal choices. “At the University of Georgia,” says one writer, “the measure of a man was football. You either played it or worshipped those who did, and there was no middle ground.”⁴ Clearly, this dilemma — playing football or worshipping those who do — ignores other measures of manhood.

Politics and government offer a wealth of examples.

⁴ Phil Gales, “A”



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- U.S.A.: Love it or leave it.
- If we don't end our dependence on oil, we will destroy our children's future.
- Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists.

In an interview with the *New York Times* in 1975, the Shah of Iran was asked why he could not introduce into his authoritarian regime greater freedom for his subjects. His reply was, "What's wrong with authority? Is anarchy better?"

Slippery Slope

If an arguer predicts that taking a first step will lead inevitably to a second, usually undesirable step, he or she must provide evidence that this will happen. Otherwise, the arguer is guilty of a **slippery-slope** fallacy.

Predictions based on the danger inherent in taking the first step are commonplace. In a speech to Congress on October 27, 1999, Independent presidential candidate Ron Paul said, "I am strongly pro-life. I think one of the most disastrous rulings of this century was *Roe versus Wade*. I do believe in the slippery-slope theory. I believe that if people are careless and casual about life at the beginning of life, we will be careless and casual about life at the end. Abortion leads to euthanasia. I believe that."⁵ Here are other examples:

- The Connecticut law allowing sixteen-year-olds and their parents to divorce each other will mean the death of the family.
- If we ban handguns, we will end up banning rifles and other hunting weapons.

Slippery-slope predictions are simplistic. They ignore not only the dissimilarities between first and last steps but also the complexity of the developments in any long chain of events.

⁵ Quoted in "Protect All Human Life." ronpaul.com.

Begging the Question

If the writer makes a statement that assumes that the very question being argued has already been proved, the writer is guilty of **begging the question**. In a letter to the editor of a college newspaper protesting the failure of the majority of students to meet the writing requirement because they had failed an exemption test, the writer said, "Not exempting all students who honestly qualify for exemption is an insult." But whether the students are honestly qualified is precisely the question that the exemption test was supposed to resolve. The writer has not proved that the students who failed the writing test were qualified for exemption. She has only made an assertion *as if* she had already proved it.

Circular reasoning is an extreme example of begging the question: "Women should not be permitted to join men's clubs because the clubs are for men only." The question to be resolved first, of course, is whether clubs for men only should continue to exist.

Other examples:

- I hate soccer because it's a sport I just don't like.
- The reason these clubs are in such demand is that everyone wants to get in them.
- Freedom of speech is important because people should be able to speak freely.

Straw Man

The **straw-man** fallacy consists of an attack on a view similar to but not the same as the one your opponent holds. It is a familiar diversionary tactic. The name probably derives from an old game in which a straw man was set up to divert attention from the real target that a contestant was supposed to knock down.

Notice how in the following passage about New York mayor Michael Bloomberg's proposed ban on the sale of sugary drinks larger than sixteen ounces, conservative pundit George Will shifts the focus from that proposed restriction to global warming:

"That's modern liberalism: They delight in bossing people around," Will complained to ABC's George Stephanopoulos. "What Bloomberg is saying [is] the government helps with your health care, the government's implicated in your health. Therefore, we own you. Therefore, the government can fine tune all the decisions you make pertinent to your health."

"This is one of the reasons liberals are so enamored over the issue of climate change," Will continued. "They say all our behaviors in some way affect the climate, therefore, the government — meaning, we liberals, the party of government — can fine tune all your behavior right down to the light bulbs you use."⁶

⁶ David Edwards, "George Will Uses Straw Man," rawstory.com, 3/1/11

Red Herring

Another diversionary tactic is the **red herring**. The straw man is an attempt to draw an opponent's attention to an issue similar to but not exactly what the opponent was talking about that the speaker or writer can better address. A red herring is an attempt to divert attention away from the subject at hand to *any* other subject, not just one related to the original subject.

An outstanding example of the red herring fallacy occurred in the famous Checkers speech of Senator Richard Nixon. In 1952, during his vice-presidential campaign, Nixon was accused of having appropriated \$18,000 in campaign funds for his personal use. At one point in the radio and television speech in which he defended his reputation, he said:

One other thing I probably should tell you, because if I don't they will probably be saying this about me, too. We did get something, a gift, after the election.

A man down in Texas heard Pat on the radio mention the fact that our two youngsters would like to have a dog, and, believe it or not, the day before we left on this campaign trip we got a message from Union Station in Baltimore saying they had a package for us. We went down to get it. You know what it was?

It was a little cocker spaniel dog, in a crate that he had sent all the way from Texas, black and white, spotted, and our little girl, Tricia, the six-year-old, named it Checkers.

And, you know, the kids, like all kids, loved the dog, and I just want to say this, right now, that regardless of what they say about it, we are going to keep it.⁷

Of course, Nixon knew that the issue was the alleged misappropriation of funds, not the ownership of the dog, which no one had asked him to return.

Two Wrongs Make a Right

The **two-wrongs-make-a-right** fallacy is another example of the way in which attention may be diverted from the question at issue.

After President Jimmy Carter in March 1977 attacked the human rights record of the Soviet Union, Russian officials responded:

As for the present state of human rights in the United States, it is characterized by the following facts: millions of unemployed, racial discrimination, social inequality of women, infringement of citizens' personal freedom, the growth of crime, and so on.⁸

The Russians made no attempt to deny the failure of *their* human rights record; instead they attacked by pointing out that the Americans are not blameless either.

Other examples:

- Anyone who killed those innocent children deserves the death penalty.
- It's ok to use chemical weapons against the U.S., since the U.S. used them against Viet Nam.
- I had every right to take his Blu-ray player. He broke mine!

Non Sequitur

The Latin term *non sequitur*, which means "it does not follow," is another fallacy of irrelevance. An advertisement for a book, *Worlds in Collision*, whose theories about the origin of the earth and evolutionary development have been challenged by almost all reputable scientists, states:

Once rejected as "preposterous"! Critics called it an outrage! It aroused incredible antagonism in scientific and literary circles. Yet half a million copies were sold and for twenty-seven years it remained an outstanding bestseller.

JOEL PETT
LEXINGTON HERALD-LEADER



We know, of course, that the popularity of a book does not bestow scientific respectability. The number of sales, therefore, is irrelevant to proof of the book's theoretical soundness — a non sequitur.

Other examples sometimes appear in comments by politicians and political candidates. In June 2010, President Obama said, "After all, oil is a finite resource. We consume more than 20 percent of the world's oil, but have less than 2 percent of the world's oil reserves."⁹ This is a non sequitur because the relevant relationship would be between the U.S. percentage of world *population* (not oil reserves) and the U.S. percentage of world oil consumption.

Ad Populum

Arguers guilty of the **ad populum** fallacy make an appeal to the prejudices of the people (*populum* in Latin). They assume that their claim can be adequately defended without further support if they emphasize a belief or attitude that the audience shares with them. One common form of ad populum is an appeal to patriotism, which may enable arguers to omit evidence that the audience needs for proper evaluation of the claim. In the following advertisement, the makers of Zippo lighters made such an appeal in urging readers to buy their product:

It's a grand old lighter. Zippo — the grand old lighter that's made right here in the good old U.S.A.

We truly make an all-American product. The raw materials used in making a Zippo lighter are all right from this great land of ours.

Zippo windproof lighters are proud to be Americans.

Other examples:

- But you have to let me go to the party! *Everyone* will be there!
- Everybody drives a little over the speed limit. If I drove the speed limit, I would get rear-ended!
- Lipton Ice Tea. Join the Dance.

Appeal to Tradition

In making an **appeal to tradition**, the arguer assumes that what has existed for a long time and has therefore become a tradition should continue to exist *because* it is a tradition. If the arguer avoids telling his or her reader *why* the tradition should be preserved, he or she may be accused of failing to meet the real issue.

The following statement appeared in a letter defending the membership policy of the Century Club, an all-male club established in New York City in

⁹ Glen Kessler, "U.S. Oil Resources: President Obama's 'Non Sequitur Facts,'" Washington Post Online, washingtonpost.com, 15 Mar. 2012.