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Unit VIII

My Courses

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My Community

Unit VIII



Unit VIII

Hello Everyone,

This chapter presents some of the most useful tools for clear thinking. The focus of this chapter is “Fallacies” and this particular text calls them “Dirty Tricks.” There are many fallacies and as the text clearly points out, there is not an exhaustive list. However, in the pursuit of clear thinking there are lists of fallacies based on type. I encourage you to look at the list of fallacies that I have organized by type and then when reading your text to “cross reference” the dirty trick with the particular fallacy and its type. This will help you to internalize this information, which will serve you well in your pursuit of becoming a clear and fair minded critical reasoner. Here is the list I have composed:

MASTER LIST OF LOGICAL FALLACIES

Fallacies of Relevance

1. The general fallacy **APPEAL TO EMOTION** can appeal to various other emotions including pride, pity, fear, hate, vanity, or sympathy. Generally, the issue is oversimplified to the advantage of the arguer.
 - a. Ad baculum or **APPEAL TO FORCE** is a form of **APPEAL TO EMOTION**. The arguer threatens the listener with force in order to have the argument accepted.
 - a. Ad hominem or **AGAINST THE PERSON**.
Attacking the arguer rather than his/her argument.
Example: John's objections to capital punishment carry no weight since he is a convicted felon. Note: Saying something negative about someone is not automatically ad hominem. If a person (politician for example) is the issue, then it is not a fallacy to criticize him/her.
 - b. Ad miseracordium **APPEAL TO PITY** is a form of the **APPEAL TO EMOTION**. In this fallacy, the arguer uses emotional appeals rather than logical

reasons to persuade the listener. The emotion of pity is evoked.

c. **Ad populum APPEAL TO PEOPLE.** There are generally **FOUR** types of these arguments:

i **COMMON BELIEF** (Sometimes called the **BANDWAGON** fallacy or ‘appeal to popularity’). This fallacy is committed when we assert a statement to be true on the evidence that many other people allegedly believe it. Being widely believed is not proof or evidence of the truth. Example: Of course Nixon was guilty in Watergate. Everybody knows that.

PAST BELIEF. A form of the **COMMON BELIEF** fallacy. The same error in reasoning is committed except the claim is for belief or support in the past. Example: We all know women should obey their husbands. After all, marriage vows contained those words for centuries.

ii **APPEAL TO VANITY** This fallacy is a form of **APPEAL TO PEOPLE**, which is committed when a person's vanity is used to have the listener accept the conclusion.

iii **APPEAL TO SNOBBERY** This fallacy is a form of **APPEAL TO PEOPLE**, which is committed when a person's snobbishness is used to have the listener accept the conclusion.

iv **TWO WRONGS MAKE A RIGHT** or **TU QUOQUE** This fallacy is committed when we try to justify an apparently wrong action by charges of a similar wrong. The underlying assumption is that if they do it, then we can do it too and are somehow justified. Example: Supporters of apartheid are often guilty of this error in reasoning. They point to U.S. practices of slavery to justify their system.

2. **ACCIDENT** is a fallacy that occurs when a general rule is wrongly applied to the specific case. For example, The First Amendment to the Constitution prevents the government from interfering with the free exercise of religion. Therefore any religion that involves human sacrifice must be permitted.

3. **NON SEQUITUR** or **MISSING THE POINT**. ("It does not follow.") In this fallacy the premises have no direct relationship to the conclusion. This fallacy appears in political speeches and advertising with great frequency. Example: A waterfall in the background and a beautiful girl in the foreground have nothing to do with an automobile's performance.
4. **STRAW MAN**. This fallacy occurs when we misrepresent an opponent's position to make it easier to attack, usually by distorting his or her views to ridiculous extremes. This can also take the form of attacking only the weak premises in an opposing argument while ignoring the strong ones. Example: Those who favor gun-control legislation just want to take all guns away from responsible citizens and put them into the hands of the criminals.
5. **SLANTING**. A form of misrepresentation in which a true statement is made, but made in such a way as to suggest that something is not true or to give a false description through the manipulation of connotation. Example: I can't believe how much money is being poured into the space program (suggesting that 'poured' means heedless and unnecessary spending)
6. **RED HERRING**. This fallacy introduces an irrelevant issue into a discussion as a diversionary tactic. It takes people off the issue at hand; it is beside the point. Example: Many people say that engineers need more practice in writing, but I would like to remind them how difficult it is to master all the math and drawing skills that an engineer requires.

Fallacies of Weak Induction

7. Ad verecundiam or **APPEAL TO AUTHORITY**. This fallacy tries to convince the listener by appealing to the reputation of a famous or respected person. Oftentimes it is an authority in one field who is speaking out of his or her field of expertise. Example: Sports stars selling cars or hamburgers. Or, the actor on a TV commercial that says, "I'm not a doctor, but I play one on TV."
8. Ad ignorantium or **APPEAL TO IGNORANCE**. Arguing on the basis of what is not known and cannot be proven. (Sometimes called

the “burden of proof” fallacy). If you can't prove that something is true then it must be false (and vice versa). Example: You can't prove there isn't a Loch Ness Monster, so there must be one.

9. **CONTRARY TO FACT HYPOTHESIS.** This fallacy is committed when we state with an unreasonable degree of certainty the results of an event that might have occurred but did not. Example: If President Bush had not gone into the Persian Gulf with military force when he did, Saddam Hussein would control the world's oil from Saudi Arabia today.

10. **HASTY GENERALIZATION.** A generalization accepted on the support of a sample that is too small or biased to warrant it. Example: All men are rats! Just look at the louse that I married.

11. **FALSE CAUSE - POST HOC, ERGO PROPTER HOC.** (“After this, therefore caused by this.”) A form of the false cause fallacy in which it is inferred that because one event followed another it is necessarily caused by that event. Example: Mary joined our class and the next week we all did poorly on the quiz. It must be her fault.

12. **QUESTIONABLE CAUSE.** (In Latin: non causa pro causa, “not the cause of that”). This form of the false cause fallacy occurs when the cause for an occurrence is identified on insufficient evidence. Example: I can't find the checkbook; I am sure that my husband hid it so I couldn't go shopping today.

13. **SLIPPERY SLOPE.** A line of reasoning that argues against taking a step because it assumes that if you take the first step, you will inevitably follow through to the last. This fallacy uses the valid form of hypothetical syllogism, but uses guesswork for the premises. Example: We can't allow students any voice in decision making on campus; if we do, it won't be long before they are in total control.

14. **ARGUMENT FROM ANALOGY or WEAK ANALOGY.** An unsound form of inductive argument in which an argument relies

heavily on a weak analogy to prove its point. Example: This must be a great car, for, like the finest watches in the world, it was made in Switzerland.

Fallacies of Presumption, Ambiguity and Grammatical Analogy

15. **BEGGING THE QUESTION.** An argument in which the conclusion is implied or already assumed in the premises. Also said to be a circular argument. Example: Of course the Bible is the word of God. Why? Because God says so in the Bible.

16. **COMPLEX QUESTION.** This is a question that attempts to trap the listener because there are two questions within a single question. An example is, "Have you stopped cheating on your exams?" The two questions are: a) Do you cheat on your exams b) If so, have you stopped? Answering either yes or no to the complex question traps the listener.

17. **FALSE DILEMMA or FALSE DICHOTOMY** (often called the either/or fallacy or false dichotomy). This fallacy assumes that we must choose one of two alternatives instead of allowing for other possibilities; a false form of disjunctive syllogism. Example: "America, love it or leave it." (The implication is, since you don't love it the only option is to leave it).

18. **SUPPRESSED EVIDENCE** is a fallacy of presumption because key evidence is omitted, which if included would change one's conclusion. For example Most dogs are friendly and pose no threat to people who pet them. Therefore, it would be safe to pet the little dog that is approaching us now. (No mention is made of the dog foaming at the mouth, which is a sign of rabies).

19. **EQUIVOCATION.** This fallacy is a product of semantic ambiguity. The arguer uses the ambiguous nature of a word or phrase to shift the meaning in such a way as to make the reason offered appear more convincing. Example: We realize that workers are idle during the period of lay-offs. But the government should never subsidize idleness, which has often been condemned as a vice. Therefore, payments to laid off workers are wrong.

20. **AMPHIBOLY.** A fallacy of syntactical ambiguity where the position of words in a sentence or the juxtaposition of two sentences conveys a mistaken idea. This fallacy is like equivocation except that the ambiguity does not result from a shift in meaning of a single word or phrase, but is created by word placement.. Example: Jim said he saw Jenny walk her dog through the window. Ow! She should be reported for animal abuse.

21. **COMPOSITION.** This fallacy is committed when we conclude that a whole must have a characteristic because some part of it has that characteristic. Example: The Dawson clan must be rolling in money, since Fred Dawson makes a lot from his practice.

22. **DIVISION.** This fallacy is committed when we conclude that any part of a particular whole must have a characteristic because the whole has that characteristic. Example: I am sure that Karen plays the piano well, since her family is so musical.

Formal Fallacies

1. **AFFIRMING THE CONSEQUENT.** An invalid form of the conditional argument. In this case, the second premise affirms the consequent of the first premise and the conclusion affirms the antecedent. Example: If he wants to get that job, then he must know Spanish. He knows Spanish, so the job is his.

2. **DENYING THE ANTECEDENT.** An invalid form of the conditional argument. In this one, the second premise denies the antecedent of the first premise, and the conclusion denies the consequent. Often mistaken for modus tollens. Example: If she qualifies for a promotion, she must speak English. She doesn't qualify for the promotion, so she must not know how to speak English.

3. **INCONSISTENCY.** A discourse is inconsistent or self-contradicting if it contains, explicitly or implicitly, two assertions that are logically incompatible with each other. Inconsistency can also occur between words and actions. Example: A woman who represents herself as a feminist, yet doesn't believe women should run for Congress.

Unit VIII Chapter 13 Fallacies: The Art of Mental Trickery and Manipulation

What type of thinker are you? Intellectually unskilled? Skilled manipulator? Fairminded and Critical?

Mantra: I will strive to achieve the widest, most informed viewpoint; I will not suppress dissenting points of view; I will not dominate or manipulate others; I will strive to disclose transgressions of clear and fair minded thinking.

The specific objectives for this unit are:

- To understand the characteristics of the 3 types of thinkers

1. Read pp 299 - 301
2. Action: Complete the Exercise 13.2 (p 301 bottom)

- To understand the concept of fallacies in thinking

1. Read pp 302 – 305

- To understand differences between Generalizations and Faulty Generalizations

1. Read pp 305 - 311

- To understand Analogies and Metaphors

1. Read pp 311-313

- To understand the “Dirty Tricks” in reasoning

2. Read pp 314 – 344
3. Action: Compare the “Dirty Tricks” with the “Master List of Fallacies” and identify what type of fallacy each dirty trick is.

Chapter 14 Develop as an Ethical Reasoner

What are the sources of ethical value in Western Civilization?

Respect for Persons: Kant was the philosopher who said we should never use a person as a means to an end.

Utilitarianism: J.S. Mill said do that which promotes the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

Natural Law: Do that which promotes life.

Ethical Egoism: As long as a person does not lie, cheat or steal, do that which promotes my self interest. Ayn Rand is a proponent of this view.

Virtue Ethics: We ought to develop our character and exhibit that character in our relationships to others. Aristotle developed these ideas in Nichomachean ethics.

I hope you will watch my videos on moral theory on

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/drsharonathomas>

- To understand the fundamentals of ethical reasoning
 1. Read p 348-352
- To understand Universalism as a position in ethics
 1. Read pp 352 – 354
- To understand the relation between Religion and Reason in ethics:
 1. Read pp 345 - 356
- To understand the relation between Ethics and Social Convention
 1. Read p 356 – 359
- To understand the relation between Ethics and Political Ideology

2. Read p 359 – 360

- To understand the relation between Ethics and the Law

3. Read p 360 – 361

4. Action: Study Chart on p 361

As always, I hope you have both an enjoyable time in learning this material and a few enlightening experiences!

Best,

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Unit VIII Study Guide



Unit VIII Reflection Paper



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