

Thinking Straight Critical Reasoning Workshop 4-2 (April 22, 2011)

- I. **A. (Individually)** follow the powerpoint review/mini-lecture about the answers for today's assignment. Put a check ✓ against largely correct answers, an X against largely wrong answers and a question mark ? if you aren't sure
- B. Plenary** discussion of the task

II. Fallacies of illegitimate appeal to emotion

- A. Plenary:** A third category of fallacies are those that involve an illegitimate appeal to emotion: **appeal to pity, appeal to force** and **prejudicial language**. The main issue in judging whether these fallacies occur is determine whether an appeal to emotion is reasonable.

Your partner says: *"You shouldn't leave me, because it would break my heart."* A fallacious appeal to emotion? Why or why not?

Compare/contrast to: "It breaks my heart that you don't believe I tried as hard as I could." (So you should believe I tried as hard as I could.)

Preview: Three Emotion Fallacies

1. Appeal to pity
 - a) It would make me unhappy if you called my serve "out", so it's in. (Fallacy)
 - b) It would make me unhappy if you called my serve "out", so you should call it "in." [Not a fallacy, but we might goad us into changing our belief –perhaps for the next serve...]
2. Appeal to force
 - a) They'll vote me out of office ill decide that abortion is morally permissible, so abortion is wrong. (Fallacy)
 - b) They'll vote me out of office if I decide that abortion is morally permissible, so I should take anti-abortion as my official position. [Not a fallacy, but consequences..]
[Note: A fallacy can be committed either in presenting or in accepting an argument.]

- B. In small group** try simplify each of the following argument and rewrite it in two versions parallel to those just given in the section above

1. I've poured my soul into the task of writing this novel. I've worked on it late at night after spending the day on my regular job. I've endured rejections, gone through revisions, and at last it's published. What do you think about it?
- 2 Do I need to remind you how difficult it might be if you decide that you won't go out with me? After all, I make personnel decisions around here.

- C. Plenary** discussion of the task

III. Fallacies that cause "Double Trouble"

- A. In small group** discuss the following passages that contain one of the two fallacies we call "double trouble:" Argument from Authority; Attacking the person (*ad hominem*). As with other fallacies, not all cases of citing authority or raising questions about the person presenting the argument are fallacies. The opinion of authorities should carry weight for the critical reasoner in a variety of contexts.

1. I believe the economic issue is the important one in this election. I don't know that much about economics myself, but my mother-in-law teaches economics and my uncle has run a large business for years. I've talked it over with them, and I think that the Republican candidate would probably do a better job of guiding the country's economic policies.
2. Here you are quoting Ben Franklin on the subject of how one should live his life. But what kind of a life did Franklin himself live? I've read that he was a very difficult man, prone to depression, hard to please, impatient with those around him. When you judge a man's philosophy you have to see how it worked for him

- B. Plenary Discussion**

IV. Identifying Fallacies

A. In Small group discuss whether following statements commit any of the fallacies discussed in chapter 6? If so, which one(s). Why do you think they are fallacies

1. You've been contradicting everything I say. The point I'm making is an obvious one. Obamacare will ruin the quality of medical care in the U.S.
2. Anyone who serves as president of this organization has a duty to promote its interests that's written in the charter. Supporting gender equality goes against the interests of this organization. A duty is, by definition, a moral obligation. So as president of this organization, I have a moral obligation to oppose gender equality. Actually, this is an obligation I am happy to fulfill, because I firmly believe that gender equality is a dangerous idea. You can predict the kind of behavior it will produce in women generally if you look at the angry, hysterical, man-hating females who are leaders of this movement. I would argue that the gentle, ladylike demeanor which is befitting of womankind will all but disappear if the feminists succeed in promoting their cause.
3. Tina has never had a Teddy Bear. A mother's love. A doll to cuddle. Tina knows nothing of these things. But she does know fear, rejection, and hunger. For just \$15 a month, you can help save a child like Tina. Through our "adoption" program you can help provide a child with a better diet, clothes, medical attention, school. And even a toy or two. But don't wait. There are so many. And somewhere, right now, a child is dying from starvation and neglect.

V. Plenary discussion of a Sample Argument involving equivocation (Time Permitting):

Supplement on equivocation--Procedure for diagnosing equivocation (See Ch7 pp 177-181)

- a. Write argument in standard form.
- b. Circle unclear expression that occurs in two premises.
- c. Identify what the expression must mean to make one of these premises acceptable. (Substitute a phrase for the unclear expression).
- d. Determine whether the other premise is acceptable if the expression is interpreted in the same way.--IF THE EXPRESSION MUST SHIFT IN MEANING TO MAKE BOTH PREMISES ACCEPTABLE, THE ARGUMENT IS GUILTY OF EQUIVOCATION-

- (1) Getting married involves promising to live with a person for the rest of one's life.
 - (2) No one can safely predict compatibility with another person for life.
 - (3) If two people aren't compatible, then they can't live together. I
 - (4) No one should make a promise unless she or he can safely predict that she or he can keep it.
- No one should get married

C. In small group, apply these procedure to these two examples:

- a. *Most students go to college to improve their job prospects. But the fact is that many areas of study particularly the liberal arts, don't strike students as preparing them for a vocation. They fail to see that living a life enriched by ideas is a kind of vocation. So when they quit college to get a job they are making a big mistake*

Interpret argument as: Students want college to prepare them for a vocation. Living a life enriched by ideas is a vocation. College prepares you for a life enriched by ideas. So college does prepare students for what they want.)

- b. The United States is a democracy. This follows from the fact that the United States is ruled by the people and democracy means "government ruled by the people."

D. Plenary discussion of two examples



Assignment for Tuesday April 26. No new Reading for Morning Session. Review Ch. 1-6 (and 7 to p. 185). Read the remainder of Ch. 7 for the afternoon sessions Submit: Exercise 5.3 A2; C2,C4, C12; Exercise 6.2 A2; B6,B8; Exercise 6.3 # 2,#6,#8; Exercise 6.4 B2, B4,B6,B8 Exercise 6.5 #4, #8; Exercise 7.1 B#2,#4 The answers to these exercises will be reviewed at the beginning of the Tuesday April 26th class