

TERM PAPER

-200010040

Fallacy :

When an argument's premises do not support its conclusion, it can be said to be fallacious. Therefore, fallacies are errors in reasoning in a very broad sense.

There are mainly two types of fallacies:

- i) A formal fallacy is an error in the logical structure of an argument. It refers to an argument where the conclusion does not logically follow from the premises.
- ii) An informal fallacy is an error in the content, context, or language used in an argument. It often involves mistakes in reasoning that may not be immediately apparent but can be identified upon closer inspection.

Fallacies of Presumption:

In situations involving fallacies of presumption, the premises tend to assume too much. The transition to the conclusion mistakenly relies on these unjustified assumptions. Fallacies of presumption refer to arguments that hinge on assumptions, often ones that are unstated and lacking support. Revealing the implied assumption often uncovers the fallacy. These fallacies fall into the category of informal fallacies. In flawed arguments of this type, the premises may indeed be pertinent to the drawn conclusion, but that relevance is likely to arise from the unspoken assumption of something that hasn't been adequately supported and might even be unsupportable.

There are three fallacies that fall under this category:

- i) Accident
- ii) Complex Question
- iii) Begging the Question

Accident :

In the realm of informal fallacies, there's a common error known as the fallacy of hasty generalization. This occurs when a general statement is inaccurately applied to a specific case where it doesn't truly fit. Even if a generalization is largely accurate, there can be instances where it doesn't hold. These exceptions often stem from special circumstances, also termed the "accidental" conditions of that particular case.

Example :

Premise 1:

Driving over the speed limit is illegal.

Premise 2:

Ambulance drivers, while on duty, may exceed the speed limit to respond to emergencies.

Conclusion:

Ambulance drivers are breaking the law.

Here, premise 1 is a generalization and premise 2 is one of the exceptions. That is why we end up with a false conclusion.

Complex Question (Plurium Interrogationum) :

In the realm of informal reasoning, there's a fallacy known as the Complex Question. This occurs when a question is framed in a way that assumes the truth of a proposition hidden within the question. Typically, these questions are rhetorical, with the questioner not

genuinely seeking an answer. However, by presenting the question seriously, the underlying presupposition can be introduced subtly, achieving the questioner's goal deceptively. The Complex Question is, therefore, a potentially misleading device.

The Latin term for this fallacy, *Plurium Interrogationum*, translates to "of many questions." The fallacy is considered present when individuals are not provided the chance to answer each question separately.

In situations where a question is intricate, and the presuppositions need to be denied, each presupposition should be rejected individually. Failure to deny each presupposition separately may result in the assumption of the truth of the others. In legal contexts, this situation is known as "the negative pregnant."

Example:

Question: "Do you think the esteemed professor would advocate for such a simplistic approach to solving complex issues like climate change, demonstrating a lack of understanding of the intricacies involved?"

This question falls into the complex question fallacy. Answering "Yes" might suggest agreement with several presuppositions: that the professor's approach is simplistic, that it lacks understanding of the complexities of climate change, and that advocating for it is not appropriate.

Begging the Question (Petitio Principii) :

In the realm of informal logic, there's a fallacy known as "begging the question," where the conclusion of an argument is either explicitly stated or assumed within one of the premises. This fallacy involves the error of presuming the truth of what one is attempting to prove. The Latin term for this fallacy is "*petitio principii*," and each occurrence is labeled a "*petitio*."

The central presumption leading to the fallacy is often hidden within the language of the premises, sometimes obscured by confusing or unrecognized synonyms. While every *petitio* constitutes a circular argument, the constructed circle may be extensive and perplexing, potentially concealing the logical mistake.

Circular arguments, including *petitio principii*, are unquestionably fallacious. However, the premises are not irrelevant to the conclusions drawn; they are indeed relevant and prove the conclusion, but only in a trivial manner—they essentially end where they began. A *petitio principii* is always technically valid but, importantly, always lacks real substance or worth.

Example:

Argument: "Happiness is the greatest feeling because no other emotion brings more joy!"

In this argument, the conclusion is that happiness is the greatest emotion. However, the premise offered to support this conclusion is that 'no other emotion brings more joy than happiness.' This premise is essentially restating the conclusion, asserting that happiness is the greatest feeling.

By stating that 'no other emotion brings more joy than happiness,' the argument is not providing new information or evidence to support the conclusion. Instead, it is circularly relying on the conclusion itself. This circular reasoning characterizes the fallacy of begging the question.