

Absolute statement fallacy

Literature



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Reporter: Fuentes, Mary Rose S. 6. Confusion of Absolute Statement – this fallacy is committed when one argues from the truth of a general principle to the truth of specific case. The specific case may even be an exception the general law. Let us keep in mind, there are always exceptions to general principles. A universal principle is coined in view of normal and ordinary circumstances. But there may be exceptional conditions where the force of universal principle may be waived. Example: To kill is morally criminal. (universal law) But in self-defense, one may kill. (specific case)

Therefore, self defense is morally criminal. The result is an invalid conclusion, rendering the argument fallacious. 7. Confusion of Qualified Statement – this fallacy consists in concluding from the truth of a proposition which is good only under certain circumstances of time, place, or condition to the truth of the same thing under all circumstances. Example: Some Catholics are bad. But Mary and Joseph are Catholics Therefore, Mary and Joseph are bad. In the example, it is true that “ some Catholics are bad”. But from this premise, one cannot conclude rashly that Mary and Joseph are bad just because they are Catholics.

They are not necessarily included in the “ Some Catholics”. They can be out of that group. One cannot conclude a universal truth from a particular truth. There is confusion of qualified statement. 8. Arguing Beside the Point (Ignoratio Elenchi) – this fallacy is an argumentation that escapes the point of issue, and instead resorts to some kind of alibi to prove or disprove something. Actually it does not prove or disprove because the argument evades the question. It ignores the point of at issue, hence called “ ignoratio elenchi”. This fallacy appears in different guises. a. Argument Ad Hominem

(appeal to the individual) – the fallacy evades the point of the issue and attacks the personality of the opponent. In truth, it is a biased argument, for it takes the character defects of the opponent instead of concentrating on the question. Example: The Igorots are not real Filipinos because they live in the mountains. The argument is false because living in the mountains is taken as a reason to conclude that “ Igorots are not real Filipinos”. Regardless of the place of residence, whether mountains or plains, or even in seas, as long as it is part of the Philippine territory and that the resident was born here, the Igorots remain as true Filipinos. . Argument ad Populum (appeal to the people) – the fallacy employs an appeal to the passion of the people for their biased favors, evading the issue on question. Example: The husband of the candidate is related to the governor, so let us vote for her. In the example, you will notice that the motives of the campaigners and voters are out of the regionalistic feelings and pity, respectively. Reasoning is out of place here. Instead of focusing on the qualities and abilities of the candidate, the focus was on regionalism and compassion.

The argument is fallacious in reasoning. c. Argumentum Ad Misericordiam (appeal to pity) – the fallacious argument puts aside reason and resorts to pleading for mercy and compassion, which is emotional in nature. Example: Let us give a passing grade to Pedro because he has one leg . The fallacious statement has pity as the motivating factors of the argument. d. Argument Ad Verecundiam (appeal to respect/authority) – the fallacy takes the status and the influence of the person as the point of argument putting aside the merit of the issue.

Oftentimes the prestige and authority is invoked to justify or prove something. An element of paternalism is present. Example: Abortion is not immoral because the Secretary of Health says it so. The position of the health secretary is not outright moral guarantees to justify the immoral act of abortion. After all the health secretary is not an expert and authority in matters of morality. e. Argumentum Ad Baculum (appeal to might) – physical force and moral pressure are resorted to in the argument a means to attain an end, again deviating from the real issue.

The point is to scare or force people to accept or be convinced. In this context, reason is out of place; hence, the argument is rendered fallacious. Example: I go to school because my parents will scold me. While the statement contains some moral truths, strictly speaking, the real moral issue is overshadowed or missed. Scolding or fear of being scolded should not be the priority motive for going to school. Personal growth, development, and improved quality of living should be the dominating motivations in going to school.

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