

Identifying fallacies



In Andrew Klavan's editorial piece in the Los Angeles Times, Clinton Doth Protest Too Much, he gives comparison between President's Reagan and Clinton. Klavan gives praise to Reagan for "not defending his legacy anything more than a quip and a smile"; he nonetheless berates Clinton for being a liar and threatening a newsman.

While the real issue on the matter is Clinton's inability to order the death of Osama Bin Laden and address the issue of terrorism, Klavan goes on to discredit Clinton, citing the former President's "narcissistic tendencies" and misuse of women. This piece then is an argumentum ad hominem, a fallacy which attacks the person, not the real issues of Clinton's failure to fight terrorism. But, as there are times that the issue in argumentum ad hominem can be sometimes about a person, Klavan's editorial may well have been about Clinton himself.

This then leads to the assumption by the readers that Clinton may indeed be narcissistic, rages like a child and thinks that "reality itself is being wrestled away from him, that he can wrestle it back and mold it into shape he wants it to have." (Klavan). On the other hand, the slippery slope argument was used in the editorial piece: OCL Alcohol Fines are Flawed, Fallacy-Filled. It originally starts with questioning the policy of giving fines for alcohol violations and then goes on to establish the consequences of using fines as a punishment.

It uses causation to point out that students who can afford more fines are less likely to learn from or worry about the violation, thereby defeating the purpose of the fine. A slippery slope argument basically gives out a warning about what might result in the future if a thing is done or not done. In this

case, it gives out the idea that if the policy is not changed, it would allow wealthy students to “ shrug off the punishment and continue the same behaviour”.