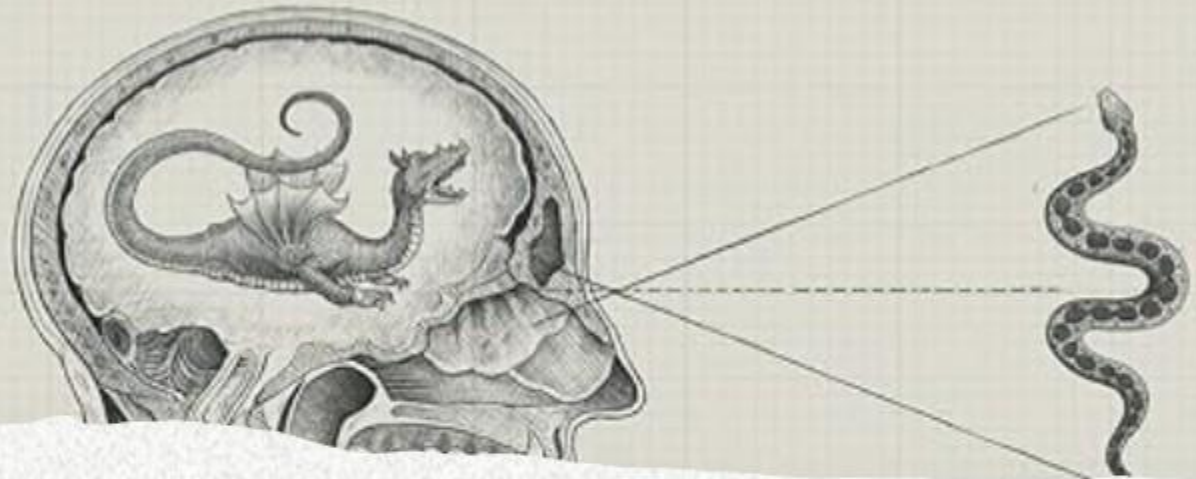


LOGIC

The Fundamentals of Thinking Well



**Come Let Us Reason
Together: Learning To
Love God With All Thy
Mind**

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Detecting Fallacies

**Come Let Us Reason Together: Learning
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Detecting Fallacies

- The technique for identifying informal fallacies is the same as identifying any kind of reasoning. You must ask two questions about the person doing the arguing:
 - What is he trying to prove?
 - How is he trying to prove it?
- For example, consider this section out of Bertrand Russell's essay entitled "Why I am not a Christian":
 - Religion is based, I think, primarily and mainly on fear. It is partly the terror of the unknown and partly, as I have said, the wish to feel that you have kind of an elder brother who will stand by you in all your troubles and disputes. Fear is the basis of the whole thing—fear of the mysterious, fear of defeat, fear of death.
- What is Russell trying to prove?
- How is he trying to prove that in this paragraph?
- By attempting to identify the source of Christian faith.

Detecting Fallacies

- Apparently, he thinks that if he can say why someone believes Christianity, then it must not be true.
- We can readily spot this as an extended Bulverism [A rhetorical fallacy where someone dismisses an argument by attacking the arguer's motives or psychological background, rather than addressing the argument's merits.]
- Remember these questions:
 - What is being argued?
 - How is it being argued?

List of Fallacies

- *Ipse Dixit*—Appeal To Authority
- *Ad Populum*—Appeal To The Masses
- *Ad Baculum*—To The Stick i.e., threats
- *Ad Hominem*—Attacking A Person
- Bulverism—Genetic Fallacy
- Tu Quoque—You do it too!
- *Ad Ignorantiam*—Lack of Information
- Chronological Snobbery
- Equivocation—confuse the real issue with multiple, vague or unclear meanings
- Accent—altered meaning through changed emphasis
- Amphiboly—vagueness of grammar alters meaning.
- Composition—transferring attributes from parts to whole
- Division—transferring attributes from whole to part
- Circular Reasoning—assuming what you are trying to prove
- *Post hoc ergo propter hoc*—assuming sequence in time implies cause & effect
- Either/Or—false dilemma
- Complex Question—question that excludes a legitimate response
- Apriorism—hasty generalization