

Bad argumentation example

The source

http://www.acl.org.au/national/browse.stw?article_id=11535

The full 'argument'

"When it comes to adultery, it's 90 percent the woman's responsibility. Why? Because a woman owns the weapon of seduction. It's she who takes off her clothes, shortens them, flirts, puts on make-up and powder and takes to the streets, God protect us, dallying. It's she who shortens, raises and lowers. Then, it's a look, a smile, a conversation, a greeting, a talk, a date, a meeting, a crime, then Long Bay jail. Then you get a judge, who has no mercy, and he gives you 65 years."

"But when it comes to this disaster, who started it? In his literature, writer al-Rafee says, if I came across a rape crime, I would discipline the man and order that the woman be jailed for life. Why would you do this, Rafee? He said because if she had not left the meat uncovered, the cat wouldn't have snatched it."

"If you get a kilo of meat, and you don't put it in the fridge or in the pot or in the kitchen but you leave it on a plate in the backyard, and then you have a fight with the neighbour because his cats eat the meat, you're crazy. Isn't this true?"

"If you take uncovered meat and put it on the street, on the pavement, in a garden, in a park, or in the backyard, without a cover and the cats eat it, then whose fault will it be, the cats, or the uncovered meat's? The uncovered meat is the disaster. If the meat was covered the cats wouldn't roam around it. If the meat is inside the fridge, they won't get it."

The essence

This is an argument by analogy (or maybe two, since there are two conclusions)

1	If cats eat uncovered meat it is not (much) the cat's fault	Assumption
2	If cats eat uncovered meat it is the meat's fault	Asp.
3	Cats eating meat is relevantly like men raping women	Asp.
4	Men are relevantly like cats	Asp.
5	Unveiled women are relevantly like uncovered meat	Asp.
6	If men rape unveiled women it's not (much) the man's fault	Conclusion: This follows by analogy from 1, assuming the relevant similarities 3&4
7	If men rape unveiled women it is the woman's fault	Conclusion: This follows by analogy from 2, assuming the relevant similarities 3&5

Comment [MG1]: So, technically I'm exceeding the demands of the assignment.

Comment [MG2]: Setting the argument out in a three column table is often a clear way to do it. The numbering makes it easy to refer back to previous steps of the argument. The middle column lists each assumption and each step. The right column states the justification for each move (or states that it is an assumption.)

The problem(s)

Damn this sucks.

Admittedly, we are off to a promising start with assumption 1 – that looks true. If we accept that, it seems we should accept the blamelessness of anything relevantly similar to the cat doing anything relevantly similar to eating the uncovered meat. But neither assumption 3 nor 4 has the slightest plausibility. So, although the initial claim looks reasonable, the relevant analogy has not been established, leaving conclusion 6 unsupported.

The (logically separate) argument for conclusion 7 is in even worse shape. The claim being made in assumption 2 is manifestly moronic even in its own terms – not need, then, to worry our pretty heads about whether the analogy (asserted in assumptions 3&5) holds (just as well because it obviously doesn't).