The Fallacies: Material, Psychological, Logical

Philosophy 130
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Fallacies: these are mistakes or errors in reasoning. One way to classify them is into the categories material, psychological, and logical:

I. **Material Fallacies**: these problems are problems with the subject matter.

   A. **Hasty Generalization**: jumping to conclusions.

      Bad experience with a logic class, so no more philosophy ...

   B. **Faulty Causal Generalization**

      "I'm experiencing hay fever symptoms and I just passed a field of goldenrod -- my symptoms must be caused by the goldenrod!"

   C. **Post Hoc, Ergo Proctor Hoc**

      "It rained tonight -- that must be because I washed my car this afternoon."

   D. **Faulty Analogy**

   E. **Fallacies of Composition and Division**

      1. **Division**: The Supreme Court is a conservative court, so each member of the Court must be a conservative judge.

      2. **Composition**: Each one of these players is a great player, so the team that they form must be a great team.

   F. **False Dilemma**

      "I can only plant wheat or corn in that field; I cannot plant corn in it, so I must plant wheat."

   G. **Vagueness, Ambiguity, etc.**

   H. **Straw Man Fallacy**

   I. **Slippery Slope Fallacy**
II. Psychological Fallacies: problems are attributable to those participating in the discourse.

A. Emotive Language: It is a fallacy to use emotive expressions, such as "cold blooded", "vicious", etc., to stand in place of an argument.

B. Argumentum ad hominem: personal attack

C. Appeals Fallacies
   1. Argumentum ad baculum: appeal to force
   2. Argumentum ad misericordium: appeal to pity
   3. Argumentum ad populum: appeal to emotions
   4. Appeal to Authority
   5. Appeal to Tradition (Etc.)

D. Damning the Origin

E. Wishful Thinking

F. Fallacy of Complex Questions
   "Have you stopped using drugs?"

III. Logical Fallacies: flaws are attributable to mistakes in the logical constructions employed.

A. Ignoratio Elenchi: fallacy of the irrelevant conclusion
   "The crime was frightening ... horrible ... gory ... sick. The defendant must have committed it."

B. Petitio Principii: begging the question
   Arguing for God's benevolence by assuming he has all the virtues.

C. Non Sequitur: the conclusion does not follow

D. Equivocation

E. Affirming the Consequent/Denying the Antecedent
   If I don't get a "3.0", there is no justice; I got a "3.0"!; there is justice! (DA)
   If sick, then not here; not here; therefore sick. (AC)