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on cognitive biases!

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Ad Hominem (Guilt by Association)

argumentum ad hominem

(also known as: association fallacy, bad company fallacy, company that you keep fallacy, they're not like us fallacy, transfer fallacy)

Description: When the source is viewed negatively because of its association with another person or group who is already viewed negatively.

Logical Form:

Person 1 states that Y is true.
Person 2 also states that Y is true, and person 2 is a moron.
Therefore, person 1 must be a moron too.

Example #1:

Delores is a big supporter for equal pay for equal work. This is the same policy that all those extreme feminist groups support. Extremists like Delores should not be taken seriously -- at least politically.

Explanation: Making the assumption that Delores is an extreme feminist simply because she supports a policy that virtually every man and woman also support, is fallacious.

Example #2:

Pol Pot, the Cambodian Maoist revolutionary, was against religion, and he was a very bad man. Frankie is against religion; therefore, Frankie also must be a very bad man.

Explanation: The fact that Pol Pot and Frankie share one particular view does not mean they are identical in other ways unrelated, specifically, being a very bad man. Pol Pot was not a bad man *because* he was against religion, he was a bad man for his genocidal actions.

Exception: If one can demonstrate that the connection between the two characteristics that were inherited by association is causally linked, or the probability of taking on a characteristic would be high, then it would be valid.

Pol Pot, the Cambodian Maoist revolutionary, was genocidal; therefore, he was a very bad man. Frankie is genocidal; therefore, Frankie must also be a very bad man.

References:

Walton, D. (1998). *Ad hominem arguments*. University of Alabama Press.

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Jacob

Sunday, February 18, 2018 - 12:01:57 PM

Is this an example of this fallacy?

Dan is a car thief. He is then accused of a murder. It is argued that people who steal cars also murder. This is used as the sole piece of evidence against him in the case.

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Bo Bennett, PhD

Sunday, February 18, 2018 - 12:02:58 PM

Probably a better example of *Poisoning the Well*.

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Jacob

Sunday, February 18, 2018 - 01:11:01 PM

@Bo Bennett, PhD: What about this...

Don't vote for Ned because he is a republican, and republicans believe the earth is 6000 years old.

I think this is poisoning the well, because it is implied that republicans believe the earth is 6000 years old and young earth creationists make terrible politicians.

I think this is also a guilt by association fallacy, because republicans are known as a group which believes in a 6000 year old universe, but

not all individual republicans believe this, so it is wrong to assume that Ned does just because he associates with other republicans.

I think my first example about Dan the car thief was not an example of Ad Hominem (Guilt by Association) because there was nothing like Dan being assumed to be a car thief because he hung out with other car thieves.

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