

ARGUMENTATIVE FALLACIES, informal

1. Tautology: Needless repetition of an idea in a different word, phrase or sentence; using the logical equivalent of one's conclusion to argue for it.
 E.G. Until we respect the needs of the client, we will never achieve a user-oriented architecture. [client = user]

2. Ignoratio Elenchi: An argument purporting to establish a particular conclusion is diverted to proving a different conclusion.
 E.G. Until we respect the needs of the client, we will never achieve a user-oriented architecture. [client ≠ user]

3. Argumentum Ad Hominem: Appealing to prejudices rather than to reason, as in attacking one's opponent rather than debating the issue.
 E.G. Philip Johnson's buildings will never attain lasting architectural significance, for he caters to the fashions of high society.

- 3b. Argumentum Ad Hominem: Argumentation based on the bias or vested interests (circumstantial) of the speaker.
 E.G. "Bungalow magazine articles have generally been compiled by architects or builder-architects who specialize in them and are looking for customers; or by romantic and sentimental young ladies who enthuse over the external impressions the bungalows excite."
 -Peter B. Wright, (1918) anti-bungalowist

4. Argumentum Ad Baculum: The appeal to threats when direct evidence or rational arguments fail.
 E.G. If you insist on building with unconventional framing or detailing, you will soon go broke.

5. Argumentum Ad Ignorantiam: Arguing that a proposition is true simply on the basis that it has not been proven false.
 E.G. This building will be perfectly safe in an earthquake, for it has passed all seismic requirements.

6. Argumentum Ad Populum: The attempt to win popular assent to a conclusion by arousing the emotions and enthusiasms of the multitude rather than by appealing to the relevant facts.
 E.G. The increasing disorder in our towns is offensive: their decay damages our self-esteem and injures our dignity. They are not worthy of our age. They are not worthy of us.

-Le Corbusier, 1925

Appendix , cont.

7. Argumentum Ad Misericordiam: Pity is appealed to for the sake of getting a conclusion accepted.
E.G. CIAM was keenly aware of the world wide hunger for food and shelter, was aware of the thousands if not millions of deaths that were occurring daily because of this hunger. These architects felt the burden of responsibility on their shoulders.
-J. Soltan, opening to H.A.R. forum
8. Argumentum Ad Vericuntiam: An appeal to an authority outside that authority's field of competence.
E.G. Our engineers produce architecture, for they employ a mathematical calculation which derives from natural law and their works give us the feeling of HARMONY.
-Le Corbusier (Vers une Architecture, 1923)
9. Petitio Principii: An argument which assumes as a premise the very conclusion it is used to prove.
(begging the question)
E.G. Our environment will return to a healthy state when Post-Modernism replaces the bleakness of the International Style with the symbolic content necessary to human well-being.
All life is function and therefore unartistic.
-Hannes Meyer, "Building," 1928
- 9b. Complex Questions: Begging the question in a question.
E.G. Why does Robert Venturi ridicule the common man?
10. Platonic Questions: Questions that presume some sort of Platonic archetype against which a particular object or example can be measured for its purity.
E.G. The institution of the supermarket should be exorcised from our cities because it violates the urban fabric.