

The past is a foreign country;
they do things differently
there.

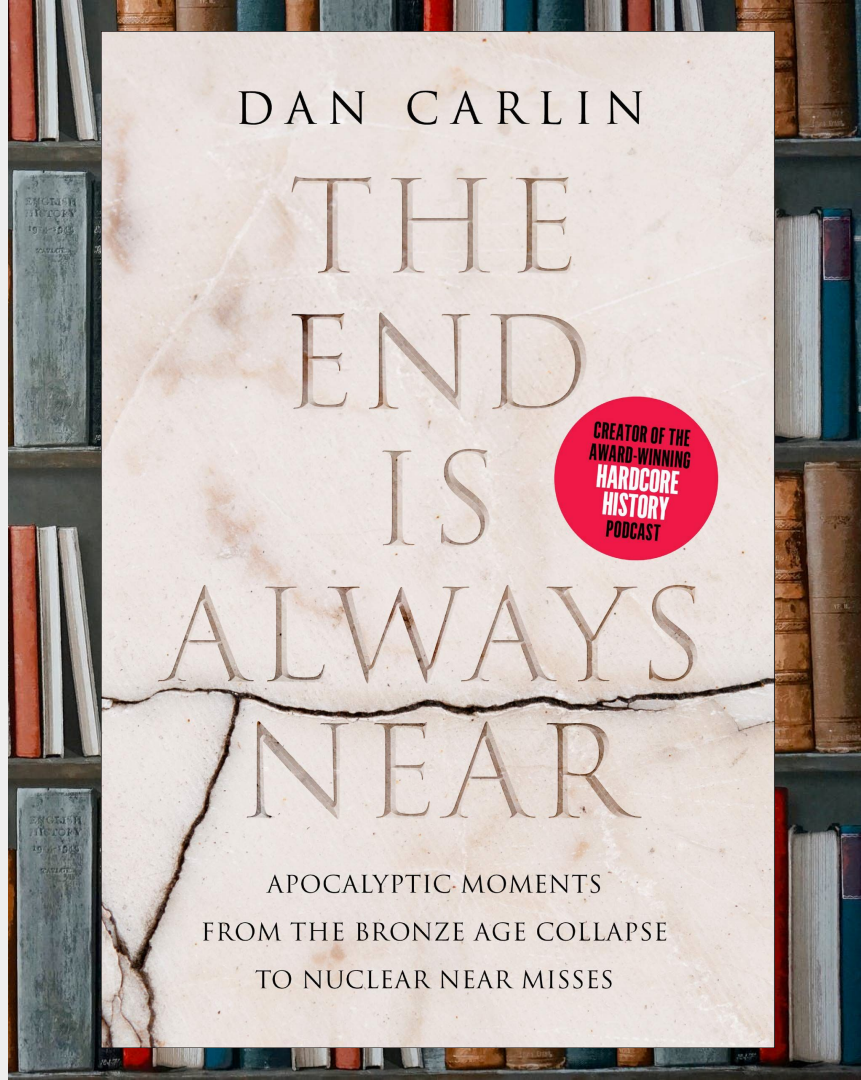
L.P. Hartley, *The Go-Between*



Introduction to Course

In his 2019 book *The End is Always Near*, Dan Carlin explores the unthinkable: the possibility that our civilization will come to an end.

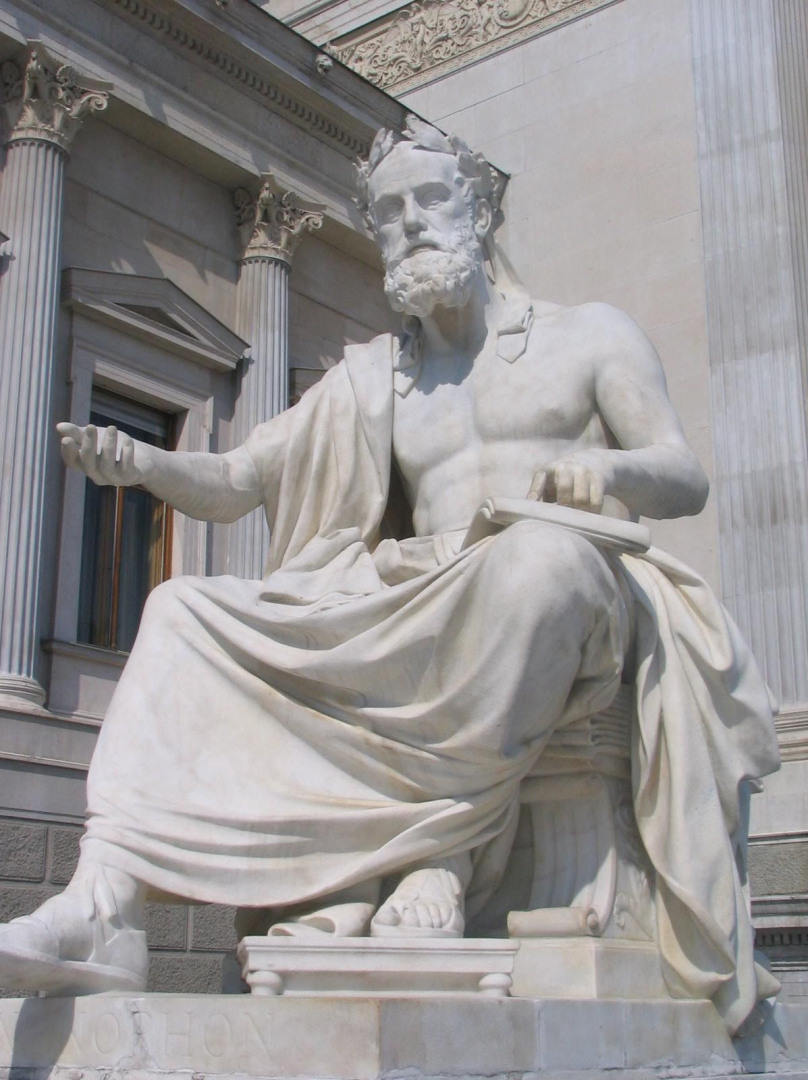
He reminds us that, although it is difficult for us to *truly* imagine our downfall, the historical record shows **many** fluctuations in civilizational complexity.



For example, in Chapter 4 Carlin discusses the downfall of the Assyrian Empire, a brutal regime that ruled its subjects with an iron fist.







A few centuries later, Xenophon was escaping from Persian forces after having fought as a mercenary on the losing side of a Persian civil war.

During his escape, Xenophon was floored by the grandeur of the Assyrian ruins, which seemed to him greater than anything his contemporaries were able to build.

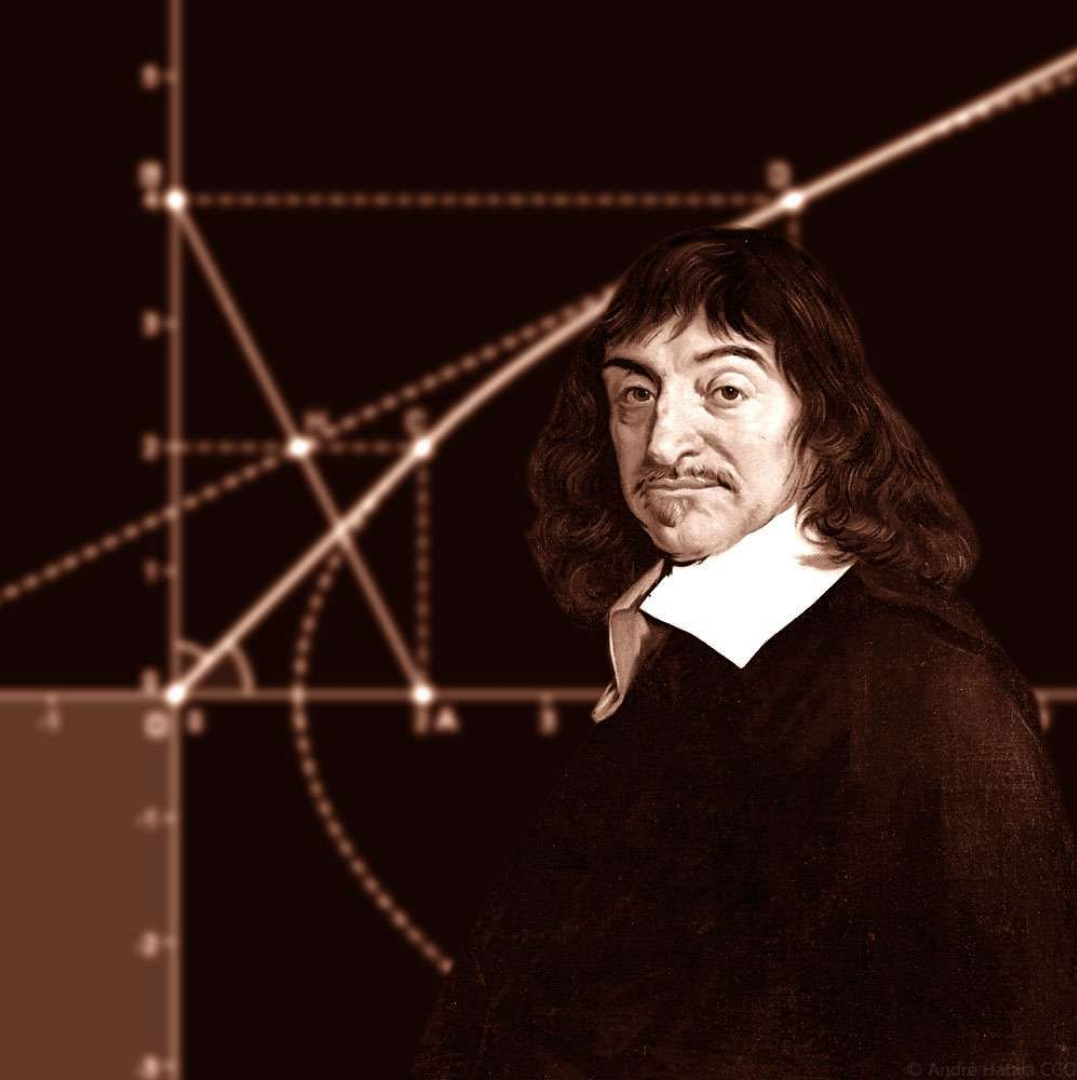


The locals, however, had no idea who had built these structures.

Some even speculated that they were giants.



Question:
What is Philosophy?

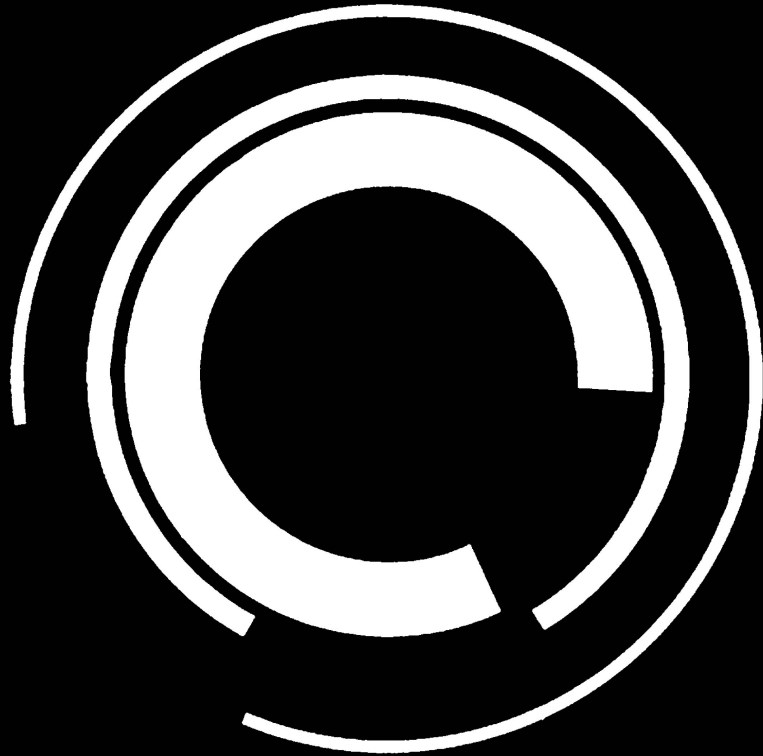


Some philosophers, such as Descartes and Kant, two individuals we will be studying, believed that Philosophy is an autonomous, **unbounded** field where fundamental truths could be sought out and discovered.

Other more contemporary philosophers see their field as continuous with the **natural sciences**, dealing with science's most abstract problems.

These are usually cross-trained (in a science) or work with scientists.





Other philosophers believe that Philosophy as a field is by and large **done**.

Various sciences have been extracted from it throughout its history, and **logic** was the last scientific extraction.

Almost all that's left now is pseudo-problems.

And still other contemporary philosophers accept that Philosophy is a field of inquiry with **no standard methodology**, which allows for exploration of topics that aren't being covered by other disciplines.



What to do?

A standard solution is to use a question-based approach in introductory classes.

In this class, we will pose questions that are traditionally accepted as being *philosophical*, whatever that may mean, and look at the responses of professional philosophers, scientists, mathematicians, and more.

Φ

rcgphi



Important Concepts

Logical Consistency

Two or more statements are **logically consistent** if it is possible that they are all true simultaneously.

PALLIS O'CONNOR Presents

BACK TO THE FUTURE THE TRILOGY

THE GREATEST TRILOGY...
EVER MADE...



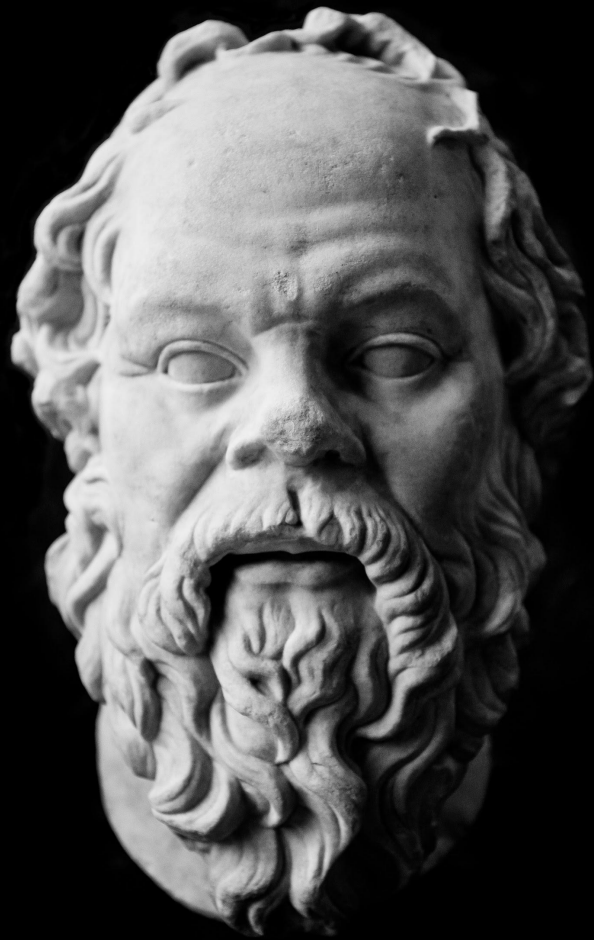


Arguments

An **argument** is a set of sentences given in support of another sentence, i.e., the conclusion.

A **premise** is a member of the set of sentences that supports the conclusion.

The **conclusion** is the sentence being argued for.



E.g., of an argument

- 1. All men are mortal.**
- 2. Socrates is a man.**
- 3. Therefore, Socrates is mortal.**

premises

The diagram consists of the word 'premises' in yellow text at the top right. Two yellow arrows originate from the bottom of 'premises' and point to the first two items of the list: '1. All men are mortal.' and '2. Socrates is a man.'. The word 'conclusion' is in cyan text at the bottom right. A cyan arrow originates from the top of 'conclusion' and points to the third item of the list: '3. Therefore, Socrates is mortal.'.

conclusion



Food for thought...

Sometimes, just putting the argument into
standard form will help you see if it is
“good” or not...

HAVE YOU HEARD THIS BEFORE?



Vegan Dude:

Heeey, did you know that
humans are the only
animals that drink the
milk of other mammals?

HAVE YOU HEARD THIS BEFORE?



1. If an activity is done by humans, but not by other mammals, then that activity is morally wrong.
2. Drinking the milk of other mammals is something only humans do.
3. Therefore, drinking non-human milk is morally wrong.



WHAT ABOUT...?



HAVE YOU HEARD THIS BEFORE?



1. If an activity is done by humans, but not by other mammals, then that activity is morally wrong.
2. Drinking the milk of other mammals is something only humans do.
3. Therefore, drinking non-human milk is morally wrong.

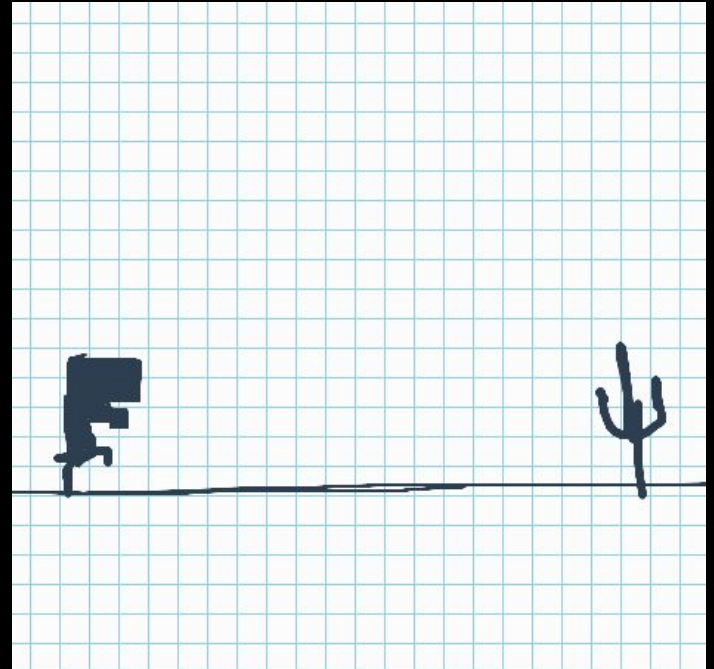
Fallacies

A **fallacy** is an error in reasoning, either intended or unintended.

These come in two kinds: formal and informal.

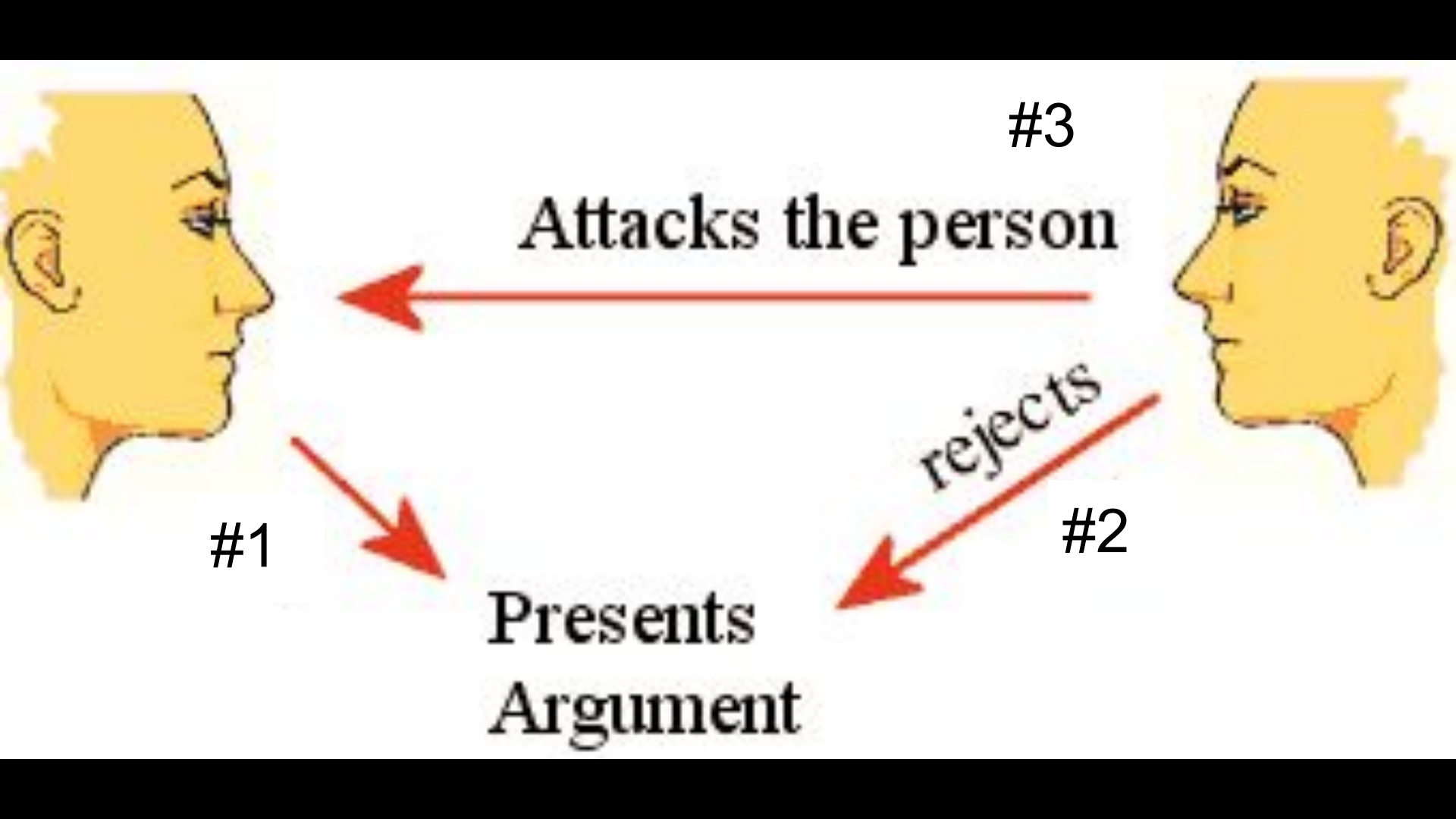
Formal fallacies have to do with the structure of one's argument; **informal fallacies** have to do with the relationship between the evidence (i.e., premises) and the conclusion.

INFORMAL
FALLACY
OF THE
DAY



Argumentum Ad Hominem

This is a fallacy in which one attacks the arguer rather than the argument itself.







Standard Form(?)

1. You are annoying.
2. You are cancerous.
3. Therefore, you should vote for Clinton.