

Analogy 1: Banning Big Brother

It is clear to any rationally thinking person that shows such as Big Brother should be banned. Whilst it is very cheap to make and supporters argue that it is just harmless fun in the name of entertainment, given careful thought it is easy to see that this is not the case.

People are entitled to a private life. If I were to stand outside my neighbour's window and stare in whilst he ate his tea, scratched his backside, argued with his wife and shouted at his children, I would not be in the least surprised if I were to be punched on the nose by him or arrested by the police for my troubles.

Not only are we allowed to invade the 'front rooms' of other people via Big Brother, we are also allowed access to their bedrooms. I can well imagine what would happen were I to be found peering into my neighbour's bedroom window during an intimate moment or even staring at him for hours whilst he sleeps. I cannot imagine that the police would take very kindly to my protests that it was all just a bit of harmless fun. Yet thousands of people think nothing of watching shows like big brother and staring into the housemates bedrooms.

The sooner Big Brother and all similar shows are banned the better. Their treatment of human beings is fundamentally immoral.

Your task is (remember the method)

- 1. What exactly is being compared?**
- 2. What is the conclusion that the analogy is meant to support?**
- 3. What significant similarities are there between the two situations?**
- 4. What significant differences are there between the two situations?**
- 5. Consider: do the differences outweigh the similarities?**
- 6. Decide: to what extent does the analogy support the conclusion.**

Analogy 2: Plato's argument against democracy.

Governing a country is like steering a ship across the ocean. The captain of the ship has to guide the ship to its destination. All the passengers depend upon his expertise and knowledge of the sea to get them safely to where they want to go. He knows which route to take and how best to handle the ship when there is a storm. Likewise the ruler of a country has to steer the country towards prosperity and safety. All the inhabitants of the country depend upon the ruler to make the right decisions; when to increase taxes, when to lower taxes; when to wage war, when to make peace; when to be tough on crime, when to be liberal. Clearly if the people are to enjoy peace and prosperity then the ruler must be a political and economic expert. Now it is obvious that only a madman would decide to take control of the ship away from the expert pilot and allow the passengers who are mainly ignorant of seamanship to make all the key decisions by democratic vote. Democracy is no way to run a ship on the high seas. Well equally, given the similarity between running a ship and running a country, surely it is illogical to hand over the running of the country to an uneducated electorate who are at the mercy of persuasive and cunning politicians. This leaves the true expert effectively stuck in the back of the boat and ignored. Democracy is no way to run a country! Power should be kept in the hands of the knowledgeable few, ie the philosophers!

Your task is (remember the method)

- 1. What exactly is being compared?**
- 2. What is the conclusion that the analogy is meant to support?**
- 3. What significant similarities are there between the two situations?**
- 4. What significant differences are there between the two situations?**
- 5. Consider: do the differences outweigh the similarities?**
- 6. Decide: to what extent does the analogy support the conclusion.**

Analogy 3: Paley and the Watch

In his 'Natural Theology' William Paley argues that the world is more like a watch than a stone. . .

"In crossing a heath, suppose I pitched my foot against a stone, and were asked how the stone came to be there; I might possibly answer, that, for any thing I knew to the contrary, it had lain there for ever: nor would it perhaps be very easy to show the absurdity of this answer. But suppose I had found a watch upon the ground, and it should be inquired how the watch happened to be in that place; I should hardly think of the answer which I had before given, that, for anything I knew, the watch might have always been there. Yet why should not this answer serve for the watch as well as for the stone? Why is it not as admissible in the second case, as in the first? For this reason, and for no other, viz. that, when we come to inspect the watch, we perceive (what we could not discover in the stone) that its several parts are framed and put together for a purpose, e. g. that they are so formed and adjusted as to produce motion, and that motion so regulated as to point out the hour of the day; that, if the different parts had been differently shaped from what they are, of a different size from what they are, or placed after any other manner, or in any other order, than that in which they are placed, either no motion at all would have been carried on in the machine, or none which would have answered the use that is now served by it."

"The conclusion of which the first examination of the watch, of its works, construction, and movement, suggested, was, that it must have had, for the cause and author of that construction, an artificer, who understood its mechanism, and designed its use. This conclusion is invincible. A second examination presents us with a new discovery. The watch is found, in the course of its movement, to produce another watch, similar to itself; and not only so, but we perceive in it a system or organization, separately calculated for that purpose. What effect would this discovery have, or ought it to have, upon our former inference?"

Likewise the world must have a designer it cannot be an accident

Your task is (remember the method)

- 1. What exactly is being compared?**
- 2. What is the conclusion that the analogy is meant to support?**
- 3. What significant similarities are there between the two situations?**
- 4. What significant differences are there between the two situations?**
- 5. Consider: do the differences outweigh the similarities?**
- 6. Decide: to what extent does the analogy support the conclusion.**

You will feed back to the group in 10-15 minutes