

## Critical Thinking – Argument Reconstruction

### SITCOMS

“Almost every sitcom from 20+ years ago are full of racism and homophobia. I think we should just stop watching them. Honestly, whenever people talk about how good old sitcoms are, I get pretty mad. Why would anyone watch something that is so likely to be full of garbage messages?”

#### (a) Summary

The speaker claims that we should stop watching sitcoms from more than 20 years ago. His/her reasoning is that most sitcoms from more than 20 years ago are full of garbage messages while also being full of racism and homophobia.

#### (b) Reconstruction

- (1) Most sitcoms from 20+ years ago are full of racism and homophobia.  
(premise)
- (2) If most sitcoms from 20+ years ago are full of racism and homophobia, then most sitcoms from 20+ years ago are likely to be filled with garbage messages. (premise)
- (3) So, most sitcoms from 20+ years ago are likely to be filled with garbage messages. (1-2)
- (4) If most sitcoms from 20+ years ago are likely to be filled with garbage messages, then we should stop watching sitcoms from 20+ years ago.  
(premise)
- (5) So, we should stop watching sitcoms from 20+ years ago. (3-4)

#### (c) Defenses

The speaker does not provide any reasons within the passage to prove (1) is true, so I will be providing one on his/her behalf. Most of the old sitcoms under-represented the minority communities and mocked them. Many sitcoms over 20 years ago have portrayed racist and homophobic comments while discriminating them casually as a joke. Many sitcoms such as ‘*Family Guy*’, ‘*Looney Tunes*’ create racist puns of minority communities and scowl up on LGBTQ+ individuals while cracking jokes and discriminating against them on the grounds of their identity.

The defense for premise (2) is pretty straightforward. If anything comprises of racism and homophobia, it can cause the source to also contain vast amounts of negative and garbage messages as they themselves are a source of it. Racism and homophobia distribute hurtful messages that spread hate and discrimination among people, which disregards other people's rights and morals. These messages can make an individual feel disturbed and can offend them since such messages only summon negative opinions. Such messages can also influence people negatively to adopt hateful behavior and normalize such atrocious actions within the community. Hence, we have good reasons to conclude that sitcoms containing racism and homophobia provide for garbage messages within itself.

The speaker doesn't argue for premise (4), because it is obviously true. Assume that most sitcoms from 20+ years ago are filled with garbage and negative messages, then people watching these sitcoms will be negatively impacted. Such messages spread would only cause harm and havoc to people. Hence, to prevent these garbage messages from being spread, we must stop watching sitcoms from 20+ years ago.

**(d) Objection**

One could object to (4) by claiming that we shouldn't just quit watching sitcoms from 20+ years ago, because the garbage messages within them can be taken into account to learn and develop better sitcoms in the future and avoid negative messages from being spread later on.