



ANSWERS

The plausibility of the arguments are a matter of interpretation. There is no single 'correct' answer here. Some suggestions are below – but you may well feel differently.

Arguments from most plausible to least:

(most plausible) 4, 2, 6, 8, 5, 7, 3, 1 (least plausible)

Do you agree? How would you array the arguments on a plausibility scale?

1. Premise 2 and Conclusion are factually wrong – outrageously so.
Conclusion does not follow from the premises.
2. The Premises are supported by historical evidence, but the Conclusion does not necessarily follow, at least in its strongest form. Crusaders joined for a variety of reasons, including the satisfaction of feudal obligations and economic as well as spiritual gain. The Church did not necessarily 'condone' all of their activities.
3. Premise 2 lacks evidence, and Premise 1 is true only for some words and some languages. The Conclusion seems a bit of a leap.
4. The argument seems basically sound, although one might reasonably question the power of the effect asserted by Premise 2. In comparison to all the other things that affect attitudes toward gender equality, language might not be a very important factor. Or the effect might be spurious.
5. There are some obvious tensions between these claims (made by Thrasymachus in Plato's *Republic*). Obedience to law does not necessarily mean the advantage of the

stronger, and vice versa. The tension between Premises 1, 2 and the Conclusion might be resolved if Thrasymachus were read as a nihilist or relativist.

6. Both Premises are strong. The biggest issue is with the inductive leap from the single case (Premise 2) to the global conclusion about colonial states in general (Conclusion).
7. Premise 1 is not uncomplicatedly true, unfortunately. Opinion polls show that Premise 2 corresponds only to a very limited extent with the true state of public opinion, with the rise of 'color-blindness' as a principle of governance and the backlash against affirmative action programs instigated during the Civil Rights era. The Conclusion is false. Strictly speaking, the argument as a whole is valid but its components are not true.
8. This is Baruch Spinoza's argument that miracles are 'sheer absurdity'. If it is vulnerable at any point, it is Premise 1. A theist seeking to defend the existence of miracles can reject this Premise and see the argument fall apart. Premises 2 and 3 are true by definition, and the argument as a whole is valid, but if God is distinct from nature then Premise 1 is false.