Response to my commentator

Juhani Rudanko
University of Tampere, Department of English

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholar.uwindsor.ca/ossaarchive

http://scholar.uwindsor.ca/ossaarchive/OSSA10/papersandcommentaries/154

This Reply is brought to you for free and open access by the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences at Scholarship at UWindsor. It has been accepted for inclusion in OSSA Conference Archive by an authorized conference organizer of Scholarship at UWindsor. For more information, please contact scholarship@uwindsor.ca.
Response to my Commentator

JUHANI RUDANKO

Department of English
University of Tampere
Kalevantie 4, Tampere
Finland
f1juru@uta.fi

1. INTRODUCTION

Kary agrees that ad urgentiam is important and deserves attention, especially in political discourse, but he is doubtful about whether it is a fallacy. A major reason for his doubts has to do with the notion of covert intention in the analysis of ad urgentiam. He refers to Jansen’s comment that “the same utterance must be judged fallacious when the intention is bad and sound when the intention is good,” and constructs a hypothetical scenario of a junior Senator linking the length of the debate to the bond sale, but without any hidden intention. Kary also refers to the veiled threat ad baculum, constructing a mobster scenario as an illustration, and he further argues that ad urgentiam induces a metacognitive error, asking whether an argument is a fallacy “because it induces error at the metacognitive level?” He answers his question by saying that his “sense is that a direct inducement of cognitive error is necessary,” but admits “that the issue needs deeper investigation” (3).

2. COMMENTS IN RESPONSE

Kary’s comments deserve reflection. I would nevertheless hold that as far as the junior Senator scenario is concerned, the framework proposed provides a way to deal with it. Accepting that the junior Senator does not have any hidden intention, it does follow that his/her argument differs from Overman’s, but it does not follow that it could not be a fallacy. It only follows that it is not a deceptive fallacy. The focus of the article is on deceptive ad urgentiam, but it is possible that a speaker may engage in non-deceptive ad urgentiam, when attempting, without a hidden intention, to prevent a reasonable amount of debate on an important proposal. The relation between ad urgentiam and veiled ad baculum deserves more investigation, but I would nevertheless argue that, independently of veiled ad baculum, the distinction between overt and covert intentions is useful in the study of deceptive communication and in shedding light on ad urgentiam. Finally, even if one views ad urgentiam as an error at the metacognitive level, its use still prevents, or may prevent, the proper unfolding of a dialogue or a debate, and taking its importance in political discourses into account, I would prefer to view it as an informal fallacy, in the spirit of Bentham’s work, referred to in the contribution.
3. CONCLUSION

While I agree that more work is needed on deceptive fallacies, I would prefer to view *ad urgentiam* as a fallacy, rather than relegating it to some other field of investigation outside of fallacy theory. One reason is that this more inclusive stance can be expected to stimulate additional work on deception and deceptive fallacies. Overall, I want to thank Kary for his comments.