

Reading Response IV (word count: 349)

Fallacies of Vagueness

Fallacies of vagueness are built upon unclear meaning in the author's message. The reader is then not certain of what is implied by the vague expression, which is often in a borderline case - this can be used to create an invalid argument which is often not easily noticed.

Example: Using drugs is illegal.

Here it is unclear whether the author is talking specifically about the recreational use of drugs obstructed by laws or all drugs. Furthermore, the author needs to specify where the drugs are illegal, for example cannabis is illegal in some countries/states and legal in other countries/states.

Fallacies of Ambiguity

Fallacies of ambiguity are built upon phrases with multiple meanings which can all be valid. These usually occur due to not enough context being provided and come hand in hand with fallacies of vagueness.

Example: She was red.

In the English language, "being red" can imply different meanings. First, it could mean that the person was quite literally red. The example could also mean the person was very angry (another meaning of "being red"). Here, without more context this sentence is ambiguous.

Fallacies of Relevance

Fallacies of relevance are built upon an irrelevant premise being used to justify a conclusion. These premises don't have anything to do with the conclusion but are often valid and so provide the illusion of correctly justifying the argument.

Example: Axel believes animals should have moral standing, but Axel got a B in his math class. Therefore animals should not have moral standing.

This is an example of an ad hominem argument.

Fallacies of Vacuity

Fallacies of vacuity are arguments that do not go anywhere. They are arguments that often start by assuming the conclusion, and use logic to lead back to the assumption, making the claim that the conclusion is valid because the conclusion is valid.

Example: You need to be able to play the piano to produce music. Therefore, to produce music you must have been playing for a long time.

This is a fallacy due to a circular argument.