1. Where Practical Activity Meets Theoretical Excitement: A Rhetorical History of Trudy Govier's Contribution to the Informal Logic Movement

TAKUZO KONISHI

Summary: Within the informal logic movement in the 20th century, Trudy Govier can be seen as a prime example of a 'pedagogy-led' informal logician whose interest in teaching of a practical reasoning course prompts her inquiry into theoretical issues in informal logic. Drawing on an oral history interview with Govier and close examination of both published and unpublished materials on informal logic from the period of 1977-1985, this chapter focuses on her gradual evolution into a powerful voice in the informal logic movement, whose interest in teaching and research inform each other and develop in tandem.

1. Introduction

Besides being a theorist and philosopher of informal logic and argumentation, Trudy Govier has been a solid contributor to education in informal logic, critical thinking, and argumentation regularly throughout her independent intellectual career.[1] First teaching a course in practical reasoning[2] at Trent University, she subsequently started to

---

[1] Although Govier taught at Trent University and Lethbridge University, she was an independent intellectual between 1982 and 2004 when she made great contributions to informal logic, critical thinking, and argumentation. While I attempt to maintain the thesis that Govier is a pedagogy-led informal logician as I (2009) previously did, we must not dismiss the fact that her contribution to theory and practice of informal logic is based on her independent scholarship outside of academic institutions. I thank Govier for calling my attention to these facts through the editor of this volume.

[2] To the best of Govier's recollection when I interviewed her (2007), the title of the course was Practical Reasoning. Given Kenneth Burke's

publish short but solid articles in *Informal Logic Newsletter* to answer Michael Scriven's (1980) call for a challenge to formal logic. She (Wellman, MDIA, Who says) discussed the distinction between deduction and induction and introduced ideas of conductive argument and *a priori* analogy, as well as defended the significance of fallacies. In *Problems in Argument Analysis and Evaluation* (PAAE), she elaborated her pluralistic theory of argument based on deductive validity, inductive strength, as well as conductive and analogical cogency. She (1999) later elaborated some of her ideas in *The Philosophy of Argument* and critically examined new ideas in informal logic, such as Ralph H. Johnson's concept of a dialectical obligation. As the editor of *Selected Issues in Logic and Communication* (SILC), she collaborated with other scholars in the field to advance our understanding of the theory and practice of informal logic, critical thinking, and argumentation. In the realm of teaching, her main informal logic contribution is *A Practical Study of Argument* published in 1985. It has sold well enough to see the release of its seventh edition, an accomplishment comparable to that of Howard Kahane's (1971) *Logic and Contemporary Rhetoric*.

As part of a collective effort to highlight Govier's achievements in the fields of informal logic, critical thinking, and argumentation, as well as social and political philosophy, this chapter focuses on her contribution to the pedagogy of logic and argumentation. As a chronicle of Govier the educator and writer in the field of informal

---

position that language is a reflection, deflection, and selection of realities, the naming of a course has significance for informal logicians and argumentation scholars in philosophy departments; it must be distinct from traditional logic courses, but must also fall within the discipline of philosophy. Through my oral history project with several informal logicians since 2007, I have learned that the course was either called Practical Reasoning as she recalls, Applied Logic, Reasoning, or Informal Logic, but not Rhetoric, Logical Communication, or Pragmatics, which would imply ties with rhetoric and communication studies, and linguistics.

logic, it follows her attraction to the teaching of a practical reasoning course, the writing of *A Practical Study of Argument*, and her research into informal logic. A close examination of her work combined with my oral history interview, conducted in 2007, reveals how she has rhetorically distinguished her work from others' work, positioning herself as a pedagogy-led informal logician with a pluralist view that acknowledges a good argument can go beyond deductive and inductive.[3] In the next section, a short historical sketch traces the development of pedagogy-led informal logicians in the early years of informal logic movement. Section 3 describes how Govier was introduced to and became engaged in the teaching of an introductory logic course, eventually becoming one of the most powerful and constructive voices in the field. Section 4 examines how Govier the teacher and theorist of informal logic approached the writing of *A Practical Study of Argument*. The last section of this chapter will attempt to situate Govier in the history of informal logic, critical thinking and argumentation.

2. A short chronicle of informal logic textbooks and pedagogy-led informal logicians

Although a historical narrative of informal logic 'from pedagogy to theory' has some truth as an account for development of informal logic in the twentieth century, and although Govier approached informal logic through this 'pedagogy-led' route, my historical research on informal logic and argumentation have revealed that some philosophers started inquiries into informal logic because of other interests (Konishi 2009). John Woods and Douglas Walton were more interested in making use of dialog logic and clarifying fallacies in their collaborative

---

[3] Interview with Trudy Govier by Takuzo Konishi at University of Windsor, June 8, 2007.

work as a reply to Charles L. Hamblin's (1970) challenge on the standard treatment of fallacies, so in this respect they were 'theory-led' informal logicians. Robert Pinto was not so interested in pedagogical practice of informal logic. However, he was fascinated with informal logicians' research on non-deductive inference at the *First International Symposium on Informal Logic*, and started to publish in the field. His approach to informal logic is more informed by applied epistemology than dissatisfaction with logic education, so this third group is called 'applied-epistemology-led' informal logic.[4]

As leaders of informal logic movement, Johnson and J. Anthony Blair (1980, 1985, 1994, 1997, 2000) have made several attempts to emphasize the pedagogy-led route to informal logic. They (1980) observed a new trend in logic textbooks that emerged in the 1970s, that they call a "New Wave" approach (12).[5] Several characteristics are ascribed to it – among them working with natural arguments, innovative ways of treating fallacies, and a consideration of what Johnson and Blair define as extended arguments (13-17). Since there were far fewer outlets in which to publish theoretical ideas on natural language argumentation than there are now, much of innovation in argumentation theory evolved in these textbooks. Those innovative ideas include serious interest

---

[4] Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter to delineate historical developments in theory-led informal logic and applied epistemology-led informal logic, these historical routes demand a more careful analysis and examination of pedagogy-led informal logic over the years.

[5] Johnson and Blair (1980) surveyed fifty-four textbooks published after the World War II, and divided them into two generations. The first generation is further divided into "global" approach to which Irvin M. Copi's *Introduction to Logic* belongs, and "critical thinking" approach to which Monroe C. Beardsley's (1950) *Practical Logic* belongs. These two approaches assume that sentential and predicate logic can analyze and evaluate natural argument. The second generation is also called "New Wave" approach, and Kahane was a key figure in this group. (11-13)

in informal fallacies and Kahane's (1971) fallacy approach, Stephen N. Thomas's (1973) discussion of logic and natural language, Scriven's (1976) seven-step analysis of natural language argument, and Johnson and Blair's (1977) triad criteria of relevance, sufficiency and acceptability (the RSA criteria). These notions have influenced the theory and practice of producing, analyzing, interpreting, evaluating, and criticizing natural language argumentation.

The above textbooks inspired young philosophers in the 1970s and helped them become influential informal logicians. Johnson started to teach an Applied Logic course at the University of Windsor, using Kahane's textbook in 1970-1971. Blair started to teach another section of the course in the subsequent academic year. In 1977 they published the first edition of *Logical Self-Defense*, crystallizing identity conditions for each fallacy type, drawing on Thomas for better analysis and interpretation of argumentative texts, and "Canadianizing" the content to better meet their students' needs.[6] The triad criteria of relevance, sufficiency, and acceptability that Johnson and Blair offered to organize fallacy types were widely accepted and adopted by textbook writers, and scholars in the field also investigated theoretical issues involved in the triad criteria.

Johnson and Blair are not atypical figures among pedagogy-led informal logicians. David Hitchcock also started out by teaching a course in introductory course in reasoning at McMaster University using Scriven's *Reasoning*, and ended up publishing his own textbook, *Critical Thinking: A Guide to Evaluating Information* in 1983, as well as making significant contributions to the research on inference, enthymeme, and warrant.

---

[6] Johnson used the word to "Canadianize" in an oral history interview with the author in the 2007 interview. Johnson and Blair's (1997) *Logical Self-Defense* also refers to the notion of Canadianizing Kahane's textbook (xiii-xvi).

Likewise, Govier (PSA) acknowledges the influence of Scriven, Johnson and Blair, and Thomas as well as John Wisdom's *Virginia Lectures* and Carl Wellman's treatment of conductive argument in publishing *A Practical Study of Argument* (x). In short, these scholars can be called 'pedagogy-led' informal logicians in that they were initially attracted to improving logic education, then later started to publish textbooks and scholarly ideas in professional newsletters and journals. Although I am not committed to the idea that informal logic developed solely out of pedagogical practice, this short sketch endorses a view that pedagogy is an important route to the development of informal logic.

The following sections in this chapter will examine the development of Govier's thoughts on informal logic more closely and make the case that she is a clear instantiation of a pedagogy-led informal logician.

3. Trudy Govier meets informal logic

Writing her dissertation on transcendental argument at the University of Waterloo, Govier had interest in argumentation, although she recalls the topic as being more focused on epistemology and Kant's philosophy than on logic or argumentation. She tells me, in an interview from 2007 that she did not take any graduate courses in logic, but taught it to herself. As a faculty member at Trent University, she taught courses in early modern philosophy, contemporary moral problems, epistemology, metaphysics, and formal logic. In addition, she created and taught a year-long course in practical reasoning. In this two-semester course, she covered a lot of material on practical reasoning and critical thinking, using Johnson and Blair's (1977) *Logical Self-Defense*, Ronald Giere's (1979) *Understanding Scientific Reasoning*, and Darrell Huff's (1954) *How To Lie With Statistics*. She continued teaching the course until moving to Calgary in the summer of 1982,

and eventually published *A Practical Study of Argument* in 1985, based partly on her teaching experience.

Although Govier the teacher of informal logic was in the making through teaching the practical reasoning course at Trent University, her first encounter with informal logic predated her teaching, she told me. It came from an unexpected source when she was on leave in Calgary in 1976 and taking care of her daughter, then only a few months old.

> In Calgary was a man called Terence Penelhum who's a very eminent Canadian philosopher and had actually been a former professor of mine. And Terence Penelhum was sent this book to review and he was very busy. And so, he decided he wanted to find someone else to review this book. So he asked me to review it. And when I got this book, I mean, I had no credentials in formal logic or in informal logic–just Penelhum got this book, he thought I was a reliable person, so he gave this book to me. So I then got it to review.

Looking back on the review process, Govier remembers her positive impression of the manuscript of *Logical Self-Defense* and its influence on her teaching:

> I was fascinated with it, of course, because I was–at the time I was teaching a junior formal logic course at the University of Calgary and I was just fascinated with this material because it was so much more interesting and so much more practical. So I was–I was very interested right away.

In support of the publication, she offered some constructive advice for shortening the manuscript and organizing the material in a way that would introduce key ideas earlier in the textbook rather than later.[7] Thanks to

---

[7] Reviewer's Comments on *Applied Logic* by Trudy Govier. Unpublished material

her and Michael Gilbert's positive reviews, the manuscript, which was written by Johnson and Blair, hit the market in 1977. This is how she helped to bring *Logical Self-Defense* into existence.[8]

Having come back from her leave, Govier created and taught the practical reasoning course at Trent using books by Kahane, Giere, Johnson and Blair, and Huff, and the course was, in her judgment, successful. Govier the teacher of informal logic was in the making, partly as a result of reviewing the manuscript of *Logical Self-Defense* and the stimulation that came from that review.

As Govier's interest in informal logic grew stronger through teaching, she heard about a scholarly symposium to be held in Windsor:

> The first one I came to, I can't remember how I heard about it, but I came here from another city in Ontario–from Peterborough–where I was living. And I remember hearing about it. Somehow I heard about it and I saw the names and I thought: "Oh, those are those two people who wrote that book that I had reviewed." And so, I came down here – actually I drove down with one of my colleagues–a very nice person, and we had a really great trip to that first meeting, which I believe was in 1978.

She attended the Symposium not only to see Johnson and Blair but also to learn more about the field overall, she recalls. There she attended a talk that affected her research career:

---

[8] Johnson and Blair (1975) were not satisfied with the first reviewers' responses and asked for a second round. However, neither of the two exactly remembers who they recommended as second-round reviewers. When I interviewed Johnson and Blair, they only recognized that Penelhum would have been a good choice. For a detailed analysis of the review process see Konishi 2011.

I remember a speech by Michael Scriven (1980). That's the thing that I remember the most….He came to this thing and he was quite a well-known person. I mean, he had written a lot on philosophy of science and philosophy of history and I had used his articles in other courses–not closely related to this [informal logic]–more philosophy of science and so on. So, I knew the name and, I mean, he gave a very fiery sort of speech, in which he really claimed that there was a cheat with formal logic, because it simply couldn't handle all of these kinds of arguments and it couldn't really, couldn't usefully describe them and couldn't usefully be used to teach people to handle them. I was very influenced by that speech. I thought there was a whole research agenda here, because if people have this kind of logic, it doesn't handle these kinds of arguments. Then the question arises: "Well what does handle these kinds of arguments?" And it just seemed to me to be a whole new territory. So I was very influenced by that and that's the thing that I remember the most of it. I also remember meeting Tony and Ralph and – just – I only knew them from their book, so I just – they were really very nice people, you know. Very friendly, gracious, charming, so I remember that. And then, I don't even know. I don't remember much from the other talks. It's mainly Scriven.

Because Govier was so influenced by Scriven's speech criticizing formal logic, she became an active participant in theoretical discussions by contributing to Johnson and Blair's *Informal Logic Newsletter* that started soon after the *Symposium*. One of her main contributions to the construction of theory was on types of argument and standards for argument evaluation. Responding to Perry Weddle's (1979) article on the distinction between deduction and induction, she (Wellman) called readers' attention to Wellman's *Challenge and Response* and examined critically key ideas in the book that are relevant

to the issue on the deduction-induction distinction. In her article, she introduced Wellman's unique conception of induction –confirmation and disconfirmation of a hypothesis "by establishing the truth or falsity of its implications" (11). Based on this conception of induction she discussed whether or not the deductive and inductive categories would exhaust all argument types. She also extended his conception of conductive argument regarding moral issues to broader domains in real life, explored "an umbrella notion of validity which applies to arguments of all types" (13) and discussed problems of 'missing' premises based on Wellman's discussion of the conductive-deductive distinction (14). In the next issue of the *Newsletter* she discussed induction and deduction further, taking a subtle, nuanced position on this particular issue. While she was reluctant to scrap the distinction between deductive and inductive arguments, she could "see a reason for moving to more than two categories" of argument without a strong commitment to conductive arguments (MDIA, 8). Although she later modified her position somewhat (Assessing), considering Hitchcock's (1979) suggestion that deduction and induction are standards of argument evaluation rather than types of arguments, she maintained that deduction and induction do not exhaust all standards for argument evaluation. Throughout the discussion, she developed a pluralistic view of good argument and defended a thesis that an argument can be a good one even if it is neither deductive nor inductive, as shown in conductive arguments and analogical arguments. Given the devel-opment of research on conductive argument and *a priori* analogy in later years, her contribution to further classes of argument and further standards of argument evaluation has been highly significant.

In addition to defending a pluralistic view of good argument, Govier (Who says) also engaged in discussion about fallacies and attempted to create space for fallacy within the theory of argumentation. She responded to

conceptions of fallacy developed in a textbook by Lambert and Ulrich (1980) and a journal article by Finocchiaro (1981), from a pluralist as well as an empiricist point of view. Conceiving of a fallacy as "a mistake in reasoning, a mistake which occurs with some frequency in real arguments and which is quite characteristically deceptive" (Who says, 2), she argued that charge of fallacy "involves issues of interpretation, classification, of logic, and (tacitly) of empirical frequency and psychological tendency to deceive" (3). Since fallacy is a mistake in reasoning, it "may be necessary to invoke a standard of good reasoning" (3). With this line of thinking she attempted to connect a pluralist view of good arguments and fallacious arguments and incorporate the latter into the former, thereby providing a more comprehensive framework within which to understand good and fallacious arguments.

Addressing Lambert and Ulrich's (1980) position that a mistake in reasoning is due to formal invalidity, Govier (Who says) criticized their strong commitment to formal validity since, in their framework, neither inductive arguments nor arguments from analogy can be good (3). In their view, discussing informal fallacy is beside the point because fallacious arguments are limited to formal invalidity. However, this position can end in absurd consequences, because two arguments with the same form (A, B, therefore not-C) can be both deductively invalid and valid, as shown in the following two examples:

> 1. Mr. Jenner claims that evidence E is strong evidence that Mr. Nixon is guilty of obstruction of justice.
> 2. Mr. Jenner was a member of a commission that recommended the legalization of prostitution.
> Therefore, 3. E is not strong evidence that Mr. Nixon is guilty. (Lambert and Ulrich 1980, quoted in Who says, 3)

The first example is an instance of *ad hominem* fallacy, and, in Lambert and Ulrich's view, is fallacious because the form of the argument is not deductively valid. In contrast, the following example employs the same A, B, therefore, not-C form, and because it is deductively valid, it is not possible for the conclusion to be false if both premises are true.

> 1. My table is brown.
> 2. Everything which is brown is not green.
> So, 3. It is not the case that my table is green. (Who says, 3)

The formal deductivist framework of Lambert and Ulrich does not seem to analyze sufficiently the intricacies of *ad hominem* fallacy, deduction, or formal validity.[9] If we adopted a pluralistic theory of argument, their framework would be less promising, "for then even if we were to show somehow that an argument was deductively invalid on all feasible formal representation, it might nevertheless be based on good non-deductive reasoning." (4) Based on the analysis of these examples and other cases of *ad hominem*, Govier concluded that Lambert and Ulrich failed to make a good case against informal fallacies.

As well as criticizing Lambert and Ulrich's deductivist framework for dealing with informal fallacies, Govier (Who says) discussed Finocchiaro's position (5). While Finocchiaro and she both endorsed a pluralistic

---

[9] In examining Lambert and Ulrich's position, Govier seems to address formalism and deductivism simultaneously, without distinguishing between them. It is possible to construct formal systems for inductive logic and conductive argument as well as deductive logic, and Govier seems to argue against applying either a formal systems or deductivism to arguments across the board. The conflation of the two seems to be due partly to the lack of clear understanding among informal logicians of the word 'formal' among informal logicians at the time. E. M. Barth and C. W. Krabbe's (1982) clearly distinguished three different senses of 'formal' in *From Axiom to Dialogue* and Johnson and Blair (1994) later adopted their view in their "Informal Logic: Past and Present."

view of good argument, Govier criticized him as a poor empiricist because, when he claimed in his review of textbook accounts that there are actually no common errors in reasoning, he failed to review two good sources: Kahane; and Johnson and Blair. In addition, Finocchiaro's examination of fallacies such as affirming the consequent or *post hoc ergo propter hoc* was not based on actual cases, which weakens his partially empirical thesis that fallacies do not exist. Based on her criticism of Lambert and Ulrich and of Finocchiaro, Govier (Who says) concludes with the hope that she has shown that: "the elimination of fallacies is premature, and that the reduction of informal fallacies to formal ones would not obviously be an accomplishment, philosophically speaking" (9).

Throughout her participation in theoretical discussions held in the *Informal Logic Newsletter*, Govier tried to maintain a balance between theory and practice, aprioristic and empirical attitudes, and the abstract generality of theorizing and the intricacies involved in pedagogy. The complex, intricate, subtle, and delicate theoretical whole she attempted to construct through this discussion has helped to advance our understanding of the limits of formal systems, the binarism of deduction and induction, the existence of further classes of argument and further standards of argument evaluation, and the relationship between good arguments and fallacious arguments.

We have observed Trudy Govier's development as a teacher and philosopher of informal logic and argumentation over the years: from a reviewer of the manuscript of *Logical Self-Defense* and teacher of a practical reasoning course to a young philosopher interested in informal logic to central contributor to theoretical discussion surrounding informal logic. The path she took in the late 1970s and early 1980s clearly shows that she was a prime and representative pedagogy-led informal logician who attempted to link pedagogical practices and the construction of theories of informal logic.

Recalling satisfying aspects of the early years of the informal logic movement, she mentions the fusion of practice and theory that characterizes pedagogy-led informal logic:

> The first one (1978 Symposium), I think it was just getting this whole research agenda from Michael Scriven's speech, and, you know, sensing that there could be this really practical activity that you could do that would also have a lot of theoretical excitement to it–and that was very exciting for me. And then, some of the other ones, it was more just the support of having colleagues who were interested in my work and were doing the same thing.

Govier's excitement was such that she made another attempt to bridge practice and theory of informal logic in publishing *A Practical Study of Argument* after she left her academic position at Trent. In the next section I will examine one of the best selling textbooks in the field of informal logic, critical thinking, and argumentation.

4. The making of *A Practical Study of Argument*

To understand the pedagogical and theoretical significance of *A Practical Study of Argument* to the informal logic movement, it is prudent to situate this textbook in the socio-historical, rhetorical situation of the mid-1980s. By the time it was published in 1985, the informal logic movement had advanced to such an extent that many "New Wave" textbooks were available on the market, and ideas on the pedagogy and theory of informal logic were being exchanged in the *Informal Logic Newsletter*. The field became professional after Johnson and Blair held the *Second International Symposium on Informal Logic* (SISIL) in 1983, when they decided to transform the *Newsletter* into the journal *Informal Logic* and the

participants agreed to establish the Association for Informal Logic and Critical Thinking (AILACT) as a sponsoring organization to disseminate theoretical ideas about informal logic and critical thinking at professional conferences. Johnson and Blair (1985) also published an overview article in *American Philosophical Quarterly*, thereby reaching an audience outside the small circles of informal logicians and making their voices heard in one of the key journals in the field of philosophy. Applied-epistemology-led informal logicians and critical thinking scholars, represented by Robert Ennis and Robert C. Pinto, had joined the movement by the mid-1980s. As the movement advanced the cause of adequate understanding and appreciation of informal logic, some dissenting voices came from outside the circle. These dissenters are represented by Lambert and Ulrich (1980) as well as by Gerald Massey (1981), all of whom attempted to defend deductivism and questioned the fallacy approach in evaluating argument.

In the rhetorical situation of the mid-1980s, Govier had to answer the demands of at least three audiences in publishing *A Practical Study of Argument*. First, it needed to be rooted well enough in traditional logical theory to appeal to philosophy instructors who wanted to teach deductive and inductive logic in introductory courses. Second, it had to accommodate the needs of informal logicians and critical thinking instructors hoping to teach logic, reasoning, or critical thinking courses in more practical ways than Copi-type logic textbooks allowed.[10] Finally, she had to appeal to the publishing market in North America so that her textbook would sell well in both Canada and the United States. These diverse, even conflicting, audiences constituted rhetorical obstacles, and

---

[10] Copi's (1953) *Introduction to Logic* is the best known among the textbooks taking the "global approach," as has been labeled by Johnson and Blair (1980). In their view, it assumes that deduction and induction are "central and essential to the logical appraisal of *all* argumentation, for *all* purposes" (12).

she attempted to deal with them from a pluralist view of good argument she had developed over the years. Two main strategies she employed were to modify the RSA/ARG criteria to accommodate both formal and informal logic and to use examples drawing on a wider North American context, both from Canada and the United States.

4.1 The balance between formalism and informalism in the ARG criteria

Govier points out the significance of the balance between the formal and informal approaches to argument in the preface of the textbook:

> Like most texts, this one developed from teaching experience and from reflecting on the complaints that I and others had about existing books. I have tried to combine some elementary formal logic with an informal approach to natural argument. This is because I believe that there are *some* natural arguments that do exemplify logically valid forms, and for these, the understanding of basic formal patterns is very useful. I also believe that the basic concept of deductive entailment is extremely important for the correct interpretation of arguments–whether or not those arguments are themselves deductive. The text is basically one in informal logic, but unlike some texts in the area, it allows formal logic to contribute *part* of the answer to the question of why *some* arguments are good ones. In taking this stance, I hope to satisfy those who, like myself, believe that formal logic must have some role in the analysis and evaluation of natural arguments even though its role is not as exhaustive as some formalist philosophers appear to believe. (PSA, ix)

Her reliance on formal logic for evaluating whether some arguments are good distinguishes Govier from people like

Kahane or Johnson and Blair, who commit fully to informal approach to evaluate natural arguments.

In actualizing her desire to maintain the balance between the formal and informal approaches,[11] she (PSA) has relied on a key construct of informal logic, Johnson and Blair's RSA criteria of relevance, strength, and acceptability, to provide an account of good argument. She has slightly modified the terminologies, using Acceptability, Relevance, and adequacy of the Ground so that the criteria stand for the first three letters of ARG-ument. Having borrowed the ARG criteria from Johnson and Blair, she adds more layers to the criteria for discussing natural language argument. In defending her use of the triad criteria, she told me:

> I believed that [the triad] was correct and I couldn't think of anything that was a greater improvement. It just–it seems to me that when you have those three criteria–they also give you a way of describing what is a good argument. Like, you know, a good argument from analogy would satisfy these criteria in this particular way. Or good inference from a best explanation would satisfy these criteria in a different way. Or, a good deductive argument would also satisfy these criteria. So I think the criteria can be applied across the board. And I also think you can use the criteria to discuss fallacy. You can say, for instance, we have these criteria, which in their system would be ARS and, in mine would be ARG, then you can say: Well, what's wrong with an appeal to ignorance? Well, it violates relevance. Or what's wrong with what, um–begging the question–well, you don't have the "A" condition satisfied. What

---

[11] It is open to question whether the balance she has attempted to maintain between formal and informal approach assigns an equal role to the two. Given that her research has focused on further classes of argument and further standards of good argument, the argument can be advanced that she is oriented more toward the informal approach than the formal approach.

is wrong with a hasty generalization? The "G" condition is not satisfied. So, I think you can use it as a general framework. So, certainly the three conditions are from them [Johnson and Blair]…but...I think the use of it in that more general way is actually my contribution to it.

Her answer to the question and the short description in the preface capture how she viewed the triad criteria with reference to her pluralistic theory of good argument,[12] marking a clear departure from the original RSA criteria in two respects.

First, while Johnson and Blair (1977) have used the criteria for understanding how fallacies violate the standards of good argument (xiv), Govier (PSA) has used them to understand four different ways in which premises of an argument can be "*properly* connected to" a conclusion—deductively, inductively, analogically, and conductively (emphasis in original, 63). One type of proper connection is deductive entailment, in which a true premise set guarantees that the conclusion is also true (103). A second type is inductive arguments, in which "a

---

[12] While the chapter on good argument has been titled "When is an argument a good one?" since the first edition of *A Practical Study of Good Argument*, the way Govier describes a good argument has changed over time. She (1985) used "argument soundness" in the first edition but (PSA 1988) changed it to "argument cogency" or "cogent argument" in the second and kept it in later editions. In the third edition she (PSA 1992) discusses why she uses "cogency" instead of "soundness" as "the most general term for argument evaluation" (68). While the traditional account of 'soundness' is linked with deductive entailment and truth, deductive entailment is just one way to meet the relevance criterion in her pluralistic theory of good argument (70-71). In addition, the acceptability criterion that makes use of common knowledge, testimony, and acceptance for the sake of argument, as well as necessary truth, may well conflict with the truth requirement (PSA 1992, 68). Finally, it would be confusing to add a new sense to "soundness" different from the one commonly understood in some other textbooks (PSA 1992, 68). Here we find another tactic she uses to introduce new ideas for argument evaluation while staying consistent with the traditional philosophical account of soundness.

hypothesis is confirmed by extrapolation from previous experience of similar events" (104). Although inductive arguments cannot prove absolutely the truth of their conclusion, the conclusion is probably true because of the assumption that regularities in the past would repeat in future as well. A third type is analogical arguments. They assume that when two cases are similar in some respects, they would be similar in further respects as well (103-104). The fourth type is conductive arguments, in which a normative conclusion is drawn based on separate lines of support (105). Defending a thesis that these four different types of argument properly connects a premise set and conclusion in different ways, Govier constructs her pluralistic view of good argument. Although it took her two more years to publish *Problems in Argument Analysis and Evaluation* and further develop her pluralistic theory of argument, the basic blueprint of her four argument types and the standards for good arguments was presented in the first edition of *A Practical Study of Argument* in a manner that was both concise and accessible for teaching purposes.

While Govier accommodates deductive, inductive, analogical, and conductive arguments in the ARG criteria, Johnson and Blair (1977) maintain some distance from deductive and inductive logic in advocating the RSA criteria. They state that

> a host of topics has not been covered in this text. We have not, for instance, gone into the distinction between inductive and deductive logic; we have not even mentioned validity, soundness, or inference patterns. All of these topics are more than adequately dealt with in the burgeoning number of formal logic texts, and we could see no point in duplicating their treatments. If such material is important to you, it can be introduced at many junctures in the text. (Johnson and Blair, 1977, xiii)

Dismissing deductive and inductive logic in *Logical Self-Defense*, Johnson and Blair (1977) construct a strong tie between the three criteria and fallacies (12). In contrast, Govier sees some benefit of utilizing formal deductive logic and inductive logic and incorporates them into the ARG criteria. While both she and Johnson and Blair use the triad criteria as the general conditions for good argument and uncogent or fallacious argument, their approaches to deductive logic and inductive logic constitute a clear and sharp contrast. Because of this, Govier's textbook is more likely than Johnson and Blair's textbook to appeal to philosophers who want to include in introductory courses some deductive and inductive logic as well as informal logic.

Secondly, while fallacies play the central role in Johnson and Blair's (1977) RSA criteria, they play a supporting role in Govier's (PSA) ARG criteria. Johnson and Blair (1977) establish the inherent connection between argument and fallacy, stating that

> the text has three sections or phases. Phase I quickly introduces the basic concepts: argument and fallacy. Since argument is at the core of most persuasive appeals, since fallacies are violations of the standards of good argument, and since our approach is to provide the tools of logical self-defense for consumers of everyday persuasion, Phase II presents an inventory of the main and representative kinds of fallacy. (xiv)

In their textbook, the RSA criteria are introduced in Phase I of the textbook and used to describe three basic fallacies, all violations of standards of good argument: irrelevant reason, hasty conclusion, and problematic premise. Other fallacy types are introduced in the subsequent chapters as variations of these three (Johnson and Blair 1977, 12). Johnson and Blair ask students to detect those fallacy types and to argue how a particular fallacy is committed in actual

argumentative discourse. Govier (PSA) expresses concern about the fallacy approach to argument evaluation:

> Teachers worry that an approach to argument that is based solely on informal fallacies may be "too negative" and risks turning students into facile and hostile critics. Students reflect on the approach and began to wonder whether there are any good arguments anywhere. Although the fallacies are interesting and important, there is a growing sense that they cannot tell the whole story about natural argumentation. In an attempt to meet these concerns, I have treated informal fallacies against the background of various standards of good arguments. (ix-x)

Because of this concern, Govier (PSA) first uses the ARG criteria to show how different argument types can meet the criteria, and then discusses specifics of the acceptability criterion and the relevance criterion in subsequent chapters (53-124). One chapter lists situations in which premises are acceptable, then moves on to describe situations in which premises are unacceptable, where the fallacy of begging the question is discussed (79-100). Another discusses ways of being relevant in deductive, inductive, or analogical arguments and then notions of irrelevance (101-105). Then it examines specific fallacies involving irrelevance such as straw person, *ad hominem*, and guilt by association (109-119). Throughout these chapters, her main focus is on accounting for good or cogent argument from a pluralistic view, and fallacies are discussed only insofar as they help to illuminate good argument in her theory.

Contrasting *Logical Self-Defense* with *A Practical Study of Argument*, we can come to understand that the latter is an extension of the former. Both adopt the same triad criteria for good argument, but Govier (PSA) has used it in different ways than Johnson and Blair (1977). The ARG criteria provide general conditions under which argument can be cogent in different ways: deductively,

inductively, analogically, and conductively. Also, since the ARG criteria bring good argument to the fore, fallacy plays a secondary role in evaluating argument. These two features give *A Practical Study of Argument* a larger scope than *Logical Self-Defense*, allowing the book to simultaneously address needs of different audience groups, namely informal logicians, critical thinking instructors, and formal logicians.

4.2 North-Americanizing examples

Besides incorporating non-deductive, non-inductive argument types into the category of good arguments, informal logic emphasizes use of actual arguments, instead of contrived ones for pedagogy, so that examples for explanation of key concepts and for exercises are of great importance for learning and theorizing. The significance examples play in teaching is reflected in *Informal Logic Newsletter*'s including an example passage for analysis in its very first issue, and examples being published as supplements on a regular basis. Subsequently, the journal decided to make it a regular feature, beginning with volume 20.

       While the emphasis on examples has helped to make logic more practical, applied, and informal, it has simultaneously created challenges for instructors. The examples must be accessible and understandable to both instructors and students. For example, evaluating the logical cogency of an argument based on the RSA/ARG criteria requires that students assess whether the premise is acceptable in and of itself. If a premise is not necessarily true, it might be examined to see if it is acceptable when judged by common knowledge. Since common knowledge varies according to time and place, it is easier to evaluate what one knows well. We can presume, for example, that US students know more about US social, cultural, economic, or political issues than their Canadian, European, Asian, or African counterparts. Similarly, we

can presume that Canadian students know more about Canadian issues than their US, European, Asian, or African counterparts. The lack of textbooks dealing with Canadian examples was part of the motivation for Johnson and Blair (1977) to write *Logical Self-Defense* (xiii-xiv), and they, in Johnson's (2007) word, "Canadianized" Kahane's textbook with real-life Canadian examples.[13] While their strategy may have appealed to the Canadian market, it was likely less attractive to the American market given American instructors' and students' relative lack of familiarity with Canadian issues.

With the limits of instructors' and students' common knowledge in mind, Govier made the decision to pursue a third way, North Americanizing the textbook by including both American and Canadian examples. Asked to what she attributes the success of *A Practical Study of Argument* in American and Canadian markets, she replies:

> (W)hen I wrote the textbook, I tried to put in American and Canadian material. I wanted a combination of both. That was a deliberate effort. The publisher wanted me to remove all the Canadian material, and I refused to do that, because I just said that I'm a Canadian, and I write in Canada, and I won't do it. And so they didn't insist. And, actually, some American professors have told me they appreciate the Canadian material. They don't at all mind telling their students that there is a city called Ottawa and that there is a Prime Minister and so on. They think its fine for their students to know this. I guess the book is quite successful because it has so many editions, but I have to emphasize that the sales numbers are not enormous. There are a number of books in this area, so I mean, there are many, many books besides mine. Yes, it's lasted for quite a while.

---

[13] Interview of Ralph Johnson by Takuzo Konishi at University of Windsor, March 6.

We have seen that the two rhetorical strategies Govier has used in writing *A Practical Study of Argument* reveal her inclusive approach to the pedagogy and theorizing of informal logic. Instead of omitting formal deductive logic and inductive logic and focusing solely on non-deductive or non-inductive argument types, she has developed her pluralistic theory of good argument and included four different argument types; instead of focusing only on good arguments or fallacious argument, she has attempted to establish the notion of cogent arguments and relate fallacious arguments to it; and instead of limiting herself to Canada- or US-specific examples, she has 'North-Americanized' the content by including both. By adopting this inclusive approach, she has succeeded in maintaining a tie with the tradition of logic, accommodating new ways of teaching courses in logic, critical thinking, and argumentation, and helping to disseminate them to a larger public.

5. Conclusion

In this chapter I have situated Govier's early work in informal logic in a historic-rhetorical context in order for us to better understand her contributions to the informal logic movement of the second half of the 20th century. By tracing what brought her to the teaching of informal logic and participation in the *First International Symposium on Informal Logic*, as well as what led her to inquire into theoretical issues involved in the practical activity, I have defended a thesis that Govier embodies what I (2009) mean by pedagogy-led informal logician.

Even before being inspired by Scriven to start her theoretical inquiries, Govier had worked as a practitioner of informal logic, reviewing the manuscript of *Logical Self-Defense* and using the textbook in her own classroom teaching. Through her teaching, she started to shape her

own ideas on informal logic, then exchanged those ideas with colleagues in the field and developed her pluralistic theory of argument in *A Practical Study of Argument*. In short, her teaching practice was a source of theorizing, and the constructed theory was, in turn, reflected in her textbook. Both played equally important roles in making Govier a key contributor to the informal logic movement.

I understand that there is much more left to say about Govier's contributions to informal logic, critical thinking, and argumentation. This chapter does not discuss her more theoretical works in later years, such as *Problems in Argument Analysis and Evaluation*, *The Philosophy of Argument*, and *Selected Issues in Logic and Communication*. Nonetheless, it is clear, even from the writings from the limited period covered here, that Govier is an important figure in history and philosophy of informal logic and argumentation, and that consideration of the later period would certainly provide further evidence of her significance in the field. The case made here is that Govier deserves status as a key contributor to the informal logic movement, together with Scriven, Kahane, Hamblin, Johnson, Blair, Woods, Walton, Hitchcock, and Pinto.