

# informal logic

newsletter

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University of Windsor

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## from the editors

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We are pleased to present three articles on fallacies in the current issue, by Trudy Govier, P. J. Mackenzie and Nelson Pole, plus a discussion of widely invoked "Principle of Charity", by Ralph Johnson. Note too the second (and final) part of Ralph Johnson's critical review of Toulmin, et al., An Introduction to Reasoning. The footnotes to both parts of Johnson's review are included at the end of part two: footnotes 1-9 belong to part one; the remaining ones, to part two. (We apologize for the inconvenience to readers.)

A new department is introduced on page 26: abstracts of articles on informal logic that have appeared in other journals. Help us to keep this department complete and up to date by sending in an abstract of anything you publish elsewhere, or failing that, an offprint of your article, or (third best but still good) a note indicating the title and when and where

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it appeared. This will help you reach a wider audience, and help other readers to keep abreast of work in the field.

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Make a note of the (Second International) Symposium on Informal Logic, tentatively scheduled for June 20-21-22-23, 1983 at the University of Windsor. The time will be ripe for a review of the progress of the informal logic movement since the first Windsor symposium in June 1978. With two years' lead time, we hope there will be ample opportunity for people to work up papers. We herewith issue the first call for papers. Papers on any and all topics related to the theory and teaching of informal logic are welcome. Inexpensive on-campus accommodations and meals will be available. We will keep you posted as more detailed plans develop.

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With this issue we complete the third year of publication of the Informal Logic Newsletter. The Newsletter has tripled, since its first year, in the amount of material included. We are sorry that the increase in the amount of material, plus rising costs, have prevented us from issuing an Examples Supplement with this volume: we have simply run out of money. However, we do have a supply of examples--many with accompanying analyses--on hand, and we will be printing as many of these as we can in the Fall 1981 number (Vol. iv, No. 1) which will be coming out early in the fall--in time for first-semester courses. It would help a lot if you would comb your last-year's stock of examples, and this summer send us a few juicy ones for inclusion in that issue. Include your own (succinct) analyses of them if you can.

Note that subscription renewals are now due. It has been necessary to increase our rates to \$6 (individuals) to cover increased costs. We hope you will agree that this is still a modest amount for the value returned. It will enable us to maintain the increased volume of material, and to have Vol. iv set in type so it will be much easier to read. Please send your renewal cheque or money order as soon as you can, so we won't have cash-flow problems.

Have a pleasant summer. \*

Thanks to Vi Smith and Midge Mailloux for typing this issue. Without the (unpaid) editorial and production assistance of June Blair, this issue would not have seen the light of day; we are grateful for her help. Our Managing Editor, Peter Wilkinson, leaves for a well-earned sabbatical as we go to press.

# articles

## Worries About Tu Quoque as a Fallacy

Trudy Govier  
Trent University

Traditionally, the tu quoque argument has been regarded as a kind of fallacious ad hominem. A classic form of this consists in attacking someone for not practicing what he preaches, and then going on to impugn on these grounds the content preached.<sup>1</sup> For example, several years ago Ontario and Federal government officials in Canada, having exhorted Canadians to spend winter holiday money at home in Canada, nevertheless abandoned our northern country for winter vacations in Florida and the Caribbean. From such a discrepancy between preaching and personal practice, one might be tempted to infer that what is preached is false, wrong, or unimportant. If one did this, then, traditionally, one would have committed an ad hominem fallacy of the tu quoque variety.

One may feel doubts about this case. Somehow, one feels, critics of government ministers have got some kind of valid point here. The matter has perplexed me for some time, and I'd like either to generate a similar perplexity in others, or to find someone who can rid me of my own.<sup>2</sup>

We may look at such cases in an abstract way. A person, A, holds a principle, P, which is of the form "People in circumstances of type (c) should do actions of type (a)". He affirms this principle, communicates it to others, advocates that they follow it, argues on its behalf, and so on. But A himself, when in circumstances of type (c) does not do actions of type (a); he performs, on the other hand, actions of type (x)--quite contrary to (a)--and thus fails to conform to his own principle. Now consider another person B who has been part of A's audience on some of the many occasions on which he has exhorted others to conform their actions to P. B, let us say, points out to A in no uncertain terms that his action of type (x) is in violation of his own principle, P. So far, B certainly has not committed any fallacy. He has merely made a