Book Review

Reason in the Balance
by **Sharon Bailin and Mark Battersby**

Whitby, ON: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 2010. Pp. xiv, 1-349.
Softcover ISBN-13: 978-007-007341-8, ISBN-10: 007007341-4
CDN$ 97.95

Review by **J. ANTHONY BLAIR**

1. The general features of *Reason in the Balance*

The authors of the critical thinking textbook, *Reason in the Balance*, take on as their objective the answer to the question, "How can we teach critical thinking in such a way as to provide students with the understanding and skills to be able to make reasoned judgments in real life contexts?" (p. x). Accordingly, a descriptive reviewer may describe how they try to accomplish this objective, and a critical reviewer may assess how well they succeed in doing so and whether the objective is sound.

What is *Reason in the Balance*'s working conception of critical thinking? It seems to be that critical thinking consists of the processes involved in coming to a reasoned judgment on complex issues: "...coming to a reasoned judgment on complex issues is at the heart of the kind of critical thinking which actually takes place both in the disciplines and in everyday life" (p. x). [This notion of critical thinking is close enough to mainstream thinking about the concept to be unexceptionable, and is in any case an obviously worthwhile pedagogical objective.][1]

In general, *Reason in the Balance*'s approach to answering its motivating question is to find a method whereby students learn to value and operationalize open minded, epistemically disciplined inquiry into vexing issues, and learn how to carry out such inquiries into different types of issues. Accordingly, there are two components to "a reasoned judgment": one is the attitude of reasonableness or being reasonable (the open-minded component) and the other is the deployment of a group of reasoning skills or competencies that have diverse application (the disciplined component). The method whereby students are to learn to make reasoned judgments is *inquiry* —"the process of

[1] Comments within brackets express the reviewer's assessment, as does the whole of Section 3.

 Informal Logic, Vol. 32. No. 4 (2012), pp. 454-466.

carefully examining an issue in order to come to a reasoned judgment" about it (p. 4).

Reason in the Balance is organized into four sections, which I would describe as follows. First, an introduction (two chapters, c. 11% of the book). Second, a primer on the basic tools of inquiry (four chapters, c. 24%). Third, the method of inquiry (five chapters, c. 27%). And fourth, applications of the method and the use of the tools to case studies of different specific types of vexing issue (5 chapters, c. 37%). The 11 chapters of the first three parts of the book are roughly equal in length (averaging 19 pages); the five chapters of the applications part are mostly somewhat longer (26-30 pages), except one is quite a bit shorter (15 pages). [Anyone using this textbook will want to cover the first three sections—the introduction, the tools and the method. The time available in most one-semester courses will limit the possibilities of working through every chapter of the applications section with care, unless the class can be divided into groups with different interests following up on different material.] Each chapter lists its learning objectives at the beginning, and is followed at the end by a set of review questions ("Check Your Understanding") and two or three pages with sets of four or five types of exercise. I have not taught from this book, so will not try to comment on the quality of the exercises.

The book's contents represent a set of ever-more expansive repetitions. The basic tools and the method of inquiry are introduced in the two chapters of the introductory section. Each tool and aspect of the method is then covered in detail in the following two sections—the tools in the four chapters of Section II, and the method in the five chapters of Section III. Then the tools and method are put to use over and over again, modified as appropriate for each of the five different types of issue covered in the five applications chapters of Section IV. Key concepts are bold-faced in the text and also defined in small coloured boxes in the margins; concrete examples and photographs, and illustrative quotations, are scattered through the text in separate boxes. The book ends with a [useful] large glossary of key terms, and an index.

A noteworthy and important feature of the book is that the material is "taught" by a combination of showing and telling. Almost every chapter has running through it a dialogue that models the dialogical features of the kind of inquiry the authors are endorsing and that they describe in Chapter 11 in detail as part of the method. The interlocutors of these dialogues are a group of fictional classmates working through the material in the book by engaging in a wide range of inquiries. They are Phil, Nancy, Ravi, Ahmed, Sophia, Winnie, Lester, Juanita, along with cameo appearances by an unnamed Professor, by Nancy's

father McGregor, by Camilla Bell, an art exhibition docent, and by Dr. Weise, a philosophy professor (I might have overlooked a character or two). In their slightly idealized but plausibly realistic dialogues, the characters express views likely to be represented by members of a typical class being taught using this textbook, and at the same time they model realistic attempts to engage in the type of constructive, open-minded, self-disciplined (or group-disciplined) inquiry which is the essential practice that the book is trying to teach. Interspersed among and within the dialogue of each chapter are comments by the authors about points raised in the dialogue, sometimes expanding on or explaining a point, sometimes issuing correctives to what's just been said by a character in the dialogue. Readers are invited to pause and try to arrive at their own views on the matters under discussion at salient points in the dialogues. As well, the authors summarize the main points, explain key concepts, and describe the method in detail. The student who reads this textbook is thus listening in on a conversation much like one he or she would be engaged in if discussing the material of the book, as well as reading the comments that a couple of professors make about that conversation and about that material. The traditional exposition by an author, while far from absent, is broken up by sections of dialogue, or introduced by interruptions at points in the dialogue where it needs to be presented. It would be difficult for a student who reads the book with any attention to fail to come away without a solid understanding of how its tools and method of inquiry work in practice.

A large number and wide range of issues are topics of dialogues in the book, including: vegetarianism, the merits of the film *X-Men*, the banning of "dangerous" dogs, raising the minimum wage, legalizing marijuana, the justification of dropping the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, scientists' responsibility for working on developing dangerous weapons or products, capital punishment, banning hate speech, the theory of evolution, the dangers of violent video games, the existence and motivation of altruism, the meaning and value of a semi-"abstract" painting, the justification of a controversial public sculpture, ethical relativism, polygamy, and whether "9/11" was a U.S. government conspiracy.

2. Detailed exposition of the book, chapter by chapter

Section I, The Nature of Inquiry, Chs. 1 and 2.

Ch. 1, The Nature and Value of Inquiry. An inquiry is the examination of an issue—a view that is open to question—

conducted by examining the reasons that can be found for and against it and by critically evaluating their merits to arrive at a reasoned judgment about which makes the best case. Since often a variety of positions can be found on an issue, it is natural to view the formulation and assessment of reasons as a kind of dialogue among proponents of these different positions. The norms of open-mindedness and fair-mindedness characterize the spirit of a productive inquiry, one that produces the best judgment on the issue given the currently available information.

Ch. 2, Introducing Guidelines for Inquiry. A well ordered inquiry covers, more or less in order, the following five steps. First, identify the issue, getting clear about precisely what it is, distinguishing it from related issues and clarifying the relationships among connected issues. Second, identify the relevant reasons and arguments on various sides of the issue. (This step requires research; see Ch. 6.) Third, identify the context of the issue: the history of the debate surrounding it and the special nature of the issue. Fourth, evaluate the various reasons and arguments. Fifth, compare the strengths and weaknesses of the various reasons and arguments and arrive at a reasoned judgment on the issue.

Section II, Arguments: Chs. 3–6.

Ch. 3, Arguments and Their Structure. That 'argument' has many meanings is noted. The one focused on in this chapter, contrasted [as usual] with "the loud and red-faced type," is argument as a set of claims consisting of reasons offered to support a claim (premises) and the claim being supported (conclusion). [Thus, the authors opt for an epistemic function of argument.] The authors introduce standardizing or outlining the argument to reveal its linked or convergent premise-conclusion structure or their combination in "sub-arguments." They distinguish two "types" of argument: deductive (if it is a linked argument whose author appears to intend the truth of the premises to guarantee the truth of the conclusion) and inductive (if the premises provide support for the conclusion but don't entail it). [Note the asymmetry: to identify an argument as deductive, one must judge the author's intention and the premises' probative force; to identify it as inductive, one must only judge the premises' probative force.] A "sound" deductive argument is valid with true premises. Deductive validity is introduced as formal validity, and *modus ponens* and *modus tollens* are introduced as sample valid deductive argument forms, along with their respective misfires, affirming the consequent (used here to introduce the distinction between necessary and sufficient conditions) and denying the antecedent. The notion of assumption defined as an un-

stated but necessary part of an argument is introduced, and used as a method for identifying missing premises [thereby committing the authors to the deductive reconstruction of incompletely-expressed arguments]. A "dubious" assumption is a missing premise, often an underlying generalization, that is "quite doubtful."

Ch. 4, Inductive Arguments and Fallacies. A "strong" inductive argument's premises, if true, give a good reason to believe the conclusion. A "cogent" inductive argument is strong with credible premises. [Note the parallel with "validity" and "soundness" for deductive arguments. A valid argument with credible premises not known to be true would seem to fall between "sound" and "cogent".] "The key function of argument is to provide reasons (evidence, data, principles) that make the conclusion credible (i.e., worthy of reasonable belief) or at least more credible than before the argument was presented" (p. 61). The concepts of a prima facie judgment, rhetorical effect (persuasiveness in excess of probative value), probative value, and fallacy are introduced. Fallacy is defined as "an argument pattern whose persuasive power greatly exceeds its probative value (i.e., evidential worth)" (p. 63). Two groups of "informal fallacies" are described. Fallacies of illusory support: (red herring; abusive ad hominem; guilt by association; straw person; irrelevant standard—i.e., attack for failing to meet in appropriate standard—; two wrongs; popularity; hasty generalization; anecdotal evidence; begging the question; argument from ignorance, where the notion of burden of proof is introduced; argument from spectre—i.e., illusory bad long-run consequences; and equivocation); and fallacies of unacceptability (problematic premise and false dilemma). Typical examples and the modeling of their critique are provided for each fallacy. A successful charge of fallacy requires explaining both the rhetorical effect and the logical error: why the argument is persuasive and why it shouldn't be. Criteria of premise acceptability: the claim is credible or widely known to be true; it is supported by credible sources; it is offered tentatively and could be supported. A premise is not acceptable when it is not credible, less credible than the conclusion, or is offered without support when it is not obviously credible yet crucial to the argument.

Ch. 5, Key Argument Types. In Ch. 3 it was said that there are two types of argument—deductive and inductive. In this chapter, *reductio ad absurdum*, precedent analogy (argument from similarity of circumstances), causal analogy (argument from similar qualities to similar causal properties—e.g., historical analogy), and argument to the best explanation are also introduced as argument types. Argument and explanation are distinguished, as are explanations giving reasons and expla-

nations in terms of causes. Causal explanations are divided into particular and general explanations—the causal explanation of a particular event vs. the causal explanation of a type of event. Guiding questions for evaluating particular causal explanations: Did the alleged cause precede the effect? Is there a credible causal link? Are there plausible alternative explanations, and if so, can they be eliminated? Which explanation is simplest? Parallel guiding questions for assessing general causal explanations: Is there a correlation between the alleged causal factor(s) and the effect? Does the cause precede the effect? Is there a credible causal link? Are there plausible alternative explanations that fit the facts, and if so can they be eliminated? Which explanation is simplest? Again examples of each type of argument and the modeling of their assessment are provided.

Ch. 6, Credible Sources and Appeals to Experts. Ch. 6 is devoted to another argument type: appeals to epistemic authority. A list of seven guiding questions for evaluating sources used to back claims is introduced and discussed in detail. They are: 1. Is the claim from an appropriate domain of knowledge? 2. Is there consensus among the relevant experts supporting the claim? 3. Is the authority appealed to competent in the domain of the claim? 4. Has the expert had to opportunity to review relevant information before giving an opinion? 5. Is the expert trustworthy and free from bias? 6. Has the claim in question been subject to peer review or is it from a peer-reviewed source? 7. Does the expert supply plausible arguments or explanations for their point of view? The fallacy of improper appeal to authority is then introduced. The chapter ends with a discussion of the Web as a source of support for claims. Web-based sources can be assessed using questions 1., 3., 5., 6., and 7. Websites can be assessed by using a set of questions about who is supplying the argument or information provided on the site and by using a set of questions about how the argument or information is presented. Examples of misleading or untrustworthy sites are reproduced and discussed. This chapter is essential to the second step of the kind of inquiry the text advocates: identify the relevant reasons and arguments on various sides of the issue. The authors focus on Web-based research "because it is the most easily accessible and usually the most current" (p. 116). [It's also the source most likely to be used by students.]

Section III, Conducting an Inquiry, Chs. 7–11.

Ch. 7, Identifying the Issue. This chapter is about what kinds of issue are appropriate for inquiry, potential problems with candidate issues, and the different types of judgment that issues can call for. Issues need to be focused, are expressible as questions

(unlike topics), have sufficient precision, positions on them are controversial, and they need to be expressed in a neutral way so as to avoid begging the question about their answers. Problems arise from lack of clarity (vagueness, excessive generality, ambiguity) and from loaded language. The judgments that issues call for may be factual (descriptive or explanatory), evaluative (e.g., ethical, aesthetic, instrumental, or of comparative values), or interpretive (questions of meaning).

Ch. 8, Understanding the Case: Reasoning and Context. This chapter focuses on how to understand the relevant reasons and arguments on various sides of an issue. It calls for getting clear at the outset about three features of the context of the issue: first, what the authors call the current state of practice with respect to the issue, for instance getting to know what laws or conventions are in place; second, the history of the debate surrounding the issue; and third, the intellectual, social, political and historical contexts in which the issue is situated. Only once the context is understood can one be in a position to understand the various arguments and kinds of evidence offered in support of the contending positions on the issue. The latter often also involves becoming clear about the dialectic or argument exchanges between proponents of the various sides. Accordingly, the authors model a table for summarizing the arguments pro and con a given position on an issue: a summary of each of the arguments pro and each of the arguments con, and when available, lists of the objections argued against each argument and of the responses to those objections given by the other side.

Ch. 9, Evaluating the Arguments. Ch. 9 illustrates how to evaluate arguments by a case study evaluating the arguments for and against capital punishment. In general, the authors propose (p. 170): "conducting a prima facie evaluation looking for fallacies and other obvious weaknesses," assessing the factual claims by relying on the actual evidence from reliable sources, assessing the evaluative arguments according to such relevant criteria as a comparison of a proposed policy's effectiveness as a means to a desired end with other alternatives, and in general assessing possibilities in the light of alternatives. Details about how to evaluate arguments for and against various kinds of issue are provided later in the relevant chapters of Section IV.

Ch. 10, Making a Judgment and Making a Case. This chapter deals, first, with the question how to comparatively evaluate the various reasons and arguments uncovered and assessed in the inquiry in order to reach a reasoned judgment about the issue, second, with the question how to evaluate a case that someone has made in support of a position on an issue, and third, with how to make a reasonable case for the judgment you think is justified. The following guidelines for reaching a rea-

soned judgment are listed, illustrated and discussed in detail (p. 177): "Ensure that the relevant arguments, objections and responses have been identified. Evaluate the individual arguments. Establish, if possible, which view bears the burden of proof. Assess the possibilities in light of the alternatives. Consider differences in how the issues and arguments are framed. Recognize points that may be valid in various views. Synthesize the strengths of different views into the judgment. Weigh and balance the different considerations, values and arguments. Consider whether your own personal convictions and experiences may be colouring your judgment." In weighing competing considerations, the authors recommend making comparative judgments of value, assessing the degree of certainty or likelihood of competing claims, considering ethical as well as practical factors, judging the ends aimed at no less than the means proposed to reach them, considering costs as well as benefits of consequences, and keeping in mind possible conflicts among ethical values. Judgments should be apportioned in relation to the range of strength of evidence (analogous to the levels of proof in law); thus one might be very confident of a judgment, at one extreme, and be forced to suspend judgment, at the other.

Evaluating a case that someone has made, can be carried out by checking for errors or fallacies. A [useful] list of ten of these is supplied and discussed: failure to undertake a comprehensive examination of the various competing arguments; failure to give appropriate consideration to the burden of proof; failure to consider ethical arguments, alternative solutions or possibilities, objections or implications; biased framing; "either-or" fallacy; and inappropriate weighting.

In making a case, the authors advise (and discuss): identifying the audience, being clear about one's goal, acknowledging and addressing objections and replies, maintaining a tone befitting the goal and audience, clearly distinguishing factual and evaluative claims, finding common ground with the audience, and using credible sources.

Ch. 11, Dialogue and the Spirit of Inquiry. The last chapter of Section III, Conducting an Inquiry, expands on the norms of fruitful inquiry (the "spirit of inquiry") and the norms of fruitful dialogue-based inquiries. The former are introduced as the absence of various obstacles: ideological fixity, ignorance of other views, the need to be right, the desire for certainty, identification with our beliefs, defensiveness, groupthink, preconceptions or biases, and fallacious reasoning, i.e., using rhetoric to illicitly persuade instead of logic to rationally convince. The authors propose that such obstacles may be overcome in various ways, including knowing your initial views and biases, monitor your inquiry for the obstacles listed above, and evaluating your

own views by looking for weaknesses, likely criticisms and objections, alternative arguments, and contrary evidence, and by being aware of what would lead you to change our mind about the issue. For an inquiry through dialogue to be productive, the authors recommend respectful treatment of the participants (acknowledge the contributions of others, minimize combativeness, maintain friendliness, avoid personal attacks, refrain from "moralizing" the opposing position); participating in a meaningful way (don't interrupt, monopolize, cut off, or intimidate others); and productive interaction (keep the dialogue about reasons and arguments, keep on track, be clear and accurate, listen to others' arguments for their merits, take criticisms of your views seriously, seek common ground, restate others' views in a way acceptable to them, concede points to the stronger argument, be willing to concede for the sake of argument, and in the case of impasse, agreed to disagree amicably). [Faculty meetings might benefit from following such guidelines.] The authors regard the commission of fallacies to be particularly tempting as dialogues among people with initial disagreements become heated, and they model sets of worse and better responses to fallacious interjections in dialogues.

Section IV, Inquiry in Specific Areas

The last five chapters of *Reason in the Balance* teach inquiry in, respectively, the natural sciences, the social sciences, the arts, philosophy (ethics) and the extraordinary, by discussing their distinctive concepts and norms and by having model inquiries in each kind of issue carried out by the student interlocutors.

Ch. 12, Inquiry in the Natural Sciences. The authors identify as among the key features of scientific inquiry: reasoning based on observation and theories offered as testable, as causal explanations, as the best available explanations of the phenomena, as leading to other insights, as often involving the use of statistics, and as subject to the critical scrutiny of expert peers. All these concepts are explained and illustrated with historical examples.

Ch. 13, Inquiry in the Social Sciences. A variety of new concepts are introduced, explained and illustrated in Ch. 13: observational studies (retrospective and prospective), experimental studies, double blind studies, random sampling, statistically significant difference, risk factors and effect size. In evaluating social scientific claims the following points are stressed: the distinction between experimental validity and sample generalizability, the importance of identifying the order of alleged cause and effect in observational studies, the difference between individual and social causation, the limitation of predictions if verifying

social scientific hypotheses, and the importance of meaning, belief and intention in explaining human behaviour. Several examples and case studies are used to explain and illustrate.

Ch. 14, Inquiry in the Arts. This chapter challenges, with extended case studies of Picasso's *Guernica* and Serra's public sculpture *Titled Arc* in New York City's Federal Plaza, the conventional belief that works of art cannot be assessed as to their meaning or their value. It is shown how close observation of the work of art combined with an understanding of its context can serve to produce grounds for interpretive claims as to purpose or meaning and as a basis for evaluative claims about the quality of the work. At the same time the authors stress that there is more room for reasoned disagreement in judgments about aesthetics than in those about scientific theories.

Ch. 15, Inquiry in Philosophy: Ethics. The authors construct a debate about relativism among their student actors as the basis for a study of how meta-ethical inquiry proceeds, and a debate about the ethics of polygamy for a study of how first-order ethical inquiry proceeds, in philosophy. The issues are clarified and pro and con arguments (and responses to them) are discussed and summarized.

Ch. 16, Inquiry into the Extraordinary. Case study inquiries into claims about the power of positive thinking (and the "law of attraction") in Rhonda Byrne's bestseller, *The Secret*, and about "The 9/11 Conspiracy," are used to illustrate inquiries into "extraordinary" claims. The heavy burden of proof such claims bear, the dangers of confirmation bias, the need for the possibility of contrary evidence, the availability of simple and plausible alternative explanations, the acknowledgement of alternative views and arguments, the fact that the absence of definitive proof doesn't constitute evidence against a claim and the weakness of an explanation that explains everything are all discussed as raising problems for extraordinary claims.

3. Dislikes and likes

Although I could see myself happily teaching from *Reason in the Balance* in a critical thinking course—reasons why, below—there are a few details I might take issue with in my lectures.

One is its "positivist" theory of argument, to use a term Trudy Govier coined for this feature 25 years ago (1987, Ch. 3). Although it doesn't state this view explicitly, by default the book leaves the impression that all arguments are either deductive or inductive, leaving "inductive" to denote any argument that is not (intended to be) deductively valid. The latter category is of necessity a catch-all for very different kinds of arguments,

which have little in common other than the feature of being deductively invalid. 'Deductive' has a much more precise extension than 'inductive.' A second is its reliance on the intentions of the arguer to identify an argument as deductive. An arguer's intentions can be hard or impossible to judge; plus it's dubious that many arguers have any intentions about the nature of the inferences they employ or invite in their arguments. A third is its restriction of validity to formal validity, to the implicit exclusion of material validity. A fourth is its differing classifications of argument types (into deductive vs. inductive, but also into various argument schemes). "What is a 'type' of argument?" a thoughtful student will wonder. A fifth is its deductivist strategy of argument reconstruction: for an incompletely expressed argument, supply as the missing premise what will make it (deductively) valid. Thereby will many a non-deductive argument with true premises be reconstructed as a valid argument with a false premise. These are all quarrels with what I regard as an outdated and impoverished theory of argument. However, it must be admitted that these are all relatively fine points, theorists have disagreed about them, and, especially to the point, they don't matter much if at all to students: they don't get in the way of the skills in argument analysis and evaluation being taught. Theoretical complexity and elegance are difficult to simplify; as a quick and dirty story about the nature of argument that is suited to the task at hand, the one told in *Reason in the Balance* is tolerable.

I do regret that the authors use 'rhetoric' and 'rhetorical' as pejorative terms. They contrast rhetoric with reason. A fallacy is characterized as an argument whose "rhetorical effect" greatly exceeds its "logical worth" (a.k.a. its probative value or its evidential worth). This terminology adopts popular usage and thereby perpetuates the denigration of rhetoric, and that's unfortunate here because it could have been entirely avoided. The authors *define* a fallacy as "an argument pattern whose *persuasive power* greatly exceeds its probative value" (e.g., p. 63, my emphasis). They could get along just fine with that terminology without deliberately adding that they "might call" its persuasive power an argument's "rhetorical effect." The efforts of the late and esteemed Michael Leff, among others, to dislodge this ahistorical stereotype of rhetoric, which casts rhetoric as by definition unreasonable, seem not to have touched these authors.

A vice of the book as a text corresponds to one of its virtues: it has too much good material to include in a 12-15 week semester, so some things will have to be rushed over or dropped from any course altogether, which is a pity.

These reservations about *Reason in the Balance* noted, let me turn to the features of the book that I like.

I am particularly enthusiastic about the authors' adaptation of what has been called "narrative pedagogy" (Goodson and Gill, 2011). Moreover, instead of just relating stories that introduce or illuminate what is being taught, they have their cast of "students" *model* the combination of dialogue and inquiry that, as the author's correctly advertise, is a unique feature of this text. At the core of the book is the idea that (at least one type of) critical thinking consists of a kind of conversation, with oneself or with others, in which the participants conduct a structured, disciplined inquiry into an issue judged to be of importance. The dialogues in each chapter model such inquiries. They are cleverly written so that they have the authentic ring of a conversation among serious first-year students. They model sub-optimal performance, performance struggling to exemplify the ideal, and exemplars of good and of outstanding performance. They model the questions students ask and the puzzles students have. By virtue of the unobtrusive repetition of the method of critical inquiry that the text teaches, students who read the many dialogues can be expected to begin internalizing the method, and students who practice such inquiries using the text's dialogues as models can be expected to begin to employ the method with increasing competence.

Another thing I like a lot about this text is that its background doctrines are sound or, if controversial, pedagogically useful. The emphasis on the importance of clarifying the context and background of an issue to understanding the arguments is well-placed and is given the prominence if deserves (and often fails to get in critical thinking texts). The notion of fallacy as persuasive but bad (illogical) reasoning strikes me as a handy tool to leave with students. The idea that arguments in support of scientific claims are arguments to the best (available) explanation is simple but powerful. The account of the different kinds of studies found as backing for social scientific claims and in general their accounts of inquiries in the natural sciences, social sciences and the arts strike me as both sound, and presented with just the right amount of detail.

A significant virtue is the quality of the author's writing. The style is relaxed and informal, explanations are lucid (even of complicated concepts), and there is no condescension to the student, who is addressed as an intelligent adult. Part of what might be termed an "honest" style is that the authors don't pussyfoot around controversial issues. They take stands, and defend them as reasoned judgments.

Finally, the book tackles the thorny question of how arguments of differing strengths on various sides of a controversial issue are to be compared and weighed so as to produce a reasoned all-things-considered judgment, and comes up with a

workable solution. Ch. 10, where this issue is addressed directly and in detail, is thus perhaps the most important and most original contribution the book makes to the critical thinking textbook literature. The method is not neat and simple and does not guarantee clear cut final judgments, but its exemplification in the text makes a strong case that such judgments are possible in many cases where they might have been thought a vain hope, and that even when no clear "winning" position emerges, the process of trying to reach one is enormously clarifying and leaves those who followed it with a much deeper understanding of the issue than they had when they set out.

So bouquets to Bailin and Battersby for having produced a fine textbook. (Brickbats to McGraw-Hill Ryerson for charging the beleaguered student nearly $100 for it, and for reversing the image of *Guernica* on p. 264.)

P.S. It should be noted that although this is a "Canadian" textbook, its few references to things Canadian are not exotic, plus there are numerous references to issues well known to American, British and other English-speaking readers. Instructors in other English-speaking countries would have to make no adjustments to use this text in their classrooms.

References

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