conflicting pronouncements it hardly follows that p ⊃ p is in fact true. The same consequence follows by elementary laws of probability from taking "X (a generally veracious but imperfect source) has said that p is highly probable" as a correct inference. Thus Rescher has shown that for an essentially subject-based (for two sources X and Y, greater than two) appeal to authority, the type of inference can be neither deductive nor inductive. In essence, these disproofs reflect the conception that for multiple authorities that are imperfect and may be expected to have conflicting pronouncements, deductive and inductive models of inference are "too perfect". Hamblin's and Salmon's conceptions of the ad verecundiam are too idealized to adequately represent the practice of appeals to imperfect authorities whose pronouncements may clash. But confronted by contradiction we must not give up—even though deductive or inductive logics give no further guidance—but press on to resolve the contradiction by means of plausibility theory.

Now that we have eliminated the deductive and inductive models, and identified plausible inference as a preferable model for the type of argument exemplified by the ad verecundiam, it would seem the way is open to an analysis of this fallacy. And so indeed it may be, but this is not a project we shall attempt here. Suffice it to say that when Rescher conceives it plausible inference is not subject-matter-sensitive, so at very least plausibility theory will have to be conjoined to a theory of the subject-matter content of propositions in order to be adequate to the full ad verecundiam. These refinements aside however, we are at least in the position now of being able to identify one noteworthy insidious form of the ad verecundiam.

The fallacy we allude to occurs where an appeal to authority is construed so strongly, or such a lack of specification of its type of argument has transpired, that the argument is taken to have (a) deductive, or (b) inductive correctness. Yet if the appeal is meant to be taken—as it should be generally—then its construal as (a) or (b) is fallacious. The specific fallacy here lies not in the appeal to authority as such, but in the spurious escalation of the appeal towards a claim to a source of truth that is more perfect or infallible than a plausible argument has any logical right to be. In short, this fallacy is to misidentify the type of argument.

This particular error is of course not the only way in which an appeal to authority can go wrong, and elsewhere we have suggested that ad verecundiam is an umbrella concept for several specific fallacies of argument from authorities. But this particular species of the ad verecundiam is an important one, we think, in teaching students how to confront and deal with the fallacies, because it underscores the need to take into consideration identification of the type of argument as a necessary skill of informal logic. The first step in attempting to adjudicate any allegation that a fallacy has been committed is to ask the question "What (exactly) is the argument?" Answering this question involves more than simply specifying a set of propositions—as in the approach of formal logic—it includes, among other tasks, specification of the type of argument that has been advanced.

Notes
1See our article "Fallaciousness Without Invalidity?" Philosophy and Rhetoric, 9, 1976, 52-54, and "Formal Logic and the Logic of Argument" to be presented at the 6th International Congress of Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Science in Hannover, Germany, August, 1979.
3The proof, parallel to the one above, is given by Rescher (1976, p. 3).
4For such a theory, the reader should look to Douglas N. Walton 'Philosophical Basis of Relatedness Logic,' Philosophical Studies, to appear.

References
Nicholas Rescher, Plausible Reasoning, Assen/Amsterdam, Van Gorcum, 1975.

discussion notes

A NOTE ON THE "SURPRISE TEST" PUZZLE

Harry A. Nielsen (University of Windsor)

A schoolteacher announces to her class that there will be a surprise test during the following week. She specifies that by a "surprise test" she means one which no one could reasonably predict while walking to school. Immediately, one of her brighter students claims that she has contradicted herself. He offers this argument: The surprise test could take place on Friday, for if there had been no test up until Friday, then from that fact and the knowledge that there will be a test any student could expect to go to class on Monday. The surprise test, he concludes, can only take place on Friday. If you are left wondering, you are not alone. Indeed, there are several educational systems that fall under the blanket category of the "surprise test."
It is odd to confront a piece of reasoning that is valid only on some particular Thursday evening or Friday morning, but this oddity suggests a key to the puzzle: time. The bright student in the story says, "If Thursday went by, and still no test, it couldn't be a surprise on Friday, so we can scratch Friday." --Sorry, but Friday has this about it, that you can't scratch it for real until Thursday. That is, you can't scratch it for real by imagining that Thursday's class has ended and thus ruling Friday out. The reasoning in the puzzle derives its appearance of force from our forgetting that, for us humans, the whole time between the start of Monday's class and the end of Thursday's has to be lived through before a student can judge the argument's soundness. It is within that sequence of days that the student can bring off her surprise test.

The time-range in which she can spring the test extends from the start of Monday's class to near the end of Thursday's. As Thursday's class passes its halfway mark, the student does not know if she will give the test in the minutes remaining. Suppose she does; then the student will have no grievance, for the teacher came through with the test at a time he could not predict for certain on his way to school. But what can the student say if she doesn't give the test on Thursday? "You let too much time go by--now the element of surprise is gone." This is hardly a logical lapse on the teacher's part, though it may show a bit of absent-mindedness. The main point, however, is that her student is not in a position to make even that guarded judgment until the sands of Thursday's class run out.

With these considerations in mind, I wonder if what we have here could be called a logical paradox, in as much as the puzzle can take hold of the student only if he forgets a certain temporal feature of his human existence, namely, that he cannot reason himself forward to the end of the week, and then work backwards through time, but has to exist through the intervening days one by one and wait to see what each day brings.

conference reports

A PANEL ON INFORMAL LOGIC

This Report was submitted by Professor Samuel Fohr of the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford.

A Panel on Informal Logic was presented at the Behrend Campus of Penn State University in Erie, Pa. at the Spring meeting of the Tri-State Philosophical Association on April 21, 1979. The Panel was organized and chaired by William Rapaport of the State University of New York, College of Fredonia. The other participants were Samuel Fohr of the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford, James Lotta of Lake Erie College, and Nelson Pole of Cleveland State University.

Samuel Fohr pointed out that informal logic courses could help people to arrive at more true beliefs and fewer false beliefs. But the value of such courses could be seriously diminished by how they were taught and the books which were used. Philosophers have not been as rigorous in their treatment of non-symbolic logic as they have been in their treatment of symbolic logic. Many writers of logic books have been either sloppy or incorrect in their definitions of basic terms such as "valid," "sound," "deductive argument," and "inductive argument." Any way of distinguishing between deductive and inductive arguments which is not based on the intentions of the person putting forward the argument is faulty. The word "fallacy" is used very loosely by many philosophers. Strictly speaking, a fallacy is an error in inference or in drawing a conclusion from some premises. Yet philosophers have tended to identify assertions they take to be false as fallacies. One refers to the fallacy of equating determinism with fatalism, another to the fallacy of taking the rightness or wrongness of actions to be related to the motives for which they are done. Writers of logic books have gone far beyond this in identifying things as fallacies. Among other things the following have been identified in logic books as fallacies: questionable claim (practically every claim is), emotionally charged language, suppressed evidence, dog-