

REPORT ON THE WINDSOR SYMPOSIUM

A Symposium on Informal Logic was held at the University of Windsor, June 26-28, 1978. The symposium co-chairmen were Professors Ralph H. Johnson and J. Anthony Blair of the Department of Philosophy. Funds for the symposium, which was attended by about 80 persons from Canada and the United States, were provided by the Canada Council, the University of Windsor, Mr. Howard Webster, and registration fees. Here are brief summaries, prepared by the editors, of the papers read at the symposium.

"The Recent Development of Informal Logic," Ralph H. Johnson and J. Anthony Blair. The authors review the literature (monographs, articles and textbooks) on informal logic published in the last 25 years. Their paper provides documentation for the claim that informal logic is presently experiencing a period of growth, and looks to what Johnson and Blair refer to as the "new wave" of textbooks as providing the most dramatic evidence of this growth. The paper concludes with an assessment of the present status of informal logic, and a tentative list of some of the major problems confronting it. A bibliography of recent work on informal logic is included.

"What is Informal Logic?" John Woods. Woods argues that informal logic (particularly the theory of fallacy) stands to benefit from the use of formal methods, and that prejudice against this stems from a confusion between formal systems and formalization. Woods says that the pursuit of formal methods in the construction of a theory of fallacy will likely lead in the direction of rationality theory, but this is not tantamount to a re-emergence of psychologism.

"The Nature and Classification of Fallacies," Howard Kahane. Kahane attempts to clarify the nature and classification of fallacy by answering two questions: "What makes arguments fallacious?" and "What leads us to reason fallaciously?" In answer to the former, he produces a logical classification of fallacy into three types: invalid inference, unwarranted premise, and suppressed evidence. The psychological classification which emerges in answering the second question yields three factors which dispose people to reason fallaciously: strong emotions, strong desires, and rational confusion. Kahane then argues that this dual and overlapping classification of fallacy is rich enough to cover the known varieties of fallacy.

"Can the Ability to Reason Well be Taught?" Robert Binkley. The answer to this question, says Binkley, is "Yes." His paper involves the construction of an argument which parallels Plato's argument in the Meno, where a similar question was confronted: Can virtue be taught? Plato's distinction between knowledge and right opinion has its counterpart in the teaching of critical thinking, in the distinction between teaching logical theory and helping the students to develop logical intuitions. Binkley contends that a mixture of the two is needed, with more emphasis on the latter, but that a third factor--the love of reason--must also be included.

"Arguments That Aren't Arguments," Peter Minkus. Minkus brings a Wittgensteinian distrust of generalization to bear on the question of finding and appraising arguments. A preoccupation with rules can easily blind us to the concrete realities of the use of language for different ends. There are

occasions when what might otherwise be called a fallacious argument is perfectly appropriate. What we tend to do in logic, Minkus claims, is to be fond of rules without qualifications, and when this fondness combines with the appetite for rigour derived from mathematics, we find ourselves even further away from language as it is used. Far from defeating confusion, then, logic runs the risk of compounding it.

"The Philosophical and Pragmatic Significance of Informal Logic," Michael Scriven. In a wide-ranging paper, Scriven spotlights a number of important points of impact which the serious study of informal logic can have on philosophy. He contends that the development of informal logic may in fact save philosophy by breaking the back of neo-positivist epistemology, and that it would have payoffs for ethics as well. The pragmatic significance would manifest itself in the improved teaching of basic skills, and in the area of pedagogy, among others. The net effect of Scriven's paper is a call to action in informal logic.

"Petitio Principii and Argument Analysis," Douglas Walton. This paper explores three different ways of understanding the petitio: the alethic (or truth-theoretic), the epistemic, and the dialectical--attempting to evaluate the main strengths and weaknesses of each. Throughout his paper, Walton addresses himself to the question of what is necessary for adequate analysis of argument. He explores the use of digraphs (borrowed from graph theory) as a vehicle for elucidating the dependency petitio, and concludes his paper by arguing that the petitio is an epistemic fallacy.

"Advertising: Its Logic, Ethics and Economics," Alex Michalos. The aim of this paper is to disclose some of the logical, ethical and economic features of contemporary advertising in North America. After adopting a working definition of advertising, Michalos shows how the theory of public goods, and a few plausible assumptions, would lead one to expect some deceptive advertising. Several instances of misleading advertising from the public and private sectors are produced. The paper concludes with an examination of responses to several criticisms of advertising provided by two contemporary apologists.

#### WINDSOR SYMPOSIUM REGISTRANTS

The following people registered at the Windsor Symposium. We list them in response to requests, and to provide notice of some of the people who are interested in informal logic. We will update this list from time to time. Send your name and address if you would like to be included in such updates.

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#### AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST WITHIN INFORMAL LOGIC

The following people from the above list indicated areas of particular interest within the domain of informal logic: John Barker (Begging the Question, theory of argument, problem-solving), Anthony Blair (teaching critical thinking, informal fallacies, critique of advertising and news), Robert Ennis (critical thinking testing, definition, assumption finding), Trudy Govier (presupposition), David Hitchcock (developing self-instructional materials for improving skill in analyzing and evaluating arguments and other practical prose), Ralph Johnson (teaching critical thinking, informal fallacies, critique of advertising), John McPeck (the concept of 'critical thinking'--following up Ennis' early work in Harvard Ed. Rev. (1962), now working on a monograph), Daniel Merrill (general theory of argumentation), Nelson Pole (logic, philosophy for children), William Rapaport (teaching interdisciplinary course in effective thinking and writing--with others from math, English, education), Tashar Sarkar (Indian logic and its relation to current developments in informal logic), Michael Scriven (informal logic: basic, scientific, ethical), Tom Tomko (teaching logic and critical thinking in secondary school, connections between philosophical theories of meaning and psychological theories of language and language acquisition). [Also at the Bureau of Educational Research with Ennis and Tomko are: Stephen Norris (logic and critical thinking, teaching philosophy of science, philosophical aspects of testing and evaluation), Bruce Stewart (logic and critical thinking, testing and evaluation, assessing partial knowledge) and Frances Wagner (logic and critical thinking in ethics and value theory).]

#### CASH CONTRIBUTIONS

Some of those who attended the Windsor Symposium made donations to the Newsletter at that time, or mailed donations later. When sending subscription payment, those individuals may subtract their donation from the subscription rate, and forward the balance. Of course we can use those donations (which totalled \$27) as part of the capital needed to start off the Newsletter.

#### PUBLICATION OF THE WINDSOR SYMPOSIUM PROCEEDINGS

At present, the Symposium co-chairmen are corresponding with the editors of the Canadian Library of Philosophy about the publication of the proceedings. Under CLP auspices, the proceedings should appear by March 1979. We will announce definite publication plans once they are known.