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### When Different Perspectives Interact: A Historical Account of Informal Logic between 1983 and 1987

Takuzo Konishi

*Showa Women's University*

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# When Different Perspectives Interact: A Historical Account of Informal Logic between 1983 and 1987<sup>1</sup>

TAKUZO KONISHI

*Department of English Language and Communication  
Showa Women's University  
1-7-57 Taishido, Setagaya-ku, Tokyo  
Japan  
QYZ01167@nifty.com, tkonishi@swu.ac.jp*

**Abstract:** This paper will describe what happened to the community of informal logicians between 1983 and 1987, when they started to interact with communication scholars, rhetoricians and Pragma-Dialecticians. Special attention will be paid to key events, such as the Second International Symposiums on Informal Logic (SISIL), the founding of AILACT (Association for Informal Logic and Critical Thinking) in 1983, the start of journal *Informal logic* in 1984, and the international conference on argumentation held at Amsterdam in 1986.

**Keywords:** International Symposium on Informal Logic, *Informal Logic Newsletter*, *Informal Logic* (journal), AILACT (Association for Informal Logic and Critical Thinking), International Conference of Argumentation

## 1. Introduction

The First International Symposium on Informal Logic (FISIL)<sup>2</sup> in 1978 was a key intellectual event to the community of argumentation scholars, along with the conference on argumentation by then Speech Communication Association (SCA) and American Forensic Association (AFA) held in Utah in 1979 and Dutch-Belgian Speech Communication Association's (VIOT's) special session on argumentation and rhetoric in 1978. While publication of key textbooks and journal articles predated the Symposium, it was this symposium that set up argumentative and intellectual space for then marginal pedagogical courses in the discipline of philosophy. Ralph H. Johnson and J. Anthony Blair (1980, pp. 25-26) clearly laid out a list of research agenda into which philosophers of informal logic and argumentation seriously inquired in later years. Michael Scriven (1980) made a strong case on pragmatic as well as philosophical significance of informal logic and challenged the prevailing common sense on formal logic. John Woods (1980) advanced a strong counter-statement that informal logic is nothing. The success and satisfaction of the Symposium was such that Johnson and Blair started *Informal Logic Newsletter* right after

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<sup>1</sup> This article is a revision of the paper presented at the OSSA 11 conference. Since this article deals with history of informal logic and argumentation, it is important to provide historically accurate information. Comments by J. Anthony Blair, Frans H. van Eemeren, Robert Ennis, and Michael Scriven right after the presentation, as well as the author's interaction with David Zarefsky and David Hitchcock revealed some misunderstanding in the author's historical descriptions. In light of these interactions with key people in the field, the author has decided to revise the original paper rather than write a response to their comments, as other participants of the conference normally do for the proceedings.

<sup>2</sup> While the symposium is now known as the First International Symposium on Informal Logic because of the proceedings edited by Blair and Johnson, the original title of the symposium was Symposium on Informal Logic. In the oral history interview with the author, Blair (2007b) does not clearly remember who added 'first' and 'international' to the title of the proceedings. However, he thought there should be another symposium partly because he and Johnson started the newsletter and maintained communication with those interested in informal logic.

the Symposium and maintained the space on the paper medium. It was initially a forum to exchange ideas on how to teach undergraduate course on informal logic, but then gradually started dealing with theoretical issues such as induction-deduction distinction, principle of charity, or fallacy theory. Looking back, we can easily find positive and lasting consequences of the First Symposium that still guides our intellectual endeavors more than thirty five years later.

While the author of the current article (Konishi 2009, 2010, forthcoming) or other scholars (Johnson and Blair 1980, 1994, 1996, 1997, 2000; Godden, Groarke and Hansen 2011; Groarke 2011) have made several attempts to historicize the informal logic movement in the twentieth century, those historical narratives center on beginnings of the movement or achievements in theoretical development. In light of the lack of scholarship examining historical process through which key ideas and infrastructures are formed, it seems imperative that we attempt to offer a more in-depth historical account of the mid-1980s. Rather than provide account on theoretical development of informal logic in the 1980s, this article will call our attention to more historical process and infrastructural aspects of the informal logic movement and speculatively describe how and why several historical events occurred. In describing these key infrastructural aspects, the author depends on oral history interviews as well as archival research of published and unpublished materials.<sup>3</sup> Section two of this paper will focus on the Second International Symposium on Informal Logic (SISIL). Section three will discuss conversion of *Informal Logic Newsletter* into a peer-review journal *Informal Logic*. Section four will direct our attention to a cognate area of inquiry on critical thinking and discuss the founding of AILACT (Association for Informal Logic and Critical Thinking). Section five will examine the link between informal logic and communication scholars and rhetoricians as well as Pragma-Dialecticians, with special emphasis on the International Conference on Argumentation held in Amsterdam in 1986. Section six will end this article with a short summation as well as future research agenda items.

## 2. Second International Symposium on Informal Logic (SISIL)

After Blair and Johnson published the proceedings of the First Symposium in 1980, they (1981b, p. 30) announced to convene the Second International Symposium on Informal Logic (SISIL) on *Informal Logic Newsletter*. They (1981c, p. 2) state that:

(t)he 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.<sup>4</sup>

Neither Blair nor Johnson remembers who took the initiative, but they both remember

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<sup>3</sup> It must be noted that *Informal Logic Newsletter* and *Informal Logic* are now accessible online, but that announcement of symposium or conferences are not fully disclosed. In the author's opinion, this is another piece of evidence showing that the community pays more attention to theoretical developments than historical formation of informal logic and argumentation.

<sup>4</sup> In volume 4.1 of the *Newsletter*, Blair and Johnson (1981e, p. 10) used the phrase "theory and teaching of informal logic/critical thinking." The subtle change in the phrase implies that they distinguished informal logic and critical thinking, which would later become evident in forming Association of Informal Logic and Critical Thinking (AILACT).

communication with people in the scholarly community. Blair (2007a) recalls how people urged them to have another symposium:

I think people began to contact us [Blair and Johnson] and said: “Are you guys gonna have another conference?” Or “Isn't it time to have another conference? Shouldn't we...shouldn't we see how the field is doing and see where we all are?” And, and, so we eventually said, “Sure, we will have another conference. We'll have another conference” So we, I guess we must have decided in '82, and so publicized it. The next conference was, I think, we had open call for papers.<sup>5</sup>

While the FISIL consists of invited speakers, the SISIL features invited papers, contributed papers and workshops.<sup>6</sup> The number of presentation was much larger than the previous symposium, increasing from eight to twenty six (twenty papers and six workshops). The increased presenters meant more diversified voices. Only Johnson and Blair and Scriven presented in both symposiums, and the other speakers came to the symposium through different routes. Among the new presenters at the Symposium, Perry Weddle (1979), Trudy Govier (1979a, 1979b, 1980), David Hitchcock (1979, 1980), Robert Fogelin (1981), and John Hoaglund (1971) previously published their ideas in the *Newsletter*. Robert Pinto (1978) and Mark Weinstein (1982) had also written in the *Newsletter*, respectively reviewing Nicholas Rescher's *Dialectics* and introducing a role of formal logic in logical thinking course. Both later develop a link between applied epistemology and informal logic. Robert Ennis, Richard Paul and John McPeck bridged informal logic and critical thinking. Persons like Maurice Finocchiaro and Christopher Tindale, who would later become powerful voices, also presented at the Symposium. In short, the field shows some growth over five years.

As Blair and Johnson invited Scriven, an established philosopher of science, to the FISIL, they invited a prominent philosophical figure to the SISIL as a keynote speaker: Jaakko Hintikka. When asked about reasons to pick up Hintikka, Blair (2007b) tells the following story:

(I)n selecting keynotes, we were trying to do - let's see, several things. Uh, keynote speakers. We were trying to attract people to the conference, so if we had a prominent philosopher as a keynoter, that we felt that would attract people to come to the conference. We were trying to introduce prominent philosophers to the field in the hope of gaining interest in the field by prominent philosophers and spreading the word in the field of philosophy...certainly in those early days we were thinking in terms of philosophy exclusively. Later we've broadened our view.

Hintikka is someone who'd written about logic and various kinds of logics, and so we thought he would be interested. As I recall, his wife Merrill Hintikka had written...I'm having a recollection that she had written something - whether she'd written a textbook or written in this field, I'm not sure. Hintikka was a huge name in philosophy at that time. And still a prominent name, but - but maybe bigger than than he - I mean, now he's an old man. But - but - so getting Hintikka was, we thought, a real coup - we'd go after a really, really dominant figure in the

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<sup>5</sup> Johnson (2007, March 8) also tells a similar story in the oral history interview with the author.

<sup>6</sup> While Blair and Johnson (1983[*sic*]b, p. 18) list these three categories, it is not clear who were invited speakers and contributors.

field. So it was largely a political move.

Echoing Blair's story, Johnson (2007) thought that it was an attempt to "have a keynoter who was really from outside our tradition." In Johnson's memory, Hintikka "was a bit more retiring, but nevertheless gave a fairly interesting keynote presentation" titled "Questioning as a Philosophical Method."

One reason for having Hintikka as a keynoter was to attract him to informal logic, but it was not a successful move. Looking back on Hintikka's relations to informal logic, Blair (2007b) recalls as follows:

We didn't particularly expect that – you know, Hintikka hadn't worked in informal logic. I mean since then, he – he subsequently wrote a textbook in, you know, in argumentation and introductory logic. So we, maybe, could take credit for interesting him in the field. But he's been a critic of the field, but a sympathetic critic, I think. He wrote somewhere, I was reading, he wrote somewhere that he was sympathetic to what we were trying to do, but he didn't think we should call it logic. So - I'm shrugging.

Blair and Johnson's attempt to engage a giant in philosophy did not work out; nevertheless, the SISIL observed some promising signs. As a convenor of the Symposium, Blair (2007a) was encouraged to see larger numbers of people and greater interest in theoretical issues at the SISIL. Turning our eyes to the list of problems and issues Johnson and Blair (1980, pp. 25-26) offered in the proceedings of the FISIL, we find some of them discussed by the presenters at the SISIL: the theory of argument was discussed by Trudy Govier, Perry Weddle, and Seale Doss; the problem of assumptions and missing premises by David Hitchcock as well as James Gough and Christopher Tindale; the problem of context by Richard Paul; and the relationship of informal logic to other inquiries by George Yoos, Maurice Finocchiaro, and Thomas Schwartz. In addition to the theoretical issues participants discussed, the way in which they engaged in discussion also impressed Blair.

The atmosphere, again, was friendly and cooperative, and I mean, people were quite willing to critique one another, but in a constructive, positive way. (Blair, 2007b)

The next two sections will focus on two important achievements, the journal *Informal Logic* and the formation of AILACT (Association for Informal Logic and Critical Thinking), and discuss their implications to the scholarly community of argumentation scholars.

### **3. From *Informal Logic Newsletter* to peer-review journal *Informal Logic***

One notable difference that separates the SISL from the FISIL and the TISIL was non-existence of proceedings in book form. For the FISIL Blair and Johnson (1980) published *Informal Logic: The First International Symposium* with Edgepress, a small publisher owned by Scriven. They (1994) published *New Essays in Informal Logic* – a collection of articles presented at the TISIL, using *Informal Logic* as a publisher. These two books helped informal logicians to reach out external communities, as clearly evidenced by Habermas' (1981/1984, pp. 22-24) reference to

the proceedings of the FISIL in his *Theory of Communicative Action*. In light of the fact that the SISIL has no proceedings, can we conclude that it failed to promote informal logic compared with two other symposiums? The answer is partly yes because people interested in informal logic could not easily grasp developments of the field at the time in a single book. However, the answer is also no because of the journal *Informal Logic*. It could deliver key theoretical ideas with more frequency and in a timely manner. With two or three issues published per year, scholarly journals can create, maintain or develop theoretical inquiries within the community in a more time-sensitive manner than proceedings. For better understanding the journal *Informal Logic* as an intellectual infrastructure, we will pay attention to development of *Informal Logic Newsletter*, link it to the SISIL, and observe how the SISIL contributed to the development of the journal

### 3.1. Theoretical turn of *Informal Logic Newsletter*

As co-editors of the *Newsletter* Blair and Johnson made a series of subtle moves in the five-year span. In the very first issue of the *Newsletter*, they (1978, p. 1) acknowledge that informal logic means “many things to many people.” They state that their “conception is very broad and liberal, and covers everything from theoretical issues (theory of fallacy and argument) to practical ones (such as how best to display the structure of ordinary arguments) to pedagogical questions (how to design critical thinking courses; what sorts of material to use).” This balance among theory, practice, and pedagogy within informal logic changed over years.

The first volume the *Newsletter* was almost exclusively pedagogical, publishing more passages for analysis, subscribers’ analysis of those passages, conference notices and reports, expository book reviews, course descriptions of informal logic courses, tests and examples of arguments, and so on.

Volume 2.1 of the *Newsletter* marked the first theoretical turn by publishing Perry Weddle’s article (1979), “Inductive, deductive.” Johnson (2007) summarizes the consequence of the theoretical turn:

(I)t was after, I think, the first year, which was mainly pedagogical, that Perry Weddle said, “I don’t know if you guys are interested in publishing articles, but I have an article.” And he said, “You know, I’m tenured, so I don’t have to publish anywhere I don’t please. And I would be pleased to publish with you.” It was about induction, deduction. And we thought, “Yeah, OK. It’s time for us to get a bit of theoretical cast into this.” So that began in, I think, it was volume 2, might’ve been volume 3, I can’t remember. The newsletter was turning more toward, or equally toward featuring theoretical pieces, you know, articles, like a journal.

After Blair and Johnson published Weddle’s article, the *Newsletter* opened the door to theoretical issues, including induction-deduction distinction, analysis of fallacy and fallacy theory, principles of charity, and logical neutrality, just to name a few. It must be noted that a lot of pedagogical items appeared in the *Newsletter* during the five-year span because it regularly published example supplement for classroom use. However, also important is that the first volume had no critical reviews or articles. Blair and Johnson introduced these two categories in the second volume, thereby paving a way for gradual evolution of the *Newsletter* into a

journal-like periodical. The following table summarizes how many items were published in which categories of the *Newsletter*.

TABLE 1

Items Published in *Informal Logic Newsletter*<sup>7</sup>

volume	pedagogy	expository book/article review	critical book/article review	conference notices and reports	article
1	23	3	0	4	0
2	47	1	3	5	7
3	3 <sup>8</sup>	11	3	5	10
4	66	5	1	6	13
5	13	1	2	5	13

While the increase in articles and critical reviews substantively demonstrates the theoretical turn of the *Newsletter*, attention must be drawn to how Blair and Johnson also rhetorically advocated the turn to the readers. When the *Newsletter* first published a theoretical piece by Weddle in volume 2.1, they (1979, p. 1) called for materials from the subscribers:

We remind our readers that *ILN* is planned primarily as a clearing-house, for which we editors collect and dispense the materials sent to us by our readers. Please: submit to us articles, discussion notes, critical reviews, reports of conferences (past and upcoming), announcements, comments, and queries. We are in this venture to provide a service, but we depend on your supports.

In this passage they emphasize theoretical issues, but along with more mundane items such as reports of conferences and announcements. In the following issue (volume 2.2), however, their theoretical turn comes to the fore more clearly when they state (1980a, p.1) as follows:

(T)he editors continue to wish more submissions than we have been receiving. In particular, we would like to invite more discussion pieces, comments, short and long articles, critical reviews.

What is happening is that the *ILN* is beginning to take of the form of a journal of informal logic – without abandoning the news-disseminating features of a newsletter...

We are giving serious thought to the idea of developing a panel of referees, on the basis that making the *ILN* a referred publication might encourage more

<sup>7</sup> ‘Pedagogy’ includes examples for analysis, subscribers’ analysis of those examples, course descriptions, and examples supplements. ‘Expository book/article reviews’ are informative reviews and descriptions of textbooks, monographs, and journal articles. ‘Critical book/journal reviews’ take a critical look at the publication and are published in the category ‘CRITICAL REVIEW’ in the *Newsletter*. ‘Conference notices and reports’ constitute one sub-category of mundane business items. Other sub-categories such as information about other journals and subscription renewal notice are disregarded in this table. ‘Articles’ include journal-like articles and responses to those articles. While Johnson and Blair emphasized the triad of theory, practice and pedagogy, this table disregards the second category and puts some items in article and others in pedagogy. For example, Robert Binkley’s (1981, pp. 7-9) “A system of rational appraisal” is counted as a pedagogical item.

<sup>8</sup> Volume three of the *Newsletter* did not have example supplement. Instead, volume 4.1 and 4.3 had the supplement. It accounts for the decrease in the pedagogy category in volume three and increase in volume four.

submissions.

In volume 2.3, Blair and Johnson (1980b, pp. 1-2) look back on the development of informal logic and invite more participation of the readers.

This year also witnessed the introduction of two new features: articles and critical reviews. The response, particularly to the articles, has been excellent (more on that below), and we hope to continue to expand these features in the years to come. On the whole, then, we believe that the *Newsletter* has helped to promote the development of informal logic as an important and worthy enterprise and to that extent begun to realize the goal we had in mind when we began publication.

As we look to the future, we hope to be able to continue publication of challenging articles on topics of interest to our readers and to follow the dialectic wherever it may lead. We plan more critical reviews of the burgeoning number of texts in this area and hope that we can count on our readers to submit such reviews for publication....

If the growth of informal logic is to continue, if informal logic is to become an ever more vital area of inquiry and research then it is crucial that those involved in this enterprise address themselves to important conceptual and theoretical issues....It is our hope that the *Newsletter* will be a prominent forum for the publication of such research and the development of new ideas.

From these passages it is clear that Blair and Johnson want to push informal logic to the direction of theoretical inquiry rather than keeping it as a service course within philosophy. However, their advocacy was not met with total support of the community partly because of academic politics. They (1981a, pp. 1-2) report contributors' concerns on the *Newsletter* serving as a forum for theoretical inquiries. While the contributors want to support *ILN*, they also want to publish their articles in other journals and let other philosophers recognize informal logic as a legitimate philosophical inquiry. Also, they want to have their own work taken seriously by the establishment of philosophy. Calling this situation as the "the double bind" of many potential contributors, they do not offer a clear solution to the situation. Instead, they declare (1983[*sic*], p. 2) to continue the same format of the *Newsletter*, publishing articles and critical reviews as well as informing more mundane business items. This way they attempted to satisfy both camps: those interested in theoretical inquiries in informal logic and those interested in a forum to exchange ideas for teaching and past and upcoming conferences.

When Blair and Johnson held the SISIL, however, more people wanted to have serious intellectual/argumentative space in which they could engage in theoretical inquiry. In the final issue of the *Newsletter*, Blair and Johnson (1983f, p. 1) explain why they decided to convert the *Newsletter* into a journal.

In the past two years, more and more space has been devoted to articles which, in our opinion, are good enough to have been published in full-fledged journals. The change in our name, then will reflect more accurately the character of the publication.

A second motivation for the change is related to the first. We believe that people who might otherwise be inclined to send materials to the *Informal Logic*

*Newsletter* have been deterred from so doing by the fact that it was not a referred journal and hence they cannot gain credit on their c.v.'s for material published in ILN.

These along with other considerations were given a thorough airing during the Second International Symposium on Informal Logic this past June, and your editors were persuaded that the time had come for change.

The communication at the SISIL acted as the catalyst to start the peer-review journal *Informal Logic*, and it advanced research and inquiries on informal logic. However, it did not come without a cost. In *New Essays in Informal Logic*, Johnson and Blair (1994, pp. 4-5) recognize that the journal does not pursue the pedagogical mission of informal logic well. While teaching ideas or teaching supplements were regular features of the *Newsletter*, *Informal Logic* stopped publishing them. As a result, *Informal Logic* must have created the divide between theory and teaching practice at least in its early years<sup>9</sup>.

### 3.2. SISIL and *Informal Logic*

(P)apers [presented at the SISIL] were not published in book form, but many of them helped launch the new journal, *Informal Logic*, which, along with the Association for Informal Logic and Critical Thinking, was formed as a result of SISIL. (Johnson and Blair 1994, p. vii)

As Johnson and Blair recognize, the SISIL contributed a great deal to early years of *Informal Logic*. The non-existence of the proceedings worked in their favor because, many presentations were not published, and thus they could count on good presentations to be published in the journal. In addition, publishing those presentations in the journal helped to reach out to a wider audience. Taking a look at presentations at the SISIL and *Informal Logic* in the 1980s, we can easily find the journal published many papers presented at SISIL. The following table summarizes which paper was or was not published in *Informal Logic*, based on Blair and Johnson's (1983d, pp. 30-31; 1984a, p.2; 1984c, p. 2; 1984d, p.2; 1985, p.1) description.

TABLE 2

#### Presentations at the SISIL and Their Publication Outlets

Names	presentation title at the SISIL	article title	publication outlet
J. Anthony Blair and Ralph H. Johnson	Informal logic: The last five years	Informal logic: The past five years, 1978-1983	<i>American philosophical quarterly</i> , 22.3, 181-196, 1985.
Trudy Govier	Needed: A better theory of argument	Is a theory of argument possible?	<i>Problems in argument analysis and evaluation</i> , (13-36, Ch. 12)
Robert Fogelin	Logic of deep disagreements	same title	<i>Informal logic</i> 7.1, 1-8, 1985.
James Gough and Christopher Tindale	'Missing' or 'hidden' premises?	'Hidden' or 'missing' Premises.	<i>Informal logic</i> 7.2/3, 99-106, 1985.

<sup>9</sup> *Informal logic teaching supplement* became a regular feature of the journal in volume 20.1 in 2000.

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David Hitchcock	Filling premise-gaps in arguments	Enthymematic arguments	<i>Informal logic</i> 7.2/3, 83-97, 1985.
John Hoaglund	Typing	?	?
John Nolt	Possible worlds and imagination in informal logic	same title	<i>Informal logic</i> 6.2, 14-17, 1984.
Richard Paul	Background logic: Its significance in informal logic	Background logic, critical thinking, and irrational language games.	<i>Informal logic</i> 7.1, 9-18, 1985
Seale Doss	Three steps toward a theory of informal logic	same title	<i>Informal logic</i> 7.2/3, 127-135, 1985.
Perry Weddle	On theory in informal logic	same title	<i>Informal logic</i> 7.2/3, 119-126, 1985.
Stephen Norris and Ruth King <sup>10</sup>	Observational Ability: Determining and Extending its Presence	same title	<i>Informal logic</i> 7.2/3, 119-126, 1985.
Merrill Hintikka	Informal Logic and Philosophical Expertise	?	?
Jaakko Hintikka	Questioning as a philosophical method	same title	<i>The logic of epistemology and the epistemology of logic: Selected essays</i> (215-234, Essay 14), 1989.
George Yoos	The Relationship of Rhetoric and Argument	Rhetoric, argumentation and logic.	<i>Informal logic</i> 6.3, 10-16, 1984.
Robert C. Pinto	Dialectic and the Structure of Argument	same title	<i>Informal logic</i> 6.1, 16-20.
Maurice Finocchiaro	Informal Logic and the Theory of Reasoning	same title	<i>Informal logic</i> 6.2, 3-8, 1984
Thomas Schwartz	Reasoning about Explanation: Informal Logic and the Special Disciplines	Arguing for Explanations: logic and the special disciplines	<i>Informal logic</i> 6.1, 10-15.
John E. McPeck	Some Philosophical Difficulties in Evaluating Critical Thinking Skills	The evaluation of critical thinking programs: Dangers and Dogmas	<i>Informal logic</i> 6.2, 9-13, 1984.
Robert Ennis	Practical problems in testing informal logic competence	Problems in testing informal logic / critical thinking / reasoning	<i>Informal logic</i> 6.1, 3-9.
Michael Scriven	New Frontiers in Informal Logic	?	?

Surprisingly, three-fourths of the presentations at the SISIL were published in *Informal Logic*. As an intellectual infrastructure, *Informal Logic* seemed to successfully attract researchers in the field because it is a regular, peer-review journal. While there is no evidence available about how many researchers benefited from the conversion of the newsletter into the journal, some concerns expressed by readers during the years of the newsletter seems to have been settled by the change.

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<sup>10</sup> While there is no evidence to show that the journal article is based on the presentation, the author presumes it is the case because of the identical title of the presentation and the article.

#### 4. Founding Association for Informal Logic and Critical Thinking (AILACT)

The Association for Informal Logic and Critical Thinking (AILACT) was the other major achievement of the SISIL in terms of intellectual infrastructure. This organization has worked as an interest group for informal logicians to present papers at the regional meetings of American Philosophical Association, thereby helping their voices to be heard in a key intellectual space in North America.<sup>11</sup> Given that the APA regional meetings are held every year, informal logicians could meet on a regular basis to maintain their discussion on theoretical issues on informal logic. In addition, they could attract audience members interested in informal logic to come to the panel. Whereas journal *Informal Logic* served as a forum to publish a written, refined article, AILACT promoted oral exchanges of intellectual ideas at academic conventions.

Taking a look at the name of organization, people may well wonder why it included critical thinking as well as informal logic because the newsletter, journal, and symposium did not include the phrase critical thinking. For understanding how the name of the association came into being, we must attend to emerging relationship between informal logic and critical thinking since the FISIL and what happened during the SISIL in forming AILACT. Three key persons worth mentioning for us to understand the relationship are Robert Ennis, Perry Weddle, and Richard Paul.

Before Blair and Johnson held the FISIL in 1978, Ennis got the information about it through his colleague at Southern Illinois University (Ennis 1977). He attended the FISIL, and through exchange with Johnson after the symposium, agreed to co-author a paper for the proceedings with Thomas N. Tomko (Ennis and Tomoko 1980). In a letter to Ennis after the Symposium Johnson (1978b) expressed his gratitude to Ennis for revising the bibliography that he and Blair prepared. He admitted that “(f)or both of us, one of the great things about the symposium was the discovery of your work, of which we had been previously unaware.” The encounter with Ennis introduced Blair and Johnson to a cognate or overlapping field of inquiry of critical thinking.<sup>12</sup>

A second person worth mentioning is Perry Weddle, who, in Johnson’s opinion, was “one of the leading voices” in the politics of critical thinking (Blair and Johnson 2009). Like Johnson and Blair, he founded and edited *Critical Thinking News (CT news)*, a newsletter that promoted critical thinking. He contacted Blair and John to see if they were interested in publishing “Inductive, deductive” in the *Newsletter*. As described in section 3.1 of this paper, his article marked the first theoretical turn of the Newsletter, which eventually led to conversion into *Informal Logic*. In the view of current editors of *Informal Logic* (Blair, Johnson, Hansen and Tindale 2005, p.78), he “was one of the first and most loyal supporters of *Informal Logic*.” When AILACT was founded, he served the first executive of the organization.

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<sup>11</sup> According to the regular procedures of the APA meetings, scholars can present a paper in two ways. One is to send a completed paper and have it accepted for presentation, and the other is to form an organization that sponsors a panel. Since not all philosophers were open to the scholarship on informal logic, it was not easy for informal logicians to send a completed paper and to have it accepted by philosophers who may not be doing informal logic. One reason AILACT was established was to manoeuvre through the situation.

<sup>12</sup> When the author presented this paper at the OSSA conference, Ennis commented on history of critical thinking that could be traced to John Dewey and even back to John Stuart Mill, and Scriven commented that teaching of critical thinking was fairly widespread among philosophers when he was at University of Minnesota, partly because of the work by Max Black (1946, 1952) and Monroe Beardsley (1950). While Johnson and Blair as well as Woods and Walton used the phrase ‘critical thinking’ in their writing in 1970s, it seems fair to say that they were not so familiar with books or articles by Dewey, Black, or Ennis.

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Still another person bridging critical thinking and informal logic is Richard Paul. He was a fervent believer in critical thinking, key organizer of conferences held at Sonoma State University, and supporter of *Informal Logic Newsletter* and *Informal Logic* as a contributor. When he held the First National Conference on Critical Thinking, Moral Education and Rationality at Sonoma State University in 1981, Blair and Johnson respectively presented their own paper on application of informal logic to moral education and on media logic. By going to the Sonoma conference, Johnson (2007) thought: “(W)e saw that there was a connection between what was going on there and what we were doing. They’re not the same, but they’re related. We began to, you know, introduce ourselves and be introduced to a different population of people.” Paul (1982a, 1982b) also supported informal logic by refining his presentation on critical thinking in ‘strong’ sense at the first Sonoma conference and publishing it as well as a research agenda item for the informal logic and critical thinking movement in the *Newsletter*. Ennis, Weddle, and Paul all came and presented their papers at the SISIL and later published them in *Informal Logic*.

Along with the emerging relationship with these critical thinking scholars, Blair and Johnson (1982a, pp. 1-2) recognized significance of critical thinking in university education and called Executive Order No. 338 (that require a critical thinking component for graduating from the California State University System) to attention of the readers of the *Newsletter*. By the time they held the SISIL, they had known a great deal about critical thinking through interacting with critical thinking scholars and recognized its significance. While they believed that informal logic had something to offer for critical thinking, they thought that these two might be overlapping but were different enterprises.

Through the published documents, we can only know that AILACT was created (Blair and Johnson 1983g, 1984b). However, a close look at the authors’ oral history interviews with Blair (2007a), Johnson (2007), Hitchcock (2007), Pinto (2007), and Scriven (2007) suggests there was a debate about the naming of the association. When scholars discussed the name, three potential names were Associations for Informal Logic, Associations for Critical Thinking, or Association for Informal Logic and Critical Thinking. Blair (2007a) and Johnson (2007) respectively remember that Paul pushed for the name Association for Critical Thinking. Hitchcock (2007) states that Paul lobbied for putting critical thinking along with informal logic as the name for the association. Truth is now in a grove – no one clearly knows how the debate developed and was settled, but people decided to have informal logic and critical thinking alongside with each other, without giving preference to one over the other. In retrospect, Johnson (2007) tells his version of the story in the following way:

...the memorable thing there was the birth of AILACT. That was, I would say that that conference was...not dominated by...but a significant strand was informal logic, critical thinking - relationship between the two. I think it's fair to call – to say that Richard Paul is an imperialist, in the sense that he wanted critical thinking to be the driver of the bus.

And there were a lot of us who were saying, “Sorry, if we're gonna work together, it's gonna be as equals. We are not gonna work under the mantle of critical thinking, because that's not what we do. Although what we do is related to critical thinking, we do informal logic. So if we are gonna join forces, it's gonna be equals.” So we had that debate. Because Richard said, “Let’s just have an association for promotion for critical thinking.” And pretty soon people said,

“Nope.” And it was pretty clear he was not gonna win that discussion. Ennis was opposed, Scriven was opposed, Tony and I were opposed. He was pretty well on his own.

Interviewing with more people who attended the SISIL, we can probably reconstruct a better overall picture of how informal logicians and critical thinking scholars developed and resolved the debate. How argumentation scholars enter into argumentative space and resolve difference of opinion will be a significant case analysis on theory and history of argumentation.

As a result of the debate at the SISIL, AILACT came into existence, and it promoted scholarship on informal logic and critical thinking. Further investigation is necessary for us to know more about the exact benefit of the association – such as how many presentations were published in journal and became part of edited books or monographs. However, suffice it to say that the existence of the professional association must have made things easier for informal logicians and critical thinking scholars to present their ideas at key professional organization’s conventions. The following table contrastively summarizes nature and achievements of the FISIL and SISIL.

TABLE 3

Summary of the FISIL and SISIL

	FISIL	SISIL
When	26-28 June, 1978	20-23 June, 1983
Length	three days	four days
Keynoters	n/a	Jaakko Hintikka
Sessions	no concurrent sessions	two concurrent sessions in some time slots
Number of presentations	eight (nine in the proceedings)	twenty conference presentations; six workshop presentations
Registrants	64	84
Proceedings	<i>Informal logic: The first international symposium</i>	none ( <i>Informal logic</i> published 15 of 20 presentations)
Key achievements	<i>Informal logic newsletter</i> <i>Informal logic: The first international symposium</i>	journal <i>Informal logic</i> AILACT (Association for Informal Logic and Critical Thinking)

### 5. Informal Logic, Argumentation and Conference in Amsterdam in 1986

The previous section of this article has observed interactions between informal logicians’ and critical thinking researchers’ communities. While there seems to be minor confrontations on leadership issues, it can be argued that it was a dispute within philosophers’ communities. This section will observe some emerging relationship between informal logicians on the one hand and communication scholars/rhetoricians and Pragma-Dialecticians on the other, and how Blair and Frans H. van Eemeren became two of the argumentation studies Big Four (including Rob Grootendorst and Charles Arthur Willard).

Speech communication scholars and rhetoricians in the United States did a substantial amount of theoretical and practical studies of argumentation. However, Blair and Johnson did not notice most of them until 1980s. In light of the research environment of the 1970s and 80s before the arrival of the Internet, it is understandable that they did not read a lot of research by

non-philosophers. However, based on their limited exposure to the research done outside philosophy, Johnson (1978a) informed of the FISIL Douglas Ehninger, a well-known rhetorician at the University of Iowa, and he and Blair (1980, p. 17; 1978) referred to Ehninger's *Influence, Belief, and Argument* in their presentation at the FISIL. In their joint interview with the author (Blair and Johnson 2009), they said that they had read some work by communication scholars and rhetoricians, but they viewed themselves as philosophers and wanted to make their case and deliver it to philosophers as their main target audience. Their remarks shows that informal logic was a disciplinary enterprise within philosophy, at least in early years.

Interaction with communication scholars and rhetoricians increase over years, and Blair (2007b) credits Joseph Wenzel, a participants in the SISIL, for opening "the door into the communication field...for us." After the SISIL, Blair and Johnson (1984e p. 47) posted an announcement in *Informal Logic* of Summer conference on argumentation co-sponsored by Speech Communication Association (SCA) and American Forensic Association (AFA), and Blair was eventually invited, after the Conference in Amsterdam in 1986, to one of the SCA/AFA's Summer Conference on Argumentation.

Although informal logicians started to realize the significance of the rhetorical perspective of argumentation, Blair (2007b) admits it took him more time to be open to the rhetorical perspective than the dialectical perspective. This is another topic for serious historical inquiry, but the author merely states here that informal logicians had to wait for a strong voice within by Tindale (1999) to fully understand the rhetorical perspective.

Along with rhetorical and (informal) logical perspectives of argumentation, the dialectical perspective is another important approach. This perspective, particularly the one represented by Pragma-Dialectics, has been influential to the community of argumentation scholars. Around the same period when Blair and Johnson developed the informal logic movement, van Eemeren and Grootendorst started to build their refined Pragma-Dialectical theory of argumentation on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, based on dialogue logic and Searlean speech act theory. Blair and Johnson (1983c, 1983e) noticed Eemeren and Grootendorst's article (1982) on the speech act of arguing and convincing and expositively introduce it to the readers of the *Newsletter* in volume 5.2.<sup>13</sup>

What attracts our attention more than this introduction of the article, though, is how Blair and Johnson (1983c p. 2) talk about it in the 'from the editors' section of the same issue of the Newsletter. While they are aware of potential provincialism, they state that: "(w)orth reading in its own right, this article is also evidence that informal logic has a presence outside of North America, and it signals the need for all of us to become more familiar with work being done by colleagues in other parts of the world. We need to avoid, once again the dangers of being insular." After publishing *Manifest Rationality* and contrasting informal logic and Pragma-Dialectics (Johnson 2000, pp. 309-320), Johnson would not equate the two approaches to argumentation. Neither would Blair do so, after knowing more about the theory as well as interacting with Eemeren and Grootendorst to host ISSA conference several times. Charitably read, this was the juncture when argumentation scholars around the world developed their own theories fairly independently, and when informal logicians fought for their identity within a fairly conservative (or rigorous) analytic philosophy tradition. So it is understandable that Blair and

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<sup>13</sup> Blair has some confused memory about when he first encountered the Pragma-Dialectical school of argumentation. While he and Johnson introduced the article by Eemeren and Grootendorst in volume 5.2 of the Newsletter published in June 1983, he states (2007a) in the interview that he did not know their work until 1985 when he met them.

Johnson went overboard in equating the two in the early 1980s.

Blair's first encounter with Eemeren and Grootendorst happened in an unexpected way, as he (2007a) told an amusing story to the author:

What I'm thinking...was our meeting up with van Eemeren and Grootendorst, the Amsterdam scholars who developed Pragma-Dialectical theory. That happened in 1985....Hitchcock and I met them in New York. They'd come over just to, just to visit New York and they happened to come to an APA meeting that had an AILACT session at it. And so Hitchcock and I went out with them and got drunk together. And they invited me to be on their – the board of what they...the society they created, the International Society for the Study of Argumentation (ISSA)<sup>14</sup>. And the idea was that I would try to encourage philosophers in North America to attend the conference that they were going to hold in Amsterdam in the following year, which I tried to do.

According to Blair's story, it is not clear why Eemeren and Grootendorst came to New York and how they started to work with Blair. His story suggests that they happened to be in New York at the time for some reason. However, two different sources of information – Hitchcock and Eemeren – provide us with a better picture of the encounter.

When the author of this article talked casually with Hitchcock, the founding president of AILACT, during the OSSA conference in 2016 and followed up with personal correspondence, he told the following story.

The meeting with van Eemeren and Grootendorst took place at the AILACT session at the Eastern Division meetings of the American Philosophical Association, in New York City. Looking at the APA's record of the locations of its Eastern Division meetings, I see that the 1983 meeting took place in Boston, the 1984 meeting in New York, and the 1985 meeting in Washington.... The meeting took place at the New York Hilton Hotel in New York City. I would not have been on the AILACT program. (Hitchcock 2016)

Eemeren and Grootendorst did not just happen to come to an APA meeting that had an AILACT session at it. They had written in advance to me, in my capacity as founding president of AILACT, to ask if they could present a paper at the AILACT session in New York. We already had a full program, whose participants (apart from me) had been chosen as a result of a call for papers and a refereeing procedure, so rather stupidly I said no but invited them to attend. They did so, and they used the occasion to announce the upcoming First International Conference on Argumentation, which was to take place in 1986. (Hitchcock 2016)

Eemeren basically endorsed Hitchcock's story. He and Grootendorst came to the APA meeting to make the 1986 conference to meet Hitchcock and Blair, and perhaps Richard Paul. Since they perceived some divisions among argumentation scholars in different disciplines, they

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<sup>14</sup> This part of the narrative about the foundation of ISSA is not historically accurate. According to Eemeren, Grootendorst, Blair and Willard (1987, p. 3), ISSA was established at the end of the 1986 conference in Amsterdam. Blair was then approached to be the organizing committee of the 1986 conference, but not the ISSA.

wanted to bring people together, so approached Blair to be part of the team to convene an international conference on argumentation in Amsterdam. As a result of the interaction deliberately planned by Eemeren and Grootendorst, Blair became one of the convenors of the first international conference on argumentation in 1986, together with Eemeren, Grootendorst, and Willard. They held four Amsterdam conferences together in every four years. After Grootendorst's death in 2000, the three served as convenors of the Conference until 2008.

The significance of the 1986 conference in Amsterdam to informal logic and argumentation can never be emphasized too much. It was in Amsterdam that three perspectives of argumentation – logical, dialectical, and rhetorical as well as other approaches met together. It was in Amsterdam that argumentation as a field of inquiry became truly interdisciplinary. Blair (2007a) recognizes the consequences of the conference in bringing different perspectives together in the following way.

Well, that connection [with Eemeren and Grootendorst] has led to...two things. A lot of philosophers...in the field [ended in] going over to Amsterdam on a regular basis. They have a conference – international conference every four years. There had six of them so far. The other thing we met at this conference all sorts of argumentation scholars who are not philosophers, whom we had known about, from the United States, from the speech communication community, but also from Europe and elsewhere. And so we became exposed to a larger scholarly community and then to the literature of this community.

Another thing that happened was that, at least to me, I was invited, I guess, or encouraged to attend the biennial - one of the biennial conferences of the American Forensic Association and the National Communication Association meetings at Alta Utah every second summer. And there I got to know the members of the argumentation community within speech communication in the United States that - and so got exposed to that literature of that group of people. And I guess I tried to be a vehicle to that bring those influences back to informal logic. So people began to be aware of one another's work. Now there is a lot of cross-field influence and interpenetration...and that went on before that I think led to a profusion of scholarship.

If we limit our focus to Blair and Johnson's scholarship, the cross-field influence, particularly from Pragma-Dialectics, is obvious. In response to Pragma-Dialectics or the dialectical perspective of argumentation, they (1987) published "Argumentation as dialectical" in the very first issue of journal *Argumentation*, in which they attempted to situate their RSA (relevance-sufficiency-acceptability) criteria of good argument within a dialectical framework. A profusion of scholarship that Blair refers to in the above story demands more careful attention and merits further research by theorists and historians of argumentation studies.

## 6. Conclusion

Based on oral history interviews and some archival research, this article has examined development of informal logic in the early and mid-1980s. This has been the time when informal logicians started to influence and be influenced by other approaches to reasoning and argumentation, such as critical thinking, communication scholars and rhetoricians and

Pragma-Dialecticians. Blair and Johnson set up intellectual/argument space for other philosophers by convening the SISIL, converting a newsletter into a journal, establishing a professional association. In addition, their interaction with non-philosophers led to better understanding of argumentation theory and some modification of their original theoretical constructs. The author hopes that this article has met his own call (Konishi 2009, pp. 21-22) to investigate into the post-FISIL period, provide in-depth accounts of key events, and pay more attention to other communities than the informal logic movement.

With the historical evidence at hand, the following issues need further clarification. First, it is still not clear how informal logicians and critical thinking scholars exchanged arguments about the naming of AILACT. Answering this question will require better understanding of similarities and differences between informal logic and critical thinking, as perceived by those participated in the discussion. Second, how did AILACT help develop informal logic, critical thinking, argumentation in philosophers' communities? A close examination of publications by AILACT as well as the link between AILACT sessions at the APA meetings and publication of monographs and journal articles will substantiate actual consequence that the association brought about. Third, how did communities of informal logicians on the one hand and communication scholars and rhetorician on the other develop relationships? While it seems obvious that Pragma-Dialecticians influenced informal logicians including Blair, Johnson or Walton, influence by communication scholars and rhetoricians on informal logicians is less obvious and has come later than the dialectical perspective. What explains the delay? How did the historically-constructed tension between philosophy and rhetoric play a part? This may require more inquiry into history of ideas, but is worth serious consideration. Fourth, how did informal logicians and Pragma-Dialecticians form a relationship over years? While this paper has revealed the informal logic side's historical account, Pragma-Dialecticians' views are lacking. Their side of the story will better illuminate the historical process through which different perspectives interacted. Knowing more about these issues require further inquiry into argumentation in general, informal logic in particular. With apologies to omit the FISIL for lack of the evidence to back up the story, the author promises to continue this line of historical inquiry to let argumentation scholars in different disciplines know more about how things have become as they are in the first half of the 21st century.

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