

АРТУР ШОПЕНГАУЭР

THE ESSAYS OF ARTHUR
SCHOPENHAUER; THE
ART OF CONTROVERSY

Артур Шопенгауэр

**The Essays of Arthur Schopenhauer;
the Art of Controversy**

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Arthur Schopenhauer

The Essays of Arthur Schopenhauer; the Art of Controversy

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

The volume now before the reader is a tardy addition to a series in which I have endeavoured to present Schopenhauer's minor writings in an adequate form.

Its contents are drawn entirely from his posthumous papers. A selection of them was given to the world some three or four years after his death by his friend and literary executor, Julius Frauenstädt, who for this and other offices of piety, has received less recognition than he deserves. The papers then published have recently been issued afresh, with considerable additions and corrections, by Dr. Eduard Grisebach, who is also entitled to gratitude for the care with which he has followed the text of the manuscripts, now in the Royal Library at Berlin, and for having drawn attention – although in terms that are unnecessarily severe – to a number of faults and failings on the part of the previous editor.

The fact that all Schopenhauer's works, together with a volume of his correspondence, may now be obtained in a certain cheap collection of the best national and foreign literature displayed in almost every bookshop in Germany, is sufficient evidence that in his own country the writer's popularity is still very great; nor does the demand for translations indicate that his fame has at all diminished abroad. The favour with which the new edition of his posthumous papers has been received induces me, therefore, to resume a task which I thought, five years ago, that I had finally completed; and it is my intention to bring out one more volume, selected partly from these papers and partly from his *Parerga*.

A small part of the essay on *The Art of Controversy* was published in Schopenhauer's lifetime, in the chapter of the *Parerga* headed *Zur Logik und Dialektik*. The intelligent reader will discover that a good deal of its contents is of an ironical character. As regards the last three essays I must observe that I have omitted such passages as appear to be no longer of any general interest or otherwise unsuitable. I must also confess to having taken one or two liberties with the titles, in order that they may the more effectively fulfil the purpose for which titles exist. In other respects I have adhered to the original with the kind of fidelity which aims at producing an impression as nearly as possible similar to that produced by the original.

T.B.S.

February, 1896

THE ART OF CONTROVERSY

PRELIMINARY: LOGIC AND DIALECTIC

By the ancients, Logic and Dialectic were used as synonymous terms; although [Greek: *logizesthai*], "to think over, to consider, to calculate," and [Greek: *dialegesthai*], "to converse," are two very different things.

The name Dialectic was, as we are informed by Diogenes Laertius, first used by Plato; and in the *Phaedrus*, *Sophist*, *Republic*, bk. vii., and elsewhere, we find that by Dialectic he means the regular employment of the reason, and skill in the practice of it. Aristotle also uses the word in this sense; but, according to Laurentius Valla, he was the first to use Logic too in a similar way.¹ Dialectic, therefore, seems to be an older word than Logic. Cicero and Quintilian use the words in the same general signification.²

This use of the words and synonymous terms lasted through the Middle Ages into modern times; in fact, until the present day. But more recently, and in particular by Kant, Dialectic has often been employed in a bad sense, as meaning "the art of sophistical controversy"; and hence Logic has been preferred, as of the two the more innocent designation. Nevertheless, both originally meant the same thing; and in the last few years they have again been recognised as synonymous.

It is a pity that the words have thus been used from of old, and that I am not quite at liberty to distinguish their meanings. Otherwise, I should have preferred to define *Logic* (from [Greek: *logos*], "word" and "reason," which are inseparable) as "the science of the laws of thought, that is, of the method of reason"; and *Dialectic* (from [Greek: *dialegesthai*], "to converse" – and every conversation communicates either facts or opinions, that is to say, it is historical or deliberative) as "the art of disputation," in the modern sense of the word. It is clear, then, that Logic deals with a subject of a purely *à priori* character, separable in definition from experience, namely, the laws of thought, the process of reason or the [Greek: *logos*], the laws, that is, which reason follows when it is left to itself and not hindered, as in the case of solitary thought on the part of a rational being who is in no way misled. Dialectic, on the other hand, would treat of the intercourse between two rational beings who, because they are rational, ought to think in common, but who, as soon as they cease to agree like two clocks keeping exactly the same time, create a disputation, or intellectual contest. Regarded as purely rational beings, the individuals would, I say, necessarily be in agreement, and their variation springs from the difference essential to individuality; in other words, it is drawn from experience.

Logic, therefore, as the science of thought, or the science of the process of pure reason, should be capable of being constructed *à priori*. Dialectic, for the most part, can be constructed only *à posteriori*; that is to say, we may learn its rules by an experiential knowledge of the disturbance which pure thought suffers through the difference of individuality manifested in the intercourse between two rational beings, and also by acquaintance with the means which disputants adopt in order to make good against one another their own individual thought, and to show that it is pure and objective. For human nature is such that if A. and B. are engaged in thinking in common, and are communicating their opinions to one another on any subject, so long as it is not a mere fact of history, and A. perceives that B.'s thoughts on one and the same subject are not the same as his own, he does not begin by

¹ He speaks of [Greek: *dyscherelai logicai*], that is, "difficult points," [Greek: *protasis logicae aporia logicae*]

² Cic. in *Lucullo: Dialecticam inventam esse, veri et falsi quasi disceptatricem. Topica*, c. 2: *Stoici enim iudicandi vias diligenter persecuti sunt, ea scientia, quam Dialecticem appellant.* Quint., lib. ii., 12: *Itaque haec pars dialecticae, sive illam disputatricem dicere malimus*; and with him this latter word appears to be the Latin equivalent for Dialectic. (So far according to "Petri Rami dialectica, Audomari Talaeci praelectionibus illustrata." 1569.)

revising his own process of thinking, so as to discover any mistake which he may have made, but he assumes that the mistake has occurred in B.'s. In other words, man is naturally obstinate; and this quality in him is attended with certain results, treated of in the branch of knowledge which I should like to call Dialectic, but which, in order to avoid misunderstanding, I shall call Controversial or Eristical Dialectic. Accordingly, it is the branch of knowledge which treats of the obstinacy natural to man. Eristic is only a harsher name for the same thing.

Controversial Dialectic is the art of disputing, and of disputing in such a way as to hold one's own, whether one is in the right or the wrong — *per fas et nefas*.³ A man may be objectively in the right, and nevertheless in the eyes of bystanders, and sometimes in his own, he may come off worst. For example, I may advance a proof of some assertion, and my adversary may refute the proof, and thus appear to have refuted the assertion, for which there may, nevertheless, be other proofs. In this case, of course, my adversary and I change places: he comes off best, although, as a matter of fact, he is in the wrong.

If the reader asks how this is, I reply that it is simply the natural baseness of human nature. If human nature were not base, but thoroughly honourable, we should in every debate have no other aim than the discovery of truth; we should not in the least care whether the truth proved to be in favour of the opinion which we had begun by expressing, or of the opinion of our adversary. That we should regard as a matter of no moment, or, at any rate, of very secondary consequence; but, as things are, it is the main concern. Our innate vanity, which is particularly sensitive in reference to our intellectual powers, will not suffer us to allow that our first position was wrong and our adversary's right. The way out of this difficulty would be simply to take the trouble always to form a correct judgment. For this a man would have to think before he spoke. But, with most men, innate vanity is accompanied by loquacity and innate dishonesty. They speak before they think; and even though they may afterwards perceive that they are wrong, and that what they assert is false, they want it to seem the contrary. The interest in truth, which may be presumed to have been their only motive when they stated the proposition alleged to be true, now gives way to the interests of vanity: and so, for the sake of vanity, what is true must seem false, and what is false must seem true.

However, this very dishonesty, this persistence in a proposition which seems false even to ourselves, has something to be said for it. It often happens that we begin with the firm conviction of the truth of our statement; but our opponent's argument appears to refute it. Should we abandon our position at once, we may discover later on that we were right after all; the proof we offered was false, but nevertheless there was a proof for our statement which was true. The argument which would have been our salvation did not occur to us at the moment. Hence we make it a rule to attack a counter-argument, even though to all appearances it is true and forcible, in the belief that its truth is only superficial, and that in the course of the dispute another argument will occur to us by which we may upset it, or succeed in confirming the truth of our statement. In this way we are almost compelled to become dishonest; or, at any rate, the temptation to do so is very great. Thus it is that the weakness of our intellect and the perversity of our will lend each other mutual support; and that, generally, a disputant fights not for truth, but for his proposition, as though it were a battle *pro aris et focis*. He sets

³ According to Diogenes Laertius, v., 28, Aristotle put Rhetoric and Dialectic together, as aiming at persuasion, [Greek: to pithanon]; and Analytic and Philosophy as aiming at truth. Aristotle does, indeed, distinguish between (1) *Logic*, or Analytic, as the theory or method of arriving at true or apodeictic conclusions; and (2) *Dialectic* as the method of arriving at conclusions that are accepted or pass current as true, [Greek: endoxa] *probabilia*; conclusions in regard to which it is not taken for granted that they are false, and also not taken for granted that they are true in themselves, since that is not the point. What is this but the art of being in the right, whether one has any reason for being so or not, in other words, the art of attaining the appearance of truth, regardless of its substance? That is, then, as I put it above. Aristotle divides all conclusions into logical and dialectical, in the manner described, and then into eristical. (3) *Eristic* is the method by which the form of the conclusion is correct, but the premisses, the materials from which it is drawn, are not true, but only appear to be true. Finally (4) *Sophistic* is the method in which the form of the conclusion is false, although it seems correct. These three last properly belong to the art of Controversial Dialectic, as they have no objective truth in view, but only the appearance of it, and pay no regard to truth itself; that is to say, they aim at victory. Aristotle's book on *Sophistic Conclusions* was edited apart from the others, and at a later date. It was the last book of his *Dialectic*.

to work *per fas et nefas*; nay, as we have seen, he cannot easily do otherwise. As a rule, then, every man will insist on maintaining whatever he has said, even though for the moment he may consider it false or doubtful.⁴

To some extent every man is armed against such a procedure by his own cunning and villainy. He learns by daily experience, and thus comes to have his own *natural Dialectic*, just as he has his own *natural Logic*. But his Dialectic is by no means as safe a guide as his Logic. It is not so easy for any one to think or draw an inference contrary to the laws of Logic; false judgments are frequent, false conclusions very rare. A man cannot easily be deficient in natural Logic, but he may very easily be deficient in natural Dialectic, which is a gift apportioned in unequal measure. In so far natural Dialectic resembles the faculty of judgment, which differs in degree with every man; while reason, strictly speaking, is the same. For it often happens that in a matter in which a man is really in the right, he is confounded or refuted by merely superficial arguments; and if he emerges victorious from a contest, he owes it very often not so much to the correctness of his judgment in stating his proposition, as to the cunning and address with which he defended it.

Here, as in all other cases, the best gifts are born with a man; nevertheless, much may be done to make him a master of this art by practice, and also by a consideration of the tactics which may be used to defeat an opponent, or which he uses himself for a similar purpose. Therefore, even though Logic may be of no very real, practical use, Dialectic may certainly be so; and Aristotle, too, seems to me to have drawn up his Logic proper, or Analytic, as a foundation and preparation for his Dialectic, and to have made this his chief business. Logic is concerned with the mere form of propositions; Dialectic, with their contents or matter – in a word, with their substance. It was proper, therefore, to consider the general form of all propositions before proceeding to particulars.

Aristotle does not define the object of Dialectic as exactly as I have done it here; for while he allows that its principal object is disputation, he declares at the same time that it is also the discovery of truth.⁵ Again, he says, later on, that if, from the philosophical point of view, propositions are dealt with according to their truth, Dialectic regards them according to their plausibility, or the measure in which they will win the approval and assent of others.⁶ He is aware that the objective truth of a proposition must be distinguished and separated from the way in which it is pressed home, and approbation won for it; but he fails to draw a sufficiently sharp distinction between these two aspects of the matter, so as to reserve Dialectic for the latter alone.⁷ The rules which he often gives for

⁴ Machiavelli recommends his Prince to make use of every moment that his neighbour is weak, in order to attack him; as otherwise his neighbour may do the same. If honour and fidelity prevailed in the world, it would be a different matter; but as these are qualities not to be expected, a man must not practise them himself, because he will meet with a bad return. It is just the same in a dispute: if I allow that my opponent is right as soon as he seems to be so, it is scarcely probable that he will do the same when the position is reversed; and as he acts wrongly, I am compelled to act wrongly too. It is easy to say that we must yield to truth, without any prepossession in favour of our own statements; but we cannot assume that our opponent will do it, and therefore we cannot do it either. Nay, if I were to abandon the position on which I had previously bestowed much thought, as soon as it appeared that he was right, it might easily happen that I might be misled by a momentary impression, and give up the truth in order to accept an error.

⁵ *Topica*, bk. i., 2.

⁶ *Ib.*, 12.

⁷ On the other hand, in his book *De Sophisticis Elenchis*, he takes too much trouble to separate *Dialectic* from *Sophistic* and *Eristic*, where the distinction is said to consist in this, that dialectical conclusions are true in their form and their contents, while sophistical and eristical conclusions are false. Eristic so far differs from Sophistic that, while the master of Eristic aims at mere victory, the Sophist looks to the reputation, and with it, the monetary rewards which he will gain. But whether a proposition is true in respect of its contents is far too uncertain a matter to form the foundation of the distinction in question; and it is a matter on which the disputant least of all can arrive at certainty; nor is it disclosed in any very sure form even by the result of the disputation. Therefore, when Aristotle speaks of *Dialectic*, we must include in it Sophistic, Eristic, and Peirastic, and define it as "the art of getting the best of it in a dispute," in which, unquestionably, the safest plan is to be in the right to begin with; but this in itself is not enough in the existing disposition of mankind, and, on the other hand, with the weakness of the human intellect, it is not altogether necessary. Other expedients are required, which, just because they are unnecessary to the attainment of objective truth, may also be used when a man is objectively in the wrong; and whether or not this is the case, is hardly ever a matter of complete certainty. I am of opinion, therefore, that a sharper distinction should be drawn between Dialectic and Logic than Aristotle has given us; that to Logic we should assign objective truth as far as it is merely formal, and that Dialectic should be confined to the art of gaining one's point, and contrarily, that Sophistic and

Dialectic contain some of those which properly belong to Logic; and hence it appears to me that he has not provided a clear solution of the problem.

We must always keep the subject of one branch of knowledge quite distinct from that of any other. To form a clear idea of the province of Dialectic, we must pay no attention to objective truth, which is an affair of Logic; we must regard it simply as *the art of getting the best of it in a dispute*, which, as we have seen, is all the easier if we are actually in the right. In itself Dialectic has nothing to do but to show how a man may defend himself against attacks of every kind, and especially against dishonest attacks; and, in the same fashion, how he may attack another man's statement without contradicting himself, or generally without being defeated. The discovery of objective truth must be separated from the art of winning acceptance for propositions; for objective truth is an entirely different matter: it is the business of sound judgment, reflection and experience, for which there is no special art.

Such, then, is the aim of Dialectic. It has been defined as the Logic of appearance; but the definition is a wrong one, as in that case it could only be used to repel false propositions. But even when a man has the right on his side, he needs Dialectic in order to defend and maintain it; he must know what the dishonest tricks are, in order to meet them; nay, he must often make use of them himself, so as to beat the enemy with his own weapons.

Accordingly, in a dialectical contest we must put objective truth aside, or, rather, we must regard it as an accidental circumstance, and look only to the defence of our own position and the refutation of our opponent's.

In following out the rules to this end, no respect should be paid to objective truth, because we usually do not know where the truth lies. As I have said, a man often does not himself know whether he is in the right or not; he often believes it, and is mistaken: both sides often believe it. Truth is in the depths. At the beginning of a contest each man believes, as a rule, that right is on his side; in the course of it, both become doubtful, and the truth is not determined or confirmed until the close.

Dialectic, then, need have nothing to do with truth, as little as the fencing master considers who is in the right when a dispute leads to a duel. Thrust and parry is the whole business. Dialectic is the art of intellectual fencing; and it is only when we so regard it that we can erect it into a branch of knowledge. For if we take purely objective truth as our aim, we are reduced to mere Logic; if we take the maintenance of false propositions, it is mere Sophistic; and in either case it would have to be assumed that we were aware of what was true and what was false; and it is seldom that we have any clear idea of the truth beforehand. The true conception of Dialectic is, then, that which we have formed: it is the art of intellectual fencing used for the purpose of getting the best of it in a dispute; and, although the name *Eristic* would be more suitable, it is more correct to call it controversial Dialectic, *Dialectica eristica*.

Dialectic in this sense of the word has no other aim but to reduce to a regular system and collect and exhibit the arts which most men employ when they observe, in a dispute, that truth is not on their side, and still attempt to gain the day. Hence, it would be very inexpedient to pay any regard to objective truth or its advancement in a science of Dialectic; since this is not done in that original and natural Dialectic innate in men, where they strive for nothing but victory. The science of Dialectic, in one sense of the word, is mainly concerned to tabulate and analyse dishonest stratagems, in order that in a real debate they may be at once recognised and defeated. It is for this very reason that Dialectic must admittedly take victory, and not objective truth, for its aim and purpose.

Eristic should not be distinguished from Dialectic in Aristotle's fashion, since the difference which he draws rests on objective and material truth; and in regard to what this is, we cannot attain any clear certainty before discussion; but we are compelled, with Pilate, to ask, *What is truth?* For truth is in the depths, [Greek: en butho hae halaetheia] (a saying of Democritus, *Diog. Laert.*, ix., 72). Two men often engage in a warm dispute, and then return to their homes each of the other's opinion, which he has exchanged for his own. It is easy to say that in every dispute we should have no other aim than the advancement of truth; but before dispute no one knows where it is, and through his opponent's arguments and his own a man is misled.

I am not aware that anything has been done in this direction, although I have made inquiries far and wide.⁸ It is, therefore, an uncultivated soil. To accomplish our purpose, we must draw from our experience; we must observe how in the debates which often arise in our intercourse with our fellow-men this or that stratagem is employed by one side or the other. By finding out the common elements in tricks repeated in different forms, we shall be enabled to exhibit certain general stratagems which may be advantageous, as well for our own use, as for frustrating others if they use them.

What follows is to be regarded as a first attempt.

⁸ Diogenes Laertes tells us that among the numerous writings on Rhetoric by Theophrastus, all of which have been lost, there was one entitled [Greek: *Agonistikon taes peri tous eristikous gogous theorias.*] That would have been just what we want.

THE BASIS OF ALL DIALECTIC

First of all, we must consider the essential nature of every dispute: what it is that really takes place in it.

Our opponent has stated a thesis, or we ourselves, – it is all one. There are two modes of refuting it, and two courses that we may pursue.

I. The modes are (1) *ad rem*, (2) *ad hominem* or *ex concessis*. That is to say: We may show either that the proposition is not in accordance with the nature of things, i.e., with absolute, objective truth; or that it is inconsistent with other statements or admissions of our opponent, i.e., with truth as it appears to him. The latter mode of arguing a question produces only a relative conviction, and makes no difference whatever to the objective truth of the matter.

II. The two courses that we may pursue are (1) the direct, and (2) the indirect refutation. The direct attacks the reason for the thesis; the indirect, its results. The direct refutation shows that the thesis is not true; the indirect, that it cannot be true.

The direct course admits of a twofold procedure. Either we may show that the reasons for the statement are false (*nego majorem, minorem*); or we may admit the reasons or premisses, but show that the statement does not follow from them (*nego consequentiam*); that is, we attack the conclusion or form of the syllogism.

The direct refutation makes use either of the *diversion* or of the *instance*.

(a) *The diversion*. – We accept our opponent's proposition as true, and then show what follows from it when we bring it into connection with some other proposition acknowledged to be true. We use the two propositions as the premisses of a syllogism giving a conclusion which is manifestly false, as contradicting either the nature of things,⁹ or other statements of our opponent himself; that is to say, the conclusion is false either *ad rem* or *ad hominem*.¹⁰ Consequently, our opponent's proposition must have been false; for, while true premisses can give only a true conclusion, false premisses need not always give a false one.

(b) *The instance*, or the example to the contrary. – This consists in refuting the general proposition by direct reference to particular cases which are included in it in the way in which it is stated, but to which it does not apply, and by which it is therefore shown to be necessarily false.

Such is the framework or skeleton of all forms of disputation; for to this every kind of controversy may be ultimately reduced. The whole of a controversy may, however, actually proceed in the manner described, or only appear to do so; and it may be supported by genuine or spurious arguments. It is just because it is not easy to make out the truth in regard to this matter, that debates are so long and so obstinate.

Nor can we, in ordering the argument, separate actual from apparent truth, since even the disputants are not certain about it beforehand. Therefore I shall describe the various tricks or stratagems without regard to questions of objective truth or falsity; for that is a matter on which we have no assurance, and which cannot be determined previously. Moreover, in every disputation or argument on any subject we must agree about something; and by this, as a principle, we must be willing to judge the matter in question. We cannot argue with those who deny principles: *Contra negantem principia non est disputandum*.

⁹ If it is in direct contradiction with a perfectly undoubted, truth, we have reduced our opponent's position *ad absurdum*.

¹⁰ Socrates, in *Hippia Maj. et alias*.

STRATAGEMS

I

The *Extension*. – This consists in carrying your opponent's proposition beyond its natural limits; in giving it as general a signification and as wide a sense as possible, so as to exaggerate it; and, on the other hand, in giving your own proposition as restricted a sense and as narrow limits as you can, because the more general a statement becomes, the more numerous are the objections to which it is open. The defence consists in an accurate statement of the point or essential question at issue.

Example 1. – I asserted that the English were supreme in drama. My opponent attempted to give an instance to the contrary, and replied that it was a well-known fact that in music, and consequently in opera, they could do nothing at all. I repelled the attack by reminding him that music was not included in dramatic art, which covered tragedy and comedy alone. This he knew very well. What he had done was to try to generalise my proposition, so that it would apply to all theatrical representations, and, consequently, to opera and then to music, in order to make certain of defeating me. Contrarily, we may save our proposition by reducing it within narrower limits than we had first intended, if our way of expressing it favours this expedient.

Example 2. – A. declares that the Peace of 1814 gave back their independence to all the German towns of the Hanseatic League. B. gives an instance to the contrary by reciting the fact that Dantzic, which received its independence from Buonaparte, lost it by that Peace. A. saves himself thus: "I said 'all German towns,' and Dantzic was in Poland."

This trick was mentioned by Aristotle in the *Topica* (bk. viii., cc. 11, 12).

Example 3. – Lamarck, in his *Philosophic Zoologique* (vol. i., p. 208), states that the polype has no feeling, because it has no nerves. It is certain, however, that it has some sort of perception; for it advances towards light by moving in an ingenious fashion from branch to branch, and it seizes its prey. Hence it has been assumed that its nervous system is spread over the whole of its body in equal measure, as though it were blended with it; for it is obvious that the polype possesses some faculty of perception without having any separate organs of sense. Since this assumption refutes Lamarck's position, he argues thus: "In that case all parts of its body must be capable of every kind of feeling, and also of motion, of will, of thought. The polype would have all the organs of the most perfect animal in every point of its body; every point could see, smell, taste, hear, and so on; nay, it could think, judge, and draw conclusions; every particle of its body would be a perfect animal and it would stand higher than man, as every part of it would possess all the faculties which man possesses only in the whole of him. Further, there would be no reason for not extending what is true of the polype to all monads, the most imperfect of all creatures, and ultimately to the plants, which are also alive, etc., etc." By using dialectical tricks of this kind a writer betrays that he is secretly conscious of being in the wrong. Because it was said that the creature's whole body is sensitive to light, and is therefore possessed of nerves, he makes out that its whole body is capable of thought.

II

The *Homonymy*. – This trick is to extend a proposition to something which has little or nothing in common with the matter in question but the similarity of the word; then to refute it triumphantly, and so claim credit for having refuted the original statement.

It may be noted here that synonyms are two words for the same conception; homonyms, two conceptions which are covered by the same word. (See Aristotle, *Topica*, bk. i., c. 13.) "Deep,"

"cutting," "high," used at one moment of bodies at another of tones, are homonyms; "honourable" and "honest" are synonyms.

This is a trick which may be regarded as identical with the sophism *ex homonymia*; although, if the sophism is obvious, it will deceive no one.

Every light can be extinguished.
The intellect is a light.
Therefore it can be extinguished.

Here it is at once clear that there are four terms in the syllogism, "light" being used both in a real and in a metaphorical sense. But if the sophism takes a subtle form, it is, of course, apt to mislead, especially where the conceptions which are covered by the same word are related, and inclined to be interchangeable. It is never subtle enough to deceive, if it is used intentionally; and therefore cases of it must be collected from actual and individual experience.

It would be a very good thing if every trick could receive some short and obviously appropriate name, so that when a man used this or that particular trick, he could be at once reproached for it.

I will give two examples of the homonymy.

Example 1. – A.: "You are not yet initiated into the mysteries of the Kantian philosophy."

B.: "Oh, if it's mysteries you're talking of, I'll have nothing to do with them."

Example 2. – I condemned the principle involved in the word *honour* as a foolish one; for, according to it, a man loses his honour by receiving an insult, which he cannot wipe out unless he replies with a still greater insult, or by shedding his adversary's blood or his own. I contended that a man's true honour cannot be outraged by what he suffers, but only and alone by what he does; for there is no saying what may befall any one of us. My opponent immediately attacked the reason I had given, and triumphantly proved to me that when a tradesman was falsely accused of misrepresentation, dishonesty, or neglect in his business, it was an attack upon his honour, which in this case was outraged solely by what he suffered, and that he could only retrieve it by punishing his aggressor and making him retract.

Here, by a homonymy, he was foisting *civic honour*, which is otherwise called *good name*, and which may be outraged by libel and slander, on to the conception of *knightly honour*, also called *point d'honneur*, which may be outraged by insult. And since an attack on the former cannot be disregarded, but must be repelled by public disproof, so, with the same justification, an attack on the latter must not be disregarded either, but it must be defeated by still greater insult and a duel. Here we have a confusion of two essentially different things through the homonymy in the word *honour*, and a consequent alteration of the point in dispute.

III

Another trick is to take a proposition which is laid down relatively, and in reference to some particular matter, as though it were uttered with a general or absolute application; or, at least, to take it in some quite different sense, and then refute it. Aristotle's example is as follows:

A Moor is black; but in regard to his teeth he is white; therefore, he is black and not black at the same moment. This is an obvious sophism, which will deceive no one. Let us contrast it with one drawn from actual experience.

In talking of philosophy, I admitted that my system upheld the Quietists, and commended them. Shortly afterwards the conversation turned upon Hegel, and I maintained that his writings were mostly nonsense; or, at any rate, that there were many passages in them where the author wrote the words, and it was left to the reader to find a meaning for them. My opponent did not attempt to refute this assertion *ad rem*, but contented himself by advancing the *argumentum ad hominem*, and telling me that I had just been praising the Quietists, and that they had written a good deal of nonsense too.

This I admitted; but, by way of correcting him, I said that I had praised the Quietists, not as philosophers and writers, that is to say, for their achievements in the sphere of *theory*, but only as men, and for their conduct in mere matters of *practice*; and that in Hegel's case we were talking of theories. In this way I parried the attack.

The first three tricks are of a kindred character. They have this in common, that something different is attacked from that which was asserted. It would therefore be an *ignoratio elenchi* to allow oneself to be disposed of in such a manner.

For in all the examples that I have given, what the opponent says is true, but it stands in apparent and not in real contradiction with the thesis. All that the man whom he is attacking has to do is to deny the validity of his syllogism; to deny, namely, the conclusion which he draws, that because his proposition is true, ours is false. In this way his refutation is itself directly refuted by a denial of his conclusion, *per negationem consequentiae*. Another trick is to refuse to admit true premisses because of a foreseen conclusion. There are two ways of defeating it, incorporated in the next two sections.

IV

If you want to draw a conclusion, you must not let it be foreseen, but you must get the premisses admitted one by one, unobserved, mingling them here and there in your talk; otherwise, your opponent will attempt all sorts of chicanery. Or, if it is doubtful whether your opponent will admit them, you must advance the premisses of these premisses; that is to say, you must draw up pro-syllogisms, and get the premisses of several of them admitted in no definite order. In this way you conceal your game until you have obtained all the admissions that are necessary, and so reach your goal by making a circuit. These rules are given by Aristotle in his *Topica*, bk. viii., c. 1. It is a trick which needs no illustration.

V

To prove the truth of a proposition, you may also employ previous propositions that are not true, should your opponent refuse to admit the true ones, either because he fails to perceive their truth, or because he sees that the thesis immediately follows from them. In that case the plan is to take propositions which are false in themselves but true for your opponent, and argue from the way in which he thinks, that is to say, *ex concessis*. For a true conclusion may follow from false premisses, but not *vice versâ*. In the same fashion your opponent's false propositions may be refuted by other false propositions, which he, however, takes to be true; for it is with him that you have to do, and you must use the thoughts that he uses. For instance, if he is a member of some sect to which you do not belong, you may employ the declared, opinions of this sect against him, as principles.¹¹

VI

Another plan is to beg the question in disguise by postulating what has to be proved, either (1) under another name; for instance, "good repute" instead of "honour"; "virtue" instead of "virginity," etc.; or by using such convertible terms as "red-blooded animals" and "vertebrates"; or (2) by making a general assumption covering the particular point in dispute; for instance, maintaining the uncertainty of medicine by postulating the uncertainty of all human knowledge. (3) If, *vice versâ*, two things follow one from the other, and one is to be proved, you may postulate the other. (4) If a general

¹¹ Aristotle, *Topica* bk. viii., chap. 2.

proposition is to be proved, you may get your opponent to admit every one of the particulars. This is the converse of the second.¹²

VII

Should the disputation be conducted on somewhat strict and formal lines, and there be a desire to arrive at a very clear understanding, he who states the proposition and wants to prove it may proceed against his opponent by question, in order to show the truth of the statement from his admissions. The erotematic, or Socratic, method was especially in use among the ancients; and this and some of the tricks following later on are akin to it.¹³

The plan is to ask a great many wide-reaching questions at once, so as to hide what you want to get admitted, and, on the other hand, quickly propound the argument resulting from the admissions; for those who are slow of understanding cannot follow accurately, and do not notice any mistakes or gaps there may be in the demonstration.

VIII

This trick consists in making your opponent angry; for when he is angry he is incapable of judging aright, and perceiving where his advantage lies. You can make him angry by doing him repeated injustice, or practising some kind of chicanery, and being generally insolent.

IX

Or you may put questions in an order different from that which the conclusion to be drawn from them requires, and transpose them, so as not to let him know at what you are aiming. He can then take no precautions. You may also use his answers for different or even opposite conclusions, according to their character. This is akin to the trick of masking your procedure.

X

If you observe that your opponent designedly returns a negative answer to the questions which, for the sake of your proposition, you want him to answer in the affirmative, you must ask the converse of the proposition, as though it were that which you were anxious to see affirmed; or, at any rate, you may give him his choice of both, so that he may not perceive which of them you are asking him to affirm.

XL

If you make an induction, and your opponent grants you the particular cases by which it is to be supported, you must refrain from asking him if he also admits the general truth which issues from the particulars, but introduce it afterwards as a settled and admitted fact; for, in the meanwhile, he will himself come to believe that he has admitted it, and the same impression will be received by the audience, because they will remember the many questions as to the particulars, and suppose that they must, of course, have attained their end.

¹² *Idem*, chap. 11. The last chapter of this work contains some good rules for the practice of Dialectics.

¹³ They are all a free version of chap. 15 of Aristotle's *De Sophistici Elenchis*.

XII

If the conversation turns upon some general conception which has no particular name, but requires some figurative or metaphorical designation, you must begin by choosing a metaphor that is favourable to your proposition. For instance, the names used to denote the two political parties in Spain, *Serviles* and *Liberates*, are obviously chosen by the latter. The name *Protestants* is chosen by themselves, and also the name *Evangelicals*; but the Catholics call them *heretics*. Similarly, in regard to the names of things which admit of a more exact and definite meaning: for example, if your opponent proposes an *alteration*, you can call it an *innovation*, as this is an invidious word. If you yourself make the proposal, it will be the converse. In the first case, you can call the antagonistic principle "the existing order," in the second, "antiquated prejudice." What an impartial man with no further purpose to serve would call "public worship" or a "system of religion," is described by an adherent as "piety," "godliness": and by an opponent as "bigotry," "superstition." This is, at bottom, a subtle *petitio principii*. What is sought to be proved is, first of all, inserted in the definition, whence it is then taken by mere analysis. What one man calls "placing in safe custody," another calls "throwing into prison." A speaker often betrays his purpose beforehand by the names which he gives to things. One man talks of "the clergy"; another, of "the priests."

Of all the tricks of controversy, this is the most frequent, and it is used instinctively. You hear of "religious zeal," or "fanaticism"; a "*faux pas*" a "piece of gallantry," or "adultery"; an "equivocal," or a "bawdy" story; "embarrassment," or "bankruptcy"; "through influence and connection," or by "bribery and nepotism"; "sincere gratitude," or "good pay."

XIII

To make your opponent accept a proposition, you must give him the counter-proposition as well, leaving him his choice of the two; and you must render the contrast as glaring as you can, so that to avoid being paradoxical he will accept the proposition, which is thus made to look quite probable. For instance, if you want to make him admit that a boy must do everything that his father tells him to do, ask him "whether in all things we must obey or disobey our parents." Or, if a thing is said to occur "often," ask whether by "often" you are to understand few or many cases; and he will say "many." It is as though you were to put grey next black, and call it white; or next white, and call it black.

XIV

This, which is an impudent trick, is played as follows: When your opponent has answered several of your questions without the answers turning out favourable to the conclusion at which you are aiming, advance the desired conclusion, – although it does not in the least follow, – as though it had been proved, and proclaim it in a tone of triumph. If your opponent is shy or stupid, and you yourself possess a great deal of impudence and a good voice, the trick may easily succeed. It is akin to the fallacy *non causae ut causae*.

XV

If you have advanced a paradoxical proposition and find a difficulty in proving it, you may submit for your opponent's acceptance or rejection some true proposition, the truth of which, however, is not quite palpable, as though you wished to draw your proof from it. Should he reject it because he suspects a trick, you can obtain your triumph by showing how absurd he is; should he accept it> you have got reason on your side for the moment, and must now look about you; or else you can employ

the previous trick as well, and maintain that your paradox is proved by the proposition which he has accepted. For this an extreme degree of impudence is required; but experience shows cases of it, and there are people who practise it by instinct.

XVI

Another trick is to use arguments *ad hominem*, or *ex concessis*¹⁴ When your opponent makes a proposition, you must try to see whether it is not in some way – if needs be, only apparently – inconsistent with some other proposition which he has made or admitted, or with the principles of a school or sect which he has commended and approved, or with the actions of those who support the sect, or else of those who give it only an apparent and spurious support, or with his own actions or want of action. For example, should he defend suicide, you may at once exclaim, "Why don't you hang yourself?" Should he maintain that Berlin is an unpleasant place to live in, you may say, "Why don't you leave by the first train?" Some such claptrap is always possible.

XVII

If your opponent presses you with a counter-proof, you will often be able to save yourself by advancing some subtle distinction, which, it is true, had not previously occurred to you; that is, if the matter admits of a double application, or of being taken in any ambiguous sense.

XVIII

If you observe that your opponent has taken up a line of argument which will end in your defeat, you must not allow him to carry it to its conclusion, but interrupt the course of the dispute in time, or break it off altogether, or lead him away from the subject, and bring him to others. In short, you must effect the trick which will be noticed later on, the *mutatio controversiae*. (See § xxix.)

XIX

Should your opponent expressly challenge you to produce any objection to some definite point in his argument, and you have nothing much to say, you must try to give the matter a general turn, and then talk against that. If you are called upon to say why a particular physical hypothesis cannot be accepted, you may speak of the fallibility of human knowledge, and give various illustrations of it.

XX

When you have elicited all your premisses, and your opponent has admitted them, you must refrain from asking him for the conclusion, but draw it at once for yourself; nay, even though one or other of the premisses should be lacking, you may take it as though it too had been admitted, and draw the conclusion. This trick is an application of the fallacy *non causae ut causae*

¹⁴ The truth from which I draw my proof may be either (1) of an objective and universally valid character; in that case my proof is veracious, *secundum veritatem*; and it is such proof alone that has any genuine validity. Or (2) it may be valid only for the person to whom I wish to prove my proposition, and with whom I am disputing. He has, that is to say, either taken up some position once for all as a prejudice, or hastily admitted it in the course of the dispute; and on this I ground my proof. In that case, it is a proof valid only for this particular man, *ad hominem*. I compel my opponent to grant my proposition, but I fail to establish it as a truth of universal validity. My proof avails for my opponent alone, but for no one else. For example, if my opponent is a devotee of Kant's, and I ground my proof on some utterance of that philosopher, it is a proof which in itself is only *ad hominem*. If he is a Mohammedan, I may prove my point by reference to a passage in the Koran, and that is sufficient for him; but here it is only a proof *ad hominem*,

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