

# Interpretation

A JOURNAL OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Winter 1993–1994

Volume 21 Number 2

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# Interpretation

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Composition by Eastern Composition, Inc.,  
Binghamton, N.Y. 13905  
Printed and bound by Wickersham Printing Co.,  
Lancaster, PA 17603

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11367-1597, U.S.A. (718)997-5542

# Aristotle's Dialectical Purposes

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## PART I. DIALECTIC AND THE ORGANON

This article is devoted to identifying the purposes for which Aristotle intended dialectic. Aristotle treats of dialectic in the *Topics* and adds a subsidiary treatment of fallacies, *Sophistical Refutations*, to form with the eight books of the *Topics* a single whole. It is often said that Aristotle devalued dialectic from the high position assigned it by Plato. This is not a new claim. Eighteen hundred years ago Alexander of Aphrodisias was contrasting Plato's hymning of dialectic as the keystone (*thrigkos*, *Rep.* VII 534E) of philosophy itself with Aristotle's different conclusion that dialectic is only a certain syllogistic way of inquiry (Alexander of Aphrodisias, pp. 1–2). Moreover, the form in which Aristotle presents dialectic seems more firmly connected to elementary pedagogical exercises than to philosophy since Aristotle presents it as what Professor Brunschwig calls the "game none play any longer," (Brunschwig, p. ix) that is, the disputation formally organized as a scholastic exercise. The disputation format has played in different ages a major role in education down the centuries since and has only recently faded, perhaps temporarily, from the educational scene;<sup>1</sup> but its presence, continued so long, did not prevent a failure of philosophic interest in Aristotle's texts on dialectic. And when Pierre Aubenque concludes that dialectic remains at the heart of Aristotle's thought, it is a disguised and devalued dialectic which has crept back into philosophy and which Aristotle seeks to differentiate and exclude from philosophy (Aubenque, pp. 255, 282–302, 374). Nevertheless, much recent scholarship has come to emphasize the importance of Aristotle's dialectic to an understanding of Aristotle.<sup>2</sup> I would rather conclude that Aristotle distinguishes dialectic from philosophy, but conceives of dialectic as playing a most honorable role in the life of the philosopher.

### *The Priority of the Topics*

The *Topics* and the *Sophistical Refutations* form part of the Organon, which has been the collective name applied to Aristotle's "logical" works for two

This article is adapted from a part of my doctoral dissertation, "Finding the Place for Rhetoric: Aristotle's *Rhetorical Art* in its Philosophic Context," New School for Social Research.

thousand years. The term “logical” requires quotation marks in this context because the term has a meaning for Aristotle that is different from its meaning today. Aristotle’s logical works are the arts of logos.<sup>3</sup> Aristotle can refer to these arts collectively as analytics (*Met.* Gamma 3 1005b3–5; *Rhet.* A4 1359b10; *Met.* K1 1059b15–19) and decisively orients them toward their employment in human thought.

The human capacity for logos is charged with a special value in the Socratic tradition. Socrates’ second sailing in the *Phaedo* is a turn to the logos (99D). Whatever devaluation of dialectic Aristotle effected, it is still the case that in some degree logos retains its deeply ambiguous Socratic character and importance for him.

It is safe to say, I think, that in one respect at least Aristotelian philosophy consists in the execution of th[e] Socratic program. It is in speech, in searching for and finding adequate words, that the *logos* of things, the *logos* of nature (*phusis*) becomes audible and capable of being understood. (Klein, pp. 175–79).

It is the “things” or “nature,” however, that become capable of being understood. If analytics may offer the way to knowledge, it is not for Aristotle itself a subject for treatment in isolation from its human use. As most commentators agree, for Aristotle no part of analytics is a science (Ross, pp. 20–21; Owens [1978], pp. 128–35; Owens [1981], p. 26 notes 7–9; Weil; Evans, pp. 5–6, 49–50, 73–77; Aubenque, pp. 285–86). Aristotle eschews the temptation of a speculative interest in the formal science of logic, and why he does so is relevant. Father Joseph Owens says that Aristotle viewed analytics as concerning itself with the variable activity of humans and with the aspect of at least discursive thought as something humans did. Such thought was, thus, contingent (Owens [1978], pp. 128–35; Owens [1981], p. 26). Owens also cites the conclusion of the sixteenth-century Aristotelian, Zabarella, that there is, properly speaking, no science of our thought because such thought is “our product” (Zabarella, 1.3).

The view that Aristotle did not treat any discipline of the *Organon* as a science is the dominant opinion among commentators on Aristotle today; but that opinion is paradoxical to the extent that the same authors persist in treating the syllogism, that is, the *Prior Analytics*, and not the *Topics*, as the apex of Aristotle’s “logical thought.” For such authors the *Topics* is the precursor of the *Analytics*. Most of them do not bother to explain the import or order of the *Organon* where the *Prior Analytics* plays an introductory role, and the *Topics* is the climactic work. The reversal of the order of the *Organon* is assisted by a philological conclusion that the *Topics* is an “early” work and therefore only to be understood as a precursor to the *Analytics*.

There is evidence, however, that the conclusion that these disciplines were *not* sciences is far reaching in its implications and that there was controversy over the character of Aristotle’s analytical disciplines from a very early period.

This controversy has affected the treatment of the corpus Aristotelicum, for it is responsible for the creation and organization of the Organon. Paul Moraux tells us:

When he speaks of different kinds of sciences, Aristotle does not mention logic. . . . From before the time of Alexander of Aphrodisias, some wanted to consider logic as a part (*meros*) of the philosophical sciences, and others, as an instrument (*organon*). Alexander considers it as an *organon*; . . . logic is not practiced for itself: it always has its *anaphora* (reference) to a science different from it; it is certainly thus an instrument. [A]ll the commentators . . . indicate that it is the Stoics and certain Platonists who considered logic as a part of philosophy. (Moraux [1951], p. 174)

The scientific treatments proposed by Stoics and by Platonists differ. It seems to be the Stoics who were attracted to the creation of a regional science on a level with physics and ethics for the study of logic, very much in the modern sense (P. Hadot, p. 154). It is not as a regional science that Plato's Socrates speaks of dialectic.

The Stoic approach has enduring attraction, and at its heart lies a turn toward the formalization of logic.<sup>4</sup> The energy behind the turn toward formalization is strong, and few have chosen to resist it. Although Alexander affirmed the instrumental nature of the logos works, he did not oppose formalization, for he is credited with first using the word "logic" in its modern sense, that is, "concerned with the principles of valid inference" (Kneale and Kneale, pp. 1, 23). Even if logic is not called a science, but the formalization of logic and of what Aristotle called syllogism continues, both logic and the syllogism thus explicitly formalized are already potentially the object of a science.

Thus, when Pierre Aubenque speaks of the "formal character" (p. 285) of Aristotle's dialectic, that characterization may seem unproblematic in light of our ordinary conception of the nature of "logic." But Aristotle's differing approach cautions that too-ready an agreement as to dialectic's formal character may cover over important aspects of Aristotle's thought about dialectic.<sup>5</sup> Although formalization is precisely the fate that awaits the *Topics* at the hands of others (e.g., see Stump [1978], pp. 205–14, 219, Stump [1989]), the *Topics* is not essentially formal. Instead the dialectic to which the *Topics* is oriented is a convenient organization of the human activity of thought for human uses transcendent to speech itself. Similarly, a case can be made that none of Aristotle's logos works is essentially formal, but each is instead a tentative organization of thought in a form that is apt to assist in the process of seeking and learning.

Although it is important to see that a formal character is implicit in, say, the *Prior Analytics* or the other parts of the Organon, one must at the same time mark the degree to which Aristotle keeps the formal side of syllogistic and dialectic in check in relation to the ends for which he believes the Organon, the disciplines of logos, are useful (*Weil*). There are several ways in which the

understanding of the essential character of the works of the Organon will be hampered by attributing to them a too-formal character.

The order of the Organon culminates in the analysis of demonstration from self-evident first principles (*Posterior Analytics*) and a consideration of dialectic arising or apparently arising from accepted or endoxic premises (*Topics*, *Sophistical Refutations*). Demonstration and dialectic each concerns itself with its own syllogisms. The formal structure of the syllogism is treated in the *Prior Analytics*. That book appears at an earlier point in the order of the Organon than does any of the above noted works. It is at least arguable that such an ordering demotes the formal syllogism and subordinates it to its pragmatic uses in demonstration and dialectic.

The fact that the *demonstrative* and the *dialectical* syllogisms have a similar “validity”, that is, similarly join the extremes by means of an appropriate middle term, is noted (*An.Pr.* A1 24a26–28; A29–30 45b29–46a31; *An.Post.* A2 71b24–25), but the basis for the distinction between the demonstrative syllogism and the dialectical syllogism does not turn on formal considerations. Instead, the syllogisms apportioned to demonstration, just as those apportioned to dialectic, are characterized by the nature of the subject matter of which its syllogisms treat. Each such syllogism is distinguished by what Alexander of Aphrodisias calls a material distinction (*hê kata tên hulên*).<sup>6</sup> The definition of each kind of syllogism turns on the underlying character of the premises in question. Thus the *Posterior Analytics* and the *Topics* consider the material with which their syllogisms deal, that is, they consider precisely that from which the *Prior Analytics* abstracted.

Demonstration involves syllogistic reasoning proceeding from self-evident first principles; but dialectical syllogisms proceed from creditworthy opinions (*endoxa*), that is, the propositions contained in the syllogisms are matters accepted as true, but only have the status of belief or opinion for all that (*Top.* A1 100a25–100b23; *An. Post.* A2 71b17–25). It follows, then, that demonstrative syllogisms are not merely parts of an axiomatic system and that, likewise, the dialectical syllogism proceeds from more than arbitrary premises since it proceeds from principles which the participants *accept*. From this fundamental material distinction of the dialectical syllogism a secondary formal distinction follows. Dialectical syllogisms actually used in a disputation are in principle presented as questions, since the inquirer stands ready to proceed on the basis of whichever contrary seems true to the respondent (*An. Pr.* A1 24a23–24b16).

Moreover, even in the *Prior Analytics* Aristotle seems to cite as the chief motive for working out the syllogism that the syllogism is “fecund” in the production of arguments, that is, that it is chiefly to be valued as a means (*An.Pr.* A30–31).

A too-formal conception of analytics, then, can be misleading and turns the Organon on its head. It is the *Topics* which is the capstone of the Organon. Aristotle’s analytics, his logos works, have come down to us in a traditional

arrangement, not as sciences, but under the name of *organon*, the Instrument or Organon. Such an Organon is not valued solely in itself, but also or even primarily because it leads to another end. In its canonical form, the Organon consists of six works. The first three are works concerned with the term (*Categories*), the sentence (*de Interpretatione*) and the syllogism (*Prior Analytics*). These in turn culminate in the *Posterior Analytics*, the *Topics* and the *Sophistical Refutations*. The first of these considers the requirements of science (*epistêmê*); the second and third, the resources and procedures of dialectic and those fallacies and corruptions of dialectic which make eristic and sophistic reasoning possible.

If the Organon as a principle of organization is to be taken seriously, one must determine the identity of the ends to which it is instrumental. In particular, one must understand that if the first three books are for the sake of understanding terms, sentences and syllogisms as used in demonstration and dialectic, then the entire structure will turn on the uses of demonstration and dialectic. It is to these that inquiry must turn.

### *Aristotle's Philosophic Sciences*

The *Posterior Analytics* has to do with the conditions which make science (*epistêmê*) possible. The book begins with an insistence that all science, that is, all syllogistically derived, necessary knowledge, presupposes pre-existing knowledge (*An. Post.* A1, B19). This pre-existing knowledge is understood as the principles (*archai*) of knowledge; to these we must have access in some way other than by science. In a celebrated passage at the end of the *Posterior Analytics* Aristotle points to our access to what we call the universal, to which we come through the repeated experience of the same thing. We call that access induction (*epagôgê*), and our human capacity to achieve induction is understood as intelligence (*nous*) (*An. Post.* B19, 100b–5–17; *N.E.* Z6). Aristotle affirms that induction also provides us with unmediated access to or noetic grasp of the first principles of things.<sup>7</sup> The *Posterior Analytics* lies within the presupposed framework of a noetic grasp which is constituted through induction, but the book is not primarily concerned with this noetic grasp. Instead it is entirely concerned with the knowledge that grasp makes possible and so is concerned with the conditions for demonstrative proof by syllogism (Aquinas, pp. 13–14, 163).

The hallmark of the demonstrative proof is its absolute necessity, universality and unchangeableness. The necessity of demonstrative proof is not axiomatic or hypothetical because it is not derived as part of an axiomatic system or hypothetically. It is a requirement of science (*epistêmê*) that its principles must not only be true, but inherently necessary and eternal, indemonstrable and immediate; that is, they must be self-evident. From the requirement that the

principles of science be self-evident, necessary and eternal follows the necessity of distinguishing science from opinion and sensation. It follows, too, that there is no science of the contingent. Even when the contingent can be considered from the point of view of what occurs “naturally” or “for the most part” (*epi to polu*) the result is, for Aristotle, in a sense science and in a sense, not (*An.Post.* A8 75b33–36).

The first principle of a science is, at least in part, also unique in the case of each science. “To argue from first principles is to argue from first principles which are unique to each genus (*to ex archôn oikeiôn*).” (*An. Post.* A2 72a7; see also A9 75b37–76a31.) Aristotle not only believes that there are several sciences resting, in each case, on different and uniquely appropriate principles, but he denies the existence of a single all-embracing genus of things for, as Aristotle elsewhere proves, being is not a genus (*Met.* B3 998b22–23). With that far-reaching and problematic claim goes the acceptance of equivocity in the constitution of the *cosmos* and, as a corollary, that the world is (at best) a universe and not a unity (*An. Post.* A10 76a37–39). For Aristotle’s arts of analytics, these conclusions portend the acknowledgement that the common principles of thought are not the common principles of being. The sense in which the principles of thought and the principles of being, respectively, are common, is itself equivocal (*An. Post.* A6, A9; *S.E.* 11).

The standards of the knowledge whose character is set forth in the *Posterior Analytics* are rigorous. They are so rigorous that it has become a commonplace that the canons of the *Prior Analytics* are more appropriate to mathematics than to Aristotle’s works. “What Euclid later did, haltingly, for geometry, Aristotle wanted done for every branch of human knowledge” (Barnes [1975b], pp. x–xi).

The fact is that “Aristotle simply does not mean to present such a system” (Wieland, p. 128). The Aristotelian corpus has, in comparison to the standards set forth here, a distinctly aporetic character (Edel, pp. 204–7; Wieland; Barnes [1975a]). The *Posterior Analytics* do not present a method of investigation, instead it is

how we collect into an intelligible whole the scientist’s various discoveries—how we may so arrange the facts that their interrelations, and in particular their explanations, may best be revealed and grasped. (Barnes [1975b], pp. x–xi; see also Barnes [1975a], p. 82)

It may be possible to argue that Aristotle taught that even science conceived in the rigorous manner of the *Prior Analytics* has a secondary character, for science (*epistêmê*) ultimately only exists as a part of true wisdom (*sophia*) which brings into living knowledge<sup>8</sup> the attributes of the highest genera of reality. Thus, science is living knowledge of a being when and only when it articulates itself in actual knowing. But as living knowledge it is also the simultaneous grasping of the principle from which the whole of the science derives;

it is Aristotle's wisdom (*sophia*), the most accurate science in the case of each genus of being and, unqualifiedly, of the most honorable beings (*N.E. Z7; Met. A1–2 981b26–982b11*).

“Knowing (*to gnônai*) whether one knows (*oiden*) is difficult” (*An. Post. A9 76a26*). Short of *sophia* there is necessarily deep controversy over the status of the sciences (*epistêmai*). These can be no surer in any case than the problematic access to the self-evident being of which any science demonstrates only the attributes. For those driven by love of wisdom (*philosophia*) the status of regional sciences as sciences must be tentative. The precise degree of tentativeness is an extremely important and controversial subject, and that controversy was waged not least within Socratic philosophy. Aristotle's characteristic division of the whole into separate sciences contrasts strongly with Plato's refusal to accept such divisions. In proceeding as he does Aristotle attempts to preserve Socrates' first sailing, the sciences of pre-Socratic philosophy, in a revised Aristotelian form.<sup>9</sup> These are best thought of as leading in the direction of science. As a result, actual Aristotelian science approaches philosophy because any such science, despite its claim of achievement, must retrace again and again the way to its principles.<sup>10</sup> Professor Benardete speaks of this unavoidably tentative character that affects Aristotle's works:

Science cannot long remain scientific unless it re-examines continuously the ascent to science. Science cannot be institutionalized without becoming dogmatic. Decay is a necessary concomitant of any ascent. . . . Aristotle, as political scientist, addresses men for whom morality is an absolute and not open to question; but insofar as Aristotle himself founds political science, he cannot be unaware of its problematical premises. (Benardete [1978], pp. 2,4)

In this sense, the *Posterior Analytics* expresses the inversion of the actual task of coming to know. “The principles stand at the end, not at the beginning of the investigation.”<sup>11</sup> This is less evident than it should be because the human soul in dealing with art and science seems to exhibit an irrepressible tendency to cover up the route by which the principles of the art or science were reached (Davis [1985], pp. 75–97; Ferrari, p. 61). The *Posterior Analytics* abandons the way by which access to science was originally obtained, and this access is not itself accessible to demonstration. This abandonment is justified by the desire to obtain clarity of expression for the demonstration of that knowledge which was obtained.

In comparison with the “sweet *Analytics* [which] ravished generations of European scholars and scientists” (Barnes [1975b], p. ix), Aristotle's dialectic offers only the lowered horizons of wrangling dispute. The admiration for the aim of the *Posterior Analytics* is admiration of all that is clearest and most precise in human knowledge.

Precisely as a result of the powerful pull of the *Posterior Analytics* many readers will have a tendency to downgrade dialectics as explicated in the

*Topics*. Thus, the downgrading of the *Topics*, which occurred during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, accompanied the widespread conclusion that the *Topics* was an early and surpassed version of the *Prior Analytics*. As Ross says, “his own *Analytics* . . . have made his *Topics* out of date” (Ross, p. 59; see Kneale and Kneale, pp. 33, 43). That conclusion at the same time also satisfied a desire rooted in admiration for the syllogism and for logic in its later scientific form (Evans, p. 2; Forster, pp. 265–71; Ross, p. 59). The philological conclusion furthers an interest in the scientific aspect of logos, that is, of what Aristotle did not treat as a science. The tendency to downgrade the *Topics* for this reason is only increased by fascination with demonstrative knowledge as presented in the *Posterior Analytics*.

Wolfgang Wieland has said this attitude often results in an unjustified belief that the only Aristotelian methodology is demonstration, as if his works consisted of “deductions from a few intuitively obvious principles by means of the syllogistic method” (Wieland, p. 128). The point of the newer scholarship from Eric Weil on has been that dialectical thought has an inexpugnable role to play in human affairs and stands at least in coordination with science.

If one accepts this assessment and then seeks to understand the order of the *Organon*, one obtains a surprising confirmation of the relative roles of the *Analytics* and the *Topics*. The relation of science (and the *Posterior Analytics*) to dialectic (and the *Topics*) is analogous to the relation suggested by Socrates’ autobiographical description of his turn from physical science to the logos (*Phaedo* 95E–100A).

This has the following meaning for our study. First, so far as the organization of the *Organon* authentically reflects Aristotelian thought, we are vouchsafed the admission that for Aristotle dialectical method, the method of investigation through the logos, must always follow as well as precede apodictic knowledge.

At one level this is the affirmation that we have more experience of the artless and spontaneous realm of everyday life than of science. But more, it is an affirmation of the importance of such spontaneity. The spontaneity of experience is deeply interwoven into the Aristotelian fabric; it is one meaning of the denial of the separate existence of the forms. Such forms are immanent in and must express themselves through the development of the individual (*tode ti*), which (one almost says who) stands in a relation to the essential it reflects and imitates, such that the mimema “is not derived from its counterpart but reveals, or almost produces its counterpart” (Zuckerlandl, p. 36). This is important if only as a way to resist the tendency of science to hide its beginnings. Yet the point here goes beyond this.

The *Posterior Analytics*, although conceded the higher status, was treated by the ancient organizers of the *Organon* as previous to and to that extent as subordinate to dialectic. As Socrates reports he turned from physical science, the first sailing, so the order of *Organon* moves from the discussion of the conditions of science to dialectic. Science stands to dialectic as the unachieved,

perhaps humanly unachievable, goal of philosophy to philosophy and thus as a contrast which underlines the problematic status of dialectic. Moreover apodictic proof is the way of sciences, but the method of such proof is not itself science, but an art (e.g., *S.E.* 11 171a40–172b1); demonstration refers to something other than itself. The evaluation of either demonstration or dialectic depends finally on its use. It is to that use one must turn to understand the ultimate purposes Aristotle reserves for dialectic.

### *Paideia and Dialectic*

Aristotle distinguishes dialectic, which evaluates opinions and beliefs, from knowledge or science, which demonstrates the truth. Aristotle also distinguishes dialectic from philosophy and from sophistry and from rhetoric. Aristotle taught first philosophy and political philosophy as philosophy and as philosophic science, and each is obviously shot through with insight gained from the dialectical treatment of puzzles. That he taught brings in view a fourth Aristotelian project. He urged young men to acquire paideia, to come to be well educated. We can gain some clue to understanding the relations of dialectic, philosophy and science by returning to Pierre Aubenque and his insistence on the formal nature of dialectic and on the identity of that formal dialectic with paideia or being well educated.

Aubenque makes both these points in the context of a reading of the Platonic or pseudo-Platonic dialogue, *The Rival Lovers*. Aubenque understands the dialogue as being concerned with the question of wisdom, that is, with what learning a wise man should most seek. For Aubenque solution of the “node of problems” which the dialogue raises lies along the way to the main thesis of his book that the reality of Aristotle’s ontology is dialectic.

For Aubenque the dialogue presents a contest between Plato’s and Aristotle’s contrasting conceptions of dialectic, carried on in the form of a conversation involving Socrates and two young rivals. One of the rivals is much taken with culture, and the other is not. Aubenque remarks that the term dialectic must have been already common coin in Plato’s time, “where the idea of totality is obscurely associated with that of dialogue.”<sup>12</sup> Aubenque goes on to claim that Plato tries to transform dialectic into a knowledge that is universal because it is supreme. Such knowledge is not universal in the sense that polymathy is, that is, as the aggregate of all knowledge; rather it is the Idea of the Good, knowledge of which permits the rare philosopher to assign to all other knowledge its place. It is this revised combination of the universal and science, universal science in this new and nonencyclopedic sense, which Plato paradoxically wants to call dialectic under his new scheme. Aubenque says it is solely by virtue of its universality that Plato can “audaciously” call the science of the Good dialectic (pp. 281, 277).

But the *Rival Lovers* is concerned also with the argument, attributed to Aris-

tote, that Plato's Science-of-the-Good as dialectic must, in turn, be replaced by a more traditional version of dialectic now conceived as paideia. Socrates, dealing with the young rivals who stand in for the absent and unnamed Aristotle, grants that paideia is wide ranging and even universal. But having conceded that he attacks it as shallow and useless. The possessor of paideia is likened to the competitor in the pentathlon who can only hope to be second best to anyone who concentrates on or is especially gifted in any one of the athletic contests in which the pentathlete competes. Overall victory is tainted by the knowledge that others are best in each particular sport.

Aubenque believes that the arguments in favor of Aristotle's paideia bring down Platonic wrath because paideia is akin to the wisdom proffered by Gorgias. Gorgias argued that the kind of knowledge a wise man should seek is skill in persuasion because persuasion is the reality of wisdom. It is this teaching by Gorgias that brings upon him Socrates' attack in the *Gorgias*; and the attack on Aristotle in the *Rival Lovers* signals the kinship between Aristotle and Gorgias. And what Isocrates understands as philosophy does not differ from the persuasion of Gorgias and the paideia of Aristotle.

It is good to recall these traits of rhetoric in Gorgias [that are] perpetuated in the teaching of Isocrates. . . . They help above all to set before us the antiplatonic origins of a certain number of Aristotelian themes: the rehabilitation of opinion and, in parallel with that, the art that to a greater degree than rhetoric . . . takes opinion as object and to which Aristotle returns the old name of *dialectic*. (Aubenque, p. 264)

Aristotle is matched with Gorgias and Isocrates, and in apparent contrast with Plato's Socrates, (1) in rehabilitating *paideia*, the second best way<sup>13</sup> of the *Rival Lovers* (Aubenque, pp. 282–85), and (2) in what now can be seen as the corollary of rehabilitating paideia, returning the name dialectic to an art that is universal, but only moves within the realm of opinion, so that the dialectician is *contrasted* with the savant, with the skilled man, with the specialist.

It is true that Aristotle rehabilitates paideia and dialectic, but Aubenque disregards Aristotle's simultaneous assignment to dialectic of a role that does not deny the possibility of philosophy or a more ultimate wisdom. I come to issue with this failure on Aubenque's part by questioning his assumption that Aristotle's dialectic is the substance of paideia.<sup>14</sup>

What is this paideia? Aristotle was said by ancient commentators to claim to teach a nonscientific paideia,<sup>15</sup> a second mode of knowledge (*peri pasan theōrian duo tropoi tēs hexeōs*) pursuant to which “there is the ability to show an apt hand at judging (*krinai eustochōs*) whether a researcher has got hold of a good theory or not” (*Part. An.* A1 639a1–5). The evidence about Aristotle's understanding of paideia is sparse; it consists of the cited reference to *Parts of Animals* supplemented only by scattered passages where Aristotle refers to a paideia or its lack (*Part. An.* A1 639a1–10; *Rhet.* A2 1356a29; *Met.* Gamma 3 1005b4–5; *N.E.* A3 1094b13–28).

In identifying dialectic and *paideia* Aubenque stands with a substantial number of other commentators (Ross, pp. 20–23; Moraux [1951], pp. 174–76; Evans, pp. 17–20). At least one author, however, Father Ernest Fortin, denies that Aristotle identifies *paideia* with dialectic. His arguments seem decisive to me. Fortin's key observation is that *paideia* not only includes dialectic, that is, the art that has as its object the mode *common* to all the sciences; but it also embraces knowing the mode *proper* to each science (Fortin, p. 256).

If we return to the one passage in which Aristotle reflects on *paideia* thematically, what is remarkable is that one who is completely educated (*holôs pepaideumenon*) is capable of making a judgment as to whether one engaged in a science is proceeding rightly or not in the case of practically all sciences (*hôs eipein peri pantôn*) (*Part. An.*, 639a5–10). Thus the major role of *paideia* is to prepare one to address wouldbe researchers with standards for appropriate organization and treatment of a given subject. Knowing that precision is inappropriate to ethical and political matters (*N.E.* A3 1094b13–28), that rhetoric is not itself a kind of political science (*Rhet.* A2 1356a29), and that it is foolish to question the principle of noncontradiction (*Met.* Gamma 3 1005b4–5) are the prime examples that Aristotle gives of *paideia*.

It is hard to identify any of these insights as a product of dialectic, for the latter is a method of argument which aims at disclosing contradiction within given premises. Dialectic is universal and deals with the universal dialectical terms (*koinoi*) while the examples Aristotle gives of *paideia* involve, primarily, identifying “the mode *proper* to each science.” *Paideia* is not identical with dialectic. It is better to conclude tentatively with Father Fortin that

Nothing is to prevent [the young] from acquiring the rudiments of [philosophy] or, to use Aristotle's own term, its *paideia*, even if he cannot hope to gain a complete mastery of it until much later. What is more, there is every reason to suspect that the student who has not received the proper formation at this privileged moment [of youth] will be hard pressed to attain wisdom at a more advanced age. (Fortin, p. 259)

Dialectic is not identical with *paideia*, but nothing prevents it from being in Aristotle's view *productive* of *paideia*. As Fortin says:

[T]he student who wishes to acquire *paideia* must first learn to recognize a principle as opposed to a conclusion or, to put it very simply, be able to distinguish between what is known and what is unknown. (P. 252)

It is this step that Aristotle's dialectic does attempt and claims to accomplish, although it does so only in so far as dialectic has become what Aristotle calls “peirastic.” Moreover there is at least one occasion on which this very peirastic use of dialectic is called productive of *paideia*. In Plato's *Sophist* the Stranger, adopting a suggestion by Theaetetus, calls it *paideia* or noble sophistic. Aristotle with his tendency to separate out parts and stages of the whole

cannot be understood if paideia is collapsed into dialectic or if philosophy is collapsed into dialectic. Instead, the interrelations of the entire Aristotelian corpus must be brought into play, for if Aristotle can be said to have a candidate for the wisdom sought in the *Rival Lovers* it is neither paideia nor dialectic, but rather philosophy and philosophic science (*hê kata philosophian epistêmê*) (see *Top.* A2 101a35). And paideia is the early stage, or the beginnings of philosophy, while peirastic dialectic, I hope to show, provides access to paideia and philosophy.

In the *Gorgias* Socrates calls sophistry and rhetoric copies (*eidôla*) of the true species of *politikê*, namely, foundation (*nomothetikê*) and justice (*dikaio-sunê*) in the polis, that is, the coupled pairs stand to each other in the relation of original and copy. Something is a copy in the bad sense if it pretends to be the original, but is inferior to it and less authentic; a copy is a counterfeit. Something is also a copy, but in the good sense, if it (somehow)<sup>16</sup> re-produces the original and makes it to that extent present where it otherwise would not be. The *Gorgias* is primarily concerned with copies in the bad sense, that is, with the poisonous consequences of rhetoric in Polus and in Callicles. It remains to be seen whether dialectic and paideia are in different ways useful copies of philosophy which contribute in their way to the wise man's happiness. We will be better able to opine on that when we have identified the purposes or uses for which Aristotle intends his dialectic.

## PART II. ARISTOTLE'S DIALECTIC

Having considered the structure of Aristotle's logos works and their organization into the *Organon*, I have argued that the structure of the *Organon* replicates in a certain way the "Socratic turn" described in the *Phaedo* and that this is the meaning of how Aristotle's thematic treatment of dialectic is placed within the *Organon*. I have also argued that dialectic differs for Aristotle both from being educated, possessing paideia, and from philosophy, but is closely related to both. In this part we will take a closer look at what Aristotle has to say about the purposes that dialectic can serve.

For that purpose, we turn to the *Topics* and its companion *Sophistical Refutations*. The latter, although treated as a separate title in the manuscript tradition, is shown by both internal and external clues to be the culminating book (the ninth) of the *Topics*.<sup>17</sup> Accepting this, Aristotle's treatment of the art of dialectic in the *Topics* falls into three parts, to which we add the *Sophistical Refutations* as a fourth. Within the *Topics* proper, Book Alpha constitutes an introduction and overview of the proposed art of dialectic.<sup>18</sup> Books Beta through Eta of the *Topics*, the bulk of the book, work through the ways to produce and test arguments.<sup>19</sup> Book Theta of the *Topics* is devoted to the overall structure and conduct of the disputation. It is left to *Sophistical Refutations*

to provide an analysis of fallacies and sophistic and eristic argument and their solutions.

Aristotle gives no precise definition of dialectic in the *Topics*. Aristotle comes closest to a brief definition of dialectic in the *Prior Analytics* (A1 24a24) where he defines dialectic as “inquiry into contradiction” (*erôtêsis antiphaseôs*). Indeed he suggests that being precise is inappropriate (*Top.* A1 101a 19–24), that what is to be sought is a way to defend and attack any problem consistently.

Aristotle believes that every one has and uses an elementary form of dialectic, trying to test and maintain arguments (*Rhet.* A1 1354a1–6; see also *S.E.* 11 172a30–172b1) and that the practice of dialectic is one already engaged in by sophists and eristics (*S.E.* 34 183a37–184b9). But protodialectic is a practice which he claims to have been the first to transform into an art. (This striking claim of priority in reducing dialectic to an art is made in his culminating chapter, chapter 34, of the *Sophistical Refutations*.) Dialectic as an art, he says in the opening lines of the *Topics*, is the way

of reasoning, based on the best opinions, about any difficulty whatsoever and of asking, in our own case, no questions which contradict each other when we ourselves uphold an argument. (*Top.* A1 100a18–21)

Although Aristotle begins by calling dialectic an undertaking (*pragmateia*) and a way of investigation (*methodos*), Aristotle’s precise description is that dialectic can “undertake the testing of all things, and is an art of a sort, but not such as the demonstrative arts” (*S.E.* 11 171a40–172b1). As Aristotle requires in all arts, this art is marked by an effective operation (*ergon*) which aims at, but does not guarantee a result (*Top.* A3 101b5–10). The *ergon* of dialectic is “a capacity of making syllogisms about a difficulty from relevant propositions which are as generally believed as is possible” (*S.E.* 34 133a37–133b1).

Dialectic also has a perspective dictated by the uses for which it is created. The latter fulfills the need for some finite set of purposes which will give dialectic its definition. For dialectic is a capacity or skill that is otherwise indeterminate because it lacks a proper subject matter (Evans, pp. 73–77). In the case of dialectic, the perspective leads its practitioners to seek to investigate those opinions which need and will receive clarification through comparison with other commonly accepted opinions (*Top.*, A4, 10–11; *Rhet.* A2 1356b35–36). Thus, the use of commonly accepted opinions, *endoxa*, is central to dialectic. The *endoxa* are

what seems to be the case to all or to most or to the wise, and of the latter either by all or by most or by the most famed and revered. (*Top.* A1 100b22–25)

Dialectic itself grows out of the capacity to develop arguments; it has no definite subject matter and so is capable of considering what is common to all

subjects whatever, and in a peculiar way of developing both sides of any question (*Top.* A1 100a18–21, A2 101a35–37; *Rhet.* A2 1356a32–33, 1355a33–36; *S.E.* 11 172a12–21; *An.Pr.* A1 24a24). This itself is a result that no science can achieve, for each science is a science of *something*, and even first philosophy is universal only insofar as it deals with that which is prior in being (*Met.* E1 1026a23–32; *S.E.* 11 172a12–21). Dialectic is an art which, like every perspectival art, is directed to a subject matter supplied by human uses and purposes.

Aristotle goes on to discuss these purposes in greater detail, a discussion that we will follow. In doing so we should remember that the line between dialectic, on the one hand, and sophistry or eristic, on the other, will finally depend on the character and moral choice of the one who is using dialectic, and not on the discourse as such (*Rhet.* A1 1355b17–18; see also *Met.* Gamma 4, 1004b18–27; *Sophist* 253E; *Gorgias* 487E–488B). Following Aristotle's further discussion should allow us to get a better notion of the place or neighborhood, as Alexander of Aphrodisias calls it, in which dialectic, although it lacks a proper subject matter, is still at home.

### *The Uses of Dialectic in Topics A2*

There is a passage early on in the *Topics* (A2 101a25–101b4) that provides the locus classicus for Aristotle's evaluation of the uses of dialectical art. We turn to that passage, but with the warning that the explication and evaluation of the uses of dialectic that is introduced in this passage are qualified, deepened and finally transformed in the course of Aristotle's subsequent argument. What emerges and is developed in the course of this argument is *peirastikē*<sup>20</sup> to which we will soon turn. Nevertheless, each of the three distinct functions of dialectic which Aristotle characterizes as useful in the passage in A2 requires discussion.

The first use of dialectic that Aristotle mentions is that dialectic will provide exercise (*gymnasia*). Aristotle will further emphasize the importance of *gymnasia*; in Book Theta he twice repeats that *gymnasia* is a purpose of dialectic, and there we are given some clue as to the nature of the ability to whose cultivation the exercise is devoted.

Practicing is for the sake of an ability [with *logos*] and foremost with theories and objections (*protaseis kai enstaseis*). For the dialectician in the unqualified sense, so to speak, is someone who can come up with theories and objections. Making up a theory is turning the many into one (for one needs to grasp as a whole that in relation to which the argument is being made). And making objections is turning the one into many, for objections either divide up or dissolve the argument, that is both to concede and to deny that which has been put forward as a theory.<sup>21</sup>

This ability or capacity can only develop through strenuous use. *Gymnasia* is exercise (*Top.* A2 101a27–30; Theta 5 159a25–26; Theta 14 163a29). The

exhortations and the training activities suggested in Book Theta show just how strenuous the exercise is to be:

- become accustomed to convert arguments
- investigate arguments that the case stands thus *and* not thus, and straightway seek to find the undoing of each
- if one has no one else to argue with, argue with oneself
- learn thoroughly arguments of most frequent occurrence, and especially about the primary questions
- be well provided with definitions
- have ready at hand definitions of the endoxa and of first things
- one ought to be prompt about principles and to have learned through and through by heart one's premisses.<sup>22</sup>

Dialectic is, as the word *gymnasia* already suggests, instinct with the sweat of the *palestra*. Dialectic is, however, palestra in another sense, for it is also instinct with the modified and channelled competition of athletes.

Those practicing dialectic cannot uphold an argument without showing a competitive edge. (*Top.* Theta 14 164b14–15)

Notwithstanding this, the structured disputation does not emerge as a competition. The point is to see the implications of the argument, and not to win; the structured disputation is used for the sake of testing and inquiry. Moreover, because it is not a competition, students are warned against the careless use of dialectic with those not prepared for it (*Top.* Theta 14, 164b8–15). But practice only perfects the ability. The ends of this ability must lie in the other uses to be made of it.

Aristotle enjoins care as to the persons with whom may engage in dialectical disputation. But he also finds that the second important use of dialectic occurs in connection with everyday guarded encounters (*enteuxeis*) with ordinary people, for it is dialectical ability that permits us to work out in detail the convictions ordinary people have just as much as those of scholars and philosophers. The resulting understanding is useful in deciding how to talk to ordinary people (*Top.* A2 101a31–35). In this way dialectic helps one to prepare for the everyday social intercourse. The wise man proceeds in such intercourse on the basis of the beliefs and convictions of the others (*ek tôn oikeiôn dogmatôn*) rather than from what must appear to those others as an alien point of view (*ek tôn allotriôn*).

Dialectic is the basis of discriminating in guarded encounters between the kinds of statements to be made to any particular person, since one has to make that judgment based on an understanding of the beliefs of the other. Aristotle then explicitly goes on to say that dialectic in this way permits one to make an appropriate judgment about how far one can correct the errors of one's audience, that is, an understanding of dialectic helps one to gauge the amount of freedom with which one can speak (*Top.* A2 101a33–34).

Aristotle here agrees with what Socrates says in the *Phaedrus* 266B–D and 273D–274A. What dialectic does is to permit speech to be formed with a regard for the beliefs of others as such (*ouk ek tôn allotriôn all' ek tôn oikeiôn dogmatôn*) (*Top.* A2 101a33). Thus, dialectic is the basis on which rhetorical art is erected, for it is dialectic that provides the basis for the distinction between exoteric and esoteric speech. The former is speech that is grounded in encounter and takes into consideration the beliefs, abilities and disposition of others. This is the point at which rhetoric, as the scion or offshoot of dialectic, is inserted into or grafted on the mainstem of dialectic.

The third use of dialectic, in order of description, in this often cited passage is that dialectic is useful in service of the philosophical sciences (*tas kata philosophian epistêmai*). This philosophic use of dialectic is usually identified with dialectic's propaedeutic task (Ross, pp. 20–23; Moraux [1951], pp. 174–76; Aubenque, pp. 249–52), that is, assistance in the progress of science. It is in this sense that Aristotle's remarks here are often quoted. This theme is brought out in the translation by E.S Forster in the Loeb Edition:

[Dialectic] is useful in connection with the ultimate basis of each science; for it is impossible to discuss them at all on the basis of the principles peculiar to the science in question, since the principles are primary in relation to everything else, and it is necessary to deal with them through the generally accepted opinions on each point. This process belongs peculiarly, or most appropriately to dialectic; for, being of the nature of an investigation (*exetastikê*),<sup>23</sup> it lies along the path to the principles of all methods of inquiry. (*Top.* A2 101a37–101b4)

Professor John Evans, for example (see e.g., p. 23), understands the role of dialectic in this regard simply as a kind of skill in the elaboration of theories. Evans connects this theory-making function to the discussion of progress in the sciences in *An.Pr.* A30. At a later point in his book, Evans describes the role of dialectic as that of being the unique preparative for induction; and he links with this reading what Aristotle says elsewhere about the development of settled experience and, through experience, progress to the inductive act and the resulting firmer establishment of the science (Evans, pp. 33–41).

But theory-making in the sense of a modern philosophy of science cannot be the whole story in dialectic, for when Aristotle speaks of dialectical skills he adds to theory-making the different function of critique, division and dissolution.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, although Aristotle does believe that the value of dialectic is to

a large degree based on its operation as the handmaiden of the philosophical sciences, one must carefully assess what Aristotle means by this claim.

To attempt to treat dialectic as if it were a philosophy of science in the modern sense would understate the importance of dialectic to Aristotle: it would fail to give adequate consideration to what Aristotle calls peirastic (*peirastikê*). This last is no small omission, for it is the thesis of this article that peirastic is the highest use of dialectic. Let me begin with the passage in the *Metaphysics* where Aristotle sums up and contrasts the exclusive ways of dealing with the totality of the cosmos. There he names dialectic, sophistry and philosophic science. But the word or aspect under which he mentions dialectic is that it is peirastic (1004b26–28). Aristotle's description of dialectic and its uses is not complete without an understanding of peirastic.

### *Peirastic Dialectic and Sophistry*

The relation of dialectic to the philosopher is closer and more intimate than the cool appreciation of *Topics* A2 suggests. There are two passages in Book Theta that together make that point. Dialectic does not differ from philosophy in the way it works up its theories and objections (Theta 1, 155b3–17). Dialectic is immediately propaedeutic to *philosophy* (Theta 14, 163b9–18, cf. *Top.* A2 101a35–37; *S.E.* 16 175a5–17).

It is at least as important to understand that dialectic is also intimately associated with, and inseparable from, sophistic and eristic.<sup>25</sup> Aristotle even speaks of dialectic living side by side in the same neighborhood (*geitniasis*) with sophistic and eristic (*S.E.* 34 183b3). When one considers the relation in the context of dialectic as peirastic, the relation is even closer. The main weapon of the pretensions of sophistry and eristic, that which makes possible their false claims of knowledge, arises at the same moment as does peirastic argument (*S.E.* 8 169b20–25; 34 183b1–9).

The intimate relations of dialectic, philosophy and sophistry are summed up in the passage in the *Metaphysics* where Aristotle says that dialectic, sophistic and philosophy alone deal with the wholly universal, although each in decisively different ways.

In coming to understand Aristotle's peirastic doctrine we are simultaneously undertaking the task of the Eleatic Stranger in Plato's *Sophist*, that is, we are seeking to identify the sophist. We must study the point at which peirastic and sophistry come together in order to distinguish, so far as possible, sophistry from peirastic and from dialectical uses in general.

Consideration of the doctrine of peirastic, finally, needs to be prefaced by noting the strange way in which the term appears in Aristotle's text. First, the word itself appears to be an Aristotelian invention. A search of the *Theasaurus Linguae Graecae* shows that the term originates with Aristotle, is used by him

in the *Sophistical Refutations* and in the passage, already quoted, from the *Metaphysics*. Thereafter it appears only in Aristotle's later Greek commentators.

As already noted, the term does not appear early in the text of the *Topics*. It is, as I have pointed out, carefully avoided in the discussion of the usefulness of dialectic in *Topics* A2. In Theta 5 Aristotle does twice refer to dialectic disputation as testing (*peira*), the noun from which peirastic is formed. In the first of these references, Aristotle couples *peira* with yet another term for investigation (*skepsis*).

When Aristotle finally introduces the term *peirastikê* in the second chapter of the *Sophistical Refutations*, however, he paradoxically seems to assert that, in retrospect, we should be able to see that the peirastic skill has been at the center of our attention all along as *the* subject of discussion throughout the *Topics*. In this passage Aristotle defines four kinds of discourse (didactic, dialectic, peirastic and eristic *logoi*). Once he has laid down the definitions, however, he remarks that only eristic speeches have not yet been thematically treated. Didactic speeches, he tells us, were treated in the *Analytics* (*tois analutikois*) and both peirastic and dialectical speeches were treated "in the other places" (*en tois allois*) (*S.E.* 2 165b9–11). We are left to conclude that these other places in which dialectic in general and peirastic in particular have been concurrently treated are, in both cases, the totality of the preceding pages of the *Topics*. Peirastic is always at issue in dialectic.

*Peirastikê* is the art, skill or capacity that corresponds to the Greek adjective *peirastikos*. This means: to be tentative or experimental, but also to be capable of testing or assaying, of tempting or attempting. It is related to *peirô*, I try, undertake or attempt, and *peira*, a trial or experience and thus both to the ordinary word for experienced (*empeiros*) and to that for inexperienced (*apeiros*). Thence, there are available as puns a group of words related to *peiras* or *peras*, limit, bound, end.

Thus *peirastikê* implies a skill in or capacity for both being uncertain or unclear *and* having exposed or made clear. For this reason it has seemed better to me simply to transliterate the Greek word as peirastic rather than to alternate between "testing" and "tentative" or to use a clumsy and paradoxical phrase that contains both of the contrasting pair. Indeed, if a translation were to be attempted it would seem that "elenctic" or "maieutic" or "Socratic," words in English directly referring to Socrates' ways, would be best and most correct as a translation of the term.

Peirastic is most like the "noble sophistic" in Plato's *Sophist* which the Stranger there calls *paideia*<sup>26</sup> and which the Stranger implicitly assigns to Socrates. The Stranger's claims are different from those Socrates makes about his maieutics,<sup>27</sup> and we have shown that Aristotle teaches that dialectic is productive of *paideia* rather than identical with it. The extent to which the *Topics* and *Sophistical Refutations* echo Plato's *Sophist* is nevertheless really quite remark-

able. The *Topics* as a work evokes the *Sophist*, for instance, by its mention of the same character types adumbrated in the early part of the *Sophist* as the results of the Stranger's repeated applications of the method of division. In both Plato and Aristotle, the sophist, the eristic and the dialectician emerge as related and differentiated; the philosopher is not explicitly found in either; and in both there is a concern with *paideia*.

The four types in the *Sophist* are the guises of the sophist which are only to be understood in light of the problem of nonbeing. As Stanley Rosen suggests in his treatment of the *Sophist* the multiple guises of the sophist lead us into the second part of the dialogue through the need for grasping the ways in which the web of speech is *dissociated* from reality with the result that human creativity and fraud are simultaneously made possible. The same issues are at work in Aristotle's *Sophistical Refutations*.

Even after Aristotle has explicitly introduced peirastic dialectic, it is only by way of illustrative asides to the treatment of fallacies in general and of sophistical fallacies and refutations in particular<sup>25</sup> that Aristotle gives us its thematic treatment. At first we know only that peirastic is the kind of discourse (*logos*) which has a double source; insofar as it is a speech made to a respondent, it is grounded in opinion and insofar as that respondent is someone who has claimed to have knowledge, it is grounded in what is necessarily implied to someone who is in possession of knowledge (*ek tôn anankaîôn eidenai tôi pros-poioumenôi echein tèn epistêmên*) (*S.E.* 2 165b4–7). Aristotle vaguely promises to expand on either the implicit knowledge claims involved or *peirastikê* itself.

It is only when Aristotle gives an explication of the ways in which the characteristic arguments of eristics and sophistry involve "the universal topics of dialectic" (*koinoi*) (*S.E.* 170a35–37) that peirastic finally emerges in a thematic way. Aristotle says that the characteristic arguments of peirastic also are those using the *koinoi*.

Aristotle identifies one kind of fallacy as presenting the characteristic argument of peirastic as well as of sophistry, so that Aristotle's treatment of all three (sophistry, eristic and peirastic) is found within his analysis of a particular fallacy in *Sophistical Refutations*. This treatment begins in chapter 7 with a consideration of those fallacies which in fact employ valid syllogisms, but take advantage of the respondent's ignorance by using arguments which are not appropriate (*oikeion*) to the subject matter under consideration.

This latter form of fallacy is the sophistical fallacy par excellence and is, in turn, the same argumentation that is typically employed in peirastic (*S.E.* 7 169b23–25). The primary difference between the sophistical and the peirastic uses of the same syllogism is that in peirastic the point is to make it clear where it was the respondent went wrong (*deiknunte agnountas*), while neither sophist nor eristic is looking for any such clarification (*ou poiouei dêlon ei agnoei*) (*S.E.* 8 169b24–29). Aristotle then drives his point home with comparisons of

Socratic procedure as against the eristic or sophistic procedure. The latter deal with a respondent not by asking him questions which go to the point of his fallacious assumption, but by having him implicitly assume it; the Socratic makes the assumption explicit, elicits agreement and then shows the consequences. The one relies on explicit concession, the other on implicit. Some or all of these arguments, in either case, will involve misrepresentations (*pseudeis*) (*S.E.* 169b31–35).

In any case all such lines of reasoning are *ad hominem*, without regard to whether they are in form arguments or refutations (*S.E.* 8 170a12–13). What all these lines of reasoning also have in common is their employment of the universal dialectical terms (*dia tôn koinôn*)—terms such as being, unity, same, other, like and unlike, unequal (*Met.* Gamma 2 1003b36, 1004a18–21, 1005a16–18; Father Owens adds to this list contrariety, motion and rest, genus and species, part and whole, prior and posterior, [Owens, 1978, pp. 275–79].)

Almost as if in apology for the sudden introduction of a consideration of sophistry and *peirastic* in the midst of a discussion of fallacy, Aristotle reminds the reader that it is part of dialectical art to deal with such an analysis because the dialectical art is inclusive and must give an account of the apparently dialectical and the *peirastic*, in addition to an account of dialectic proper (*S.E.* 9 170a8–11).

Aristotle starts again and introduces his dialectical account of *peirastic* and *sophistical* argument with a consideration of the distinction that people are reaching for when they attempt to draw a line between verbal and conceptual arguments. Aristotle attempts to show that that distinction ultimately has its roots in the distinction between the kind of teaching effected by the methods of dialectic, on the one hand, and didactic teaching on the other hand (*S.E.* 10 171a28–171b3). The didactic method or lecture is appropriate for teaching subjects of which there is demonstration, such as mathematics. It proceeds from certain first principles which it is up to the auditor to reach for; it does not first elicit them from the auditor. If the student does not already have a pre-existent noetic grasp of the principles, didactic teaching proceeds on the basis of presupposing a trustful acceptance of the teacher on the part of the student (*S.E.* 2 165b2–3) who obtains thus a first knowledge of science as a kind of dogma.

Dialectic, on the other hand, and its highest form, *peirastic*, can *only* proceed by way of eliciting responses from the auditor; dialectic is necessarily *ad hominem*. The fact that fallacies are similarly *ad hominem* is relevant. Both in fallacies and in dialectic the respondent has to find his own way out of the difficulties and cannot rely on the questioner. That is why question-and-answer is appropriate to *peirastic*, and lecturing is not. The reverse is the case if we are proceeding from certain principles as in actual mathematical demonstration.

Fallacy, again, is both like and unlike a mistake in mathematics. Universal dialectical terms can be used within their proper sphere, and actual dialectic occurs when a dialectician does so (*ho kata to pragma theorôn ta koina*). The

sophist tries to give the appearance of doing the same thing; and the *peirastikos* is a dialectician who, if he uses fallacy, is bent not on blunting the work of people who have some hold on truth, but of dealing instead with those who do not know but think they know. So in a sense when we speak of sophists or eristics, we are talking about people who misapply dialectic in just the way that anyone who draws a misleading mathematical diagram is attempting, but failing in an effort to do mathematics while in some sense making use of mathematics (*S.E.* 11 171b4–8, 35–38).

In the case of sophistry and eristic and in case of the abuse of dialectic, however, we are dealing not with a blunder in a settled science, but with what is only, in the best case, a use of logos. Speech in the realm of the universal dialectical terms lacks the discipline of reality, for there is a gap between speech and reality:

Now dialectical terms do not deal with some determinate subject matter, they explicate nothing, nor are they of the same nature as the truly universal (*oude toioutòs oios ho katholou*), for all things do not stand in one level universal class (*en henì tini genei*) and if some sort of universality is possible, it is not such as to make everything stand under one set of principles. (*S.E.* 11 172a12–14)

The difference between procedures involving self-evident principles and those involving universal dialectical terms brings us back once more to the characteristic methods of communicating in science and in dialectic, that is, to the dialectical conversation as opposed to the apodictive demonstration. Aristotle continues by saying:

The result is that no art which can explicate some particular thing (*tina phusin*) is interrogative. It cannot indifferently proceed with its first principles affirmed or denied and still be demonstrative. Dialectic is interrogative. If it was a kind of explication, it would not proceed by questioning, or at least would raise questions only about the less important items. Without concessions to begin with, dialectic can make no headway with its objections. It is the same with peirastic. (*S.E.* 11 172a14–21)

Socratic conversation does not presuppose Socrates' knowing something, for he insists he does not know. Instead it involves the undeniable power of one who lacks knowledge to test anyone who does claim to know in terms of the necessary consequences of the supposed knowledge (*S.E.* 11 172a21–28). In that way the respondent auditor may not come to knowledge of the subject under discussion, but he may come, first, to wonder and then to knowledge of himself, the knowledge that he, like Socrates, can know that he does not know. This, in turn, is just the Socratic refinement of ordinary, everyday conversation. What is refined is the consciousness of one's own use of the universal dialectical terms (which ordinary conversation hardly reaches).<sup>29</sup>

Thus peirastic is capable of a kind of universal knowledge in the sense that it may be applicable in a discussion of any subject; but it is a knowledge, not of subjects, but of self; it is a knowledge, not of *eidê*, but like a knowledge of exclusions and negations (*apophaneis*) (*S.E.* 11 172a39). This is the root and work of Socratic argument, a new kind of art or science, very different from all others (*S.E.* 11 172b1–2).

### *Sophists, Eristics and Socratics*

Sophistry makes use of dialectic, but goes beyond it in a sense. In the opening passages of the *Topics* (101a18–21) Aristotle says that investigation and maintaining arguments are the characteristic human activities that the dialectical art exploits; and he says close to the same thing at the beginning of *Rhetorical Art*. Aristotle distinguishes the activity of investigating arguments from that of sustaining them, however, when he comes, at the end of *Sophistical Refutations*, to make a final summing up. The proper (*kath hautên*) dialectical and peirastic effective operation (*ergon*) is simply an ability to seek and see implications (*dunamin sullogistikên*). The sustaining of arguments is set apart and said to arise from dialectic's near identity with sophistry (*S.E.* 34 183a37–183b7; see *Rhet.* A4 1359b8–12).

Dialectic as a way of upholding argument, Aristotle says, can most clearly be seen in the fact that the sophist asserts not only the ability to seek and see implications as a dialectician should (*ou monon dialektikôs*), but asserts also the power of doing this *as if this were all there were to knowledge* (*alla kai hôs eidôs*) (*S.E.* 34 183b2–4).<sup>30</sup>

Aristotle contrasts Socrates' modesty with this sophistic claim; but it is the specific Socratic basis of that modesty that gives the clue to the implications for Aristotle of the sophist's taking opinion as no different from the truth. Aristotle says:

This is the reason that Socrates asked questions, but did not answer them. For he conceded he did not know. (*S.E.* 34 187b7–8)

What Aristotle characterizes as sophistry (and with Plato gives that term its enduring pejorative meaning) exploits that possibility of speech which mimics demonstration while being itself empty (*S.E.* 1 165a22–24; 11 171b28–30). It is this negative characterization of Socrates' dialectic that lends credence to Pierre Aubenque's conclusion that the ultimate formulation of Aristotle's dialectic is as a purely formal and negative activity, for Aristotle clearly says that Socratic peirastic is the speech of one who does not have knowledge and makes remarks of similar import in other places in his work. Aubenque concludes that

Universality, critical activity, formality in character, openness to the totality: such finally are the traits which Aristotle recognizes in a [dialectic]. . . One sees well

enough in what sense that conception of [dialectic] constitutes a rehabilitation of sophistry and of rhetoric as against the Platonic attacks on them. (Aubenque, pp. 252, 285)

As I have already suggested, my opinion is that if the emphasis in this reading is on the formal in the sense of the empty character of dialectic, it misstates the role of dialectical negativity and turns it into a quasi-Kantian emptiness of thought.<sup>31</sup> Instead in order to show an alternative for Aubenque's reading, I return to Aristotle's claim that sophists act as if speech and opinion were all there were to knowledge.

Saying that opinion is all there is to knowledge has a double and opposed meaning. To accuse sophists of acting as if opinion and knowledge are identical can mean, of course, that a sophist improperly offers an argument as setting forth the truth of things. It can suggest dogmatism. But such an accusation equally well may mean skepticism of a specifically sophistic sort. At least in the Platonic-Aristotelian tradition sophistic skepticism with its consequence of revulsion from argument, that is, of hatred for discussion (misology), (*Phaedo* 89C–90D; cf. *Sophist* 234C–E), is the more dangerous form of skepticism because it amounts to the denial, at least with respect to the whole, of any knowledge which is distinct from opinion.

Sophistic skepticism is the denial that there is knowledge as opposed to human opinion. Such skepticism teaches that to attempt to distinguish between opinion and knowledge is simply illusory. In its most radical and elegant form, it is the assertion of the Protagorean argument as set forth in Plato's *Theaetetus* (152D–168D). There is no ultimate truth available to men; what there is falls into two classes—there are only individual perceptions, which are incorrigible and private, and there is speech. Knowledge is an illusion, and wisdom is understanding this. Aristotle is identifying sophistry with the illusion of knowledge in its two forms of dogmatism and skepticism.

In the *Theaetetus* Socrates refutes Protagoras, at least to Theaetetus' satisfaction, by insisting on the possibility of mistake, error and ignorance and finding agreement there between Socrates and Theaetetus (Benardete [1984], p. I.183). At the same time it is a redefinition of wisdom, for wisdom will not now be an art of *overcoming* all other men.

For Aristotle although dialectic is an art, sophistry and eristic and peirastic are all uses of dialectic. To be a sophist or eristic, as well as to be a peirastic, is to use an art for a human end. Such a use always also involves moral choice. There is a motive for the sophist's adoption of fallacious claims of knowledge. The sophist is out to gain a reputation, and the paradigmatic motive for gaining a reputation is to make money (*S.E.* I 165a23; II 171b27–28). Plato's Socrates also attacked the sophist's and the rhetor's unlimited seeking for fees, and Aristotle agrees with that characterization. For many modern commentators, this is to be dismissed as a class-based scorn for the sophists' lack of indepen-

dent means (Stone, p. 42; Kerferd, pp. 25–26; Guthrie, pp. 35–40). But Aristotle ought not simply be taxed with a partisan political act. He is very clear that philosophers need external goods and how heavy a burden is placed on philosophy by the fact that philosophy, the highest human happiness, must presuppose external goods, reasonable means; and Socrates' poverty and dependence on his friends was proverbial. Aristotle has a further point and argument about this claim of sophisticated motivation which needs to be explicated.

The point of Aristotle's insisting that sophistry is essentially a moneymaking enterprise lies elsewhere, although it may begin with or exploit the fact that fee-taking was a socially distasteful way of making a living. For this reason, it is perhaps important to put aside the question of the position of the historical sophists in order to understand the moral defects that Aristotle uses the term to impute.

There is a double-sidedness to sophistry and eristic in Aristotle. On the one hand, sophistry and eristics are *the* philosophic vices, of which few if any would be philosophers do not show traces. On the other hand, the term is a loose way of referring to an identifiable group of individual thinkers. In this latter sense sophists emerge and re-emerge in history in various guises, for whom the principle is the insistence that opinion and knowledge are identical. They are Gorgias and Protagoras, splendid fellows with splendid and serious insights, and perhaps Nietzsche or Heidegger or John Dewey or Richard Rorty, equally splendid fellows, but denying in the name of knowledge the possibility of knowledge. One wants both to embrace the fellow philosophers in such persons or, alternatively, to project onto them the struggle against that with which they present us, i.e., an invitation to indulge in our favorite philosophic vices. If Aristotle and Plato engaged in partisan activity when they gave a permanent pejorative flavor to those who called themselves sophists, then the party on whose behalf they were acting is more likely to have been the party of the Socratics, deeply persuaded of the moral and intellectual importance of philosophy as the knowledge of not knowing, than to have been the party of the dominant Athenian conservatives. In any case neither Plato nor Aristotle shows any sign of ever forgetting that sophists are the indistinguishable, or nearly so, congeners of the philosopher. Moreover they read Gorgian and the Protagorean texts very carefully, just as we gratefully read them and the texts of Nietzsche, Heidegger and Dewey.

If we can accept that Aristotle's partisanship is a partisanship of ideas, of ways of life, as Socrates says in the *Gorgias*, then we will be able to understand the claim that the sophist develops and uses dialectic for self-aggrandizement and gain in the narrowest possible sense for want of any other motive, and fee-taking is emblematic of that narrow sense of self-aggrandizement. There is something feckless about such a use of the most important and highest of the analytic arts.<sup>32</sup> There is even something deeply comic about the sophist who claims to have the key to empire and power (*Gorgias* 452D), but offers to

teach it to others at only a small fee. He turns out to be someone who “makes [all things] quickly and offers them for sale for a very small sum” (*Sophist* 234A).

On the other hand, the sophist claims his art is more important than that of any of the others, because, as Stanley Rosen says, “[t]he purpose of the ‘focal art’ of sophistry is to enable us to persuade others to satisfy our desires [while overtly] the primary theme of sophistic speeches is the law, written and unwritten, of the city” (Rosen, pp. 165–66, 160–61). Comic sophistry is too close to philosophy for comfort. Rosen elsewhere says:

Sophistry is . . . a rival to philosophy because it claims to deal with the welfare of the whole city. This claim is based upon the sophist’s putting opinion in the place of knowledge. In other words, the crucial thesis of sophistry is that opinion is higher than knowledge. The Sophist does not deny that there is technical knowledge, whether of some shoemaking or geometry. His point is rather that there is no technical knowledge of opinions about the good; instead, there is technical knowledge of how to persuade others to accept our opinion of the good. (Rosen, p. 160)

This drive to bring others over to one’s side fits in easily and directly with the sophist’s moneymaking teaching of the art which claims to be at the same time both persuasion and wisdom. At the same time the sophistic desire to make money from teaching is, in the Socratic tradition, only a derivative from a different kind of gain-seeking. This second understanding of the meaning of sophistic gain-seeking shows a fiercer side of the fictive drive to persuade than we have seen before. The motives and skills of the sophists would not be fully elucidated by considering the sophists as teachers. They must also be elucidated as they are in a passage in Seth Benardete’s Commentary on the *Theaetetus*:

Knowledge and wisdom are not the same [for Protagoras]. Knowledge, which Protagoras mentions only once, is of the Heraclitean flux; wisdom works within the horizon of ineradicable illusion. . . . The wise . . . are effective only if they leave this ground alone. . . . The doctor changes by means of drugs the patient’s opinion of a food’s bitterness. . . . The sophist’s drugs are speeches; what, then, is the soul’s food? . . . A city that can resist its own assimilation to another city is a healthy city, and the city in the best condition can feed on every other city. The same holds for the soul. The soul is healthy when it assimilates other souls to itself. . . . Wisdom is power. He is wise who can make someone or something into his own image. (Benardete [1984], pp. 1.121–1.122)

The sophist so elucidated becomes a type of the tyrant.<sup>33</sup> Socrates says in the *Republic* that though sophists have a handbook for handling public opinion, it is those in power in the city who really coopt the young into the ways of public thinking (*Rep.* VI 492A–493C). It is the statesmen who have power, then, who are the true sophists. If we are talking of assimilation that is overwhelming, the

sophists' art is a distant copy of the tyrant's use of social pressures (*nomos*) (*Statesman* 303B–C; see Benardete [1984], pp. III.138–III.139).

Both philosophy and sophistry presuppose a neediness and a capacity. But the neediness of the sophist has a different character from the neediness that characterizes Socratic eros, and so does the sophistic capacity. The sophist has turned away from Socratic neediness, and the neediness that the sophist recognizes in himself and in others drives him to seek unlimited gain.<sup>34</sup> The two kinds of neediness stand to each other as the first and the second Socratic speeches in the *Phaedrus*. Lysias' love, says Socrates, is assimilative and cannibalistic, "just as the wolf loves the lamb" (*Phaedrus* 241D).

The sophist responds to his neediness by an endless pursuit of wealth, an endless assimilation of others through the creation and imposition of persuasive views of the world, all of which he thinks are equally true, false or indifferent. Sophistic wisdom has its roots in the skepticism that believes that each of us, as incorrigibly private, reaches out to others in speech only on the basis of an ultimate illusion. The belief that illusion is ultimate is coupled with the denial of the distinction between opinion and knowledge. The two provide the underpinning motivation for the making of those moral choices that lead, in the worst case, to a person's becoming that corrupt and burntout case to whom Aristotle here gives the name of sophist. The sophistic character results from too often perverting the search for knowledge into the pursuit of wealth and power.

[S]ophists draw on themselves the appearance of the philosopher . . . for sophistry . . . grapples with the same class of objects as does philosophy, but differs from it . . . by the sophist's choice of a way of life. . . . Sophistic does not seek reality, but is satisfied with appearance. (*Met.* Gamma 4, 1004b18–27; see also *Rhet.* A1 1355b17–18: "Sophistry lies not in a skill, but in a moral choice.")

### *Dialectic, Philosophy and Philosophic Sciences*

The philosopher, however, makes a different choice, that is, the choice to pursue knowledge believing that is right.<sup>35</sup> It is a choice that is made possible by the knowledge of one's ignorance (*peirastic*), but it is not identical with the knowledge of ignorance. One who engages in *peirastic* is also making a human use of dialectic; such a person also must have a motive, and that motive will display a moral character. The motive is something like that of doing good for one's friends, whether the respondent or the audience or both.<sup>36</sup> If Father Fortin is right, in the short study from which I have already quoted, that there is some deeper reason for education through *peirastic* to start with the relatively young (Fortin, p. 259), then we must correct Socrates' words in the *Republic* (*Rep.* 537D–539D) by Socrates' practice throughout the dialogues and record him as a lover of philosophic young men. There is one more aspect of the motive for *peirastic* (which is the motive of the teacher). A friendly motive is charac-

terized by selfless action, that is, for action for the sake of the other (*N.E.* 18 1163b2–5). But Aristotle also insists there is self-interest in any friendship, and such self-interest, grown within the soul of good persons into the love of the noble, is good (*N.E.* 18 1169b2–3).

Aristotle separates philosophy from both peirastic and dialectic, although he seems to admit the intimate association of all three. In the culminating passage of the *Metaphysics* where Aristotle both compares and distinguishes dialectic, sophistry and philosophy, he says that where dialectic is peirastic, philosophy is openness to achieving knowledge (*gnôristikê*) (*Met.* Gamma 2 1004b26–27). Earlier in the same passage in the *Metaphysics* Aristotle has said that what separates dialectic from philosophy is not the subject matter of dialectic, but because dialectic has nothing to say about the priority of substance (*ousia*) (*Met.* Gamma 2 1004b5–10).

We now have the resources to understand these claims. The sophist ultimately denies the possibility of knowledge of the whole, but that is, in effect, to deny ignorance of the whole. To admit one's ignorance, however, is to admit that the distinction between appearance and reality is applicable to understanding the whole; it is a turn to seeking the essence of things (*ousia*) and a denial that all knowledge is basically and radically contingent (*Met.* E2 1026b3–22). On the contrary, to speak of knowledge of the radically contingent is, as Aristotle says in the *Posterior Analytics*, to claim that knowledge is knowledge of accidents, (*An. Post.* A2 71b9–10) and that claim is, as he argues in the *Metaphysics*, an attempt to do without the principle of noncontradiction (*Met.* Gamma 4 1007a21–1007b18). Thus, philosophy is the attempt to turn from the investigation of opinions considered as such (which is what dialectic undertakes) (*Top.* A1 100a30–100b1; *Met.* B1 99521–26) toward knowledge of the beings, that is, an attempt to move beyond wonder. Moreover, it is an attempt to make such a move with an awareness of the weakness of speech (*to tôn asthenes*) (*Seventh Epistle* 343a1).

Even Aristotle proposes *philosophic* sciences only, and the adjective *gnôristikê* which he uses in this passage primarily means openness to knowledge, not knowing. In *Met.* Z1 1028b3–7 Aristotle says, “What is being, that is, what is *ousia*? This is what was, is and will be sought and always be hedged with puzzles.”

Thus dialectic in its highest use is inseparable from peirastic,<sup>37</sup> but it would seem that peirastic does not go beyond dialectic, that is, it stays within the limits of the proper use of speech (*S.E.* 11 171b7–8). In doing so it pushes speech and opinions to their limit without breaking that limit.<sup>38</sup>

The break between peirastic and philosophy may, like the Socratic image of the cave, serve to underline the radical conversion from normal civic life that philosophic *paideia* demands and the role of the conversion in the completed cycle of the cave. For it is necessary to make the first turn to self-knowledge which is the knowledge that we are governed by opinions, endoxa and conven-

tions only, and the trace of the truth and that these are the ineradicable ground of our shared understanding. But the conversion is not only this turn, but it is also wonder and not bitter cynicism—sensing that the light is primary and not the fires on the wall—which must result, for that alone leads away to the light of the true sun, the way that leads away towards philosophy which, however, must always turn back to dialectic to test itself. The cave is first and last, and it is lit only with remembered light.

## NOTES

1. The disputation was eclipsed by the rhetorical exercise, the *declamatio*, in the Roman world, (Marrou, pp. 201–5, 286–89; Kennedy, pp. 316–22), but it was reborn in the medieval universities. See Green-Pedersen, p. 338; Murphy, pp. 200–211, 198–230; Ong (1983), pp. 36–37, 152–56; Ong (1981), p. 139.

2. “LeBlond . . . E. Weil and G.E.L. Owen . . . have stressed the importance which Aristotle assigns to dialectic [which is] firmly in the centre of the mature Aristotle’s thought” (Evans, pp. 2–3, 5).

3. Aristotle does not use the expression *logikê*, logic, of any discipline whatsoever (P. Hadot, p. 154). Moreover, when Aristotle does use the related words *logikos* and *logikôs*, he probably does so with the meaning of “dialectical” (Evans, pp. 29–30).

4. For the unproblematic seizing on the formal aspect of the syllogism, see Lukasiewicz, pp. 12–19; Kneale and Kneale, pp. 1, 33, 178. “Aristotle, it would seem, was the first to write a logic series. He was, it must be conceded, unaware of the fact” (McMullin, p. v).

5. The concept of formality is a difficult one in any case, and many different meanings have been assigned to it. Aubenque seems to be thinking of testing through the “formal validity” of arguments which lead a thesis into self-contradiction. It is the test of formal validity alone that the questioner provides while the theses, the matter of the argument, are provided by the respondent and not the proponent. Aubenque may be overstating the formal character of dialectic since, it will be argued, it is difficult to say the effect of dialectic for Aristotle is empty, formal and negative although each of these adjectives is, in a sense, true of the questioner’s role in dialogue. Aubenque has reason to emphasize the formal nature of dialectic to the highest degree, for such emphasis highlights his conclusion that the reality of first philosophy is nothing but such a dialectic (pp. 300–301; compare Owens [1978], pp. xvi–xxvi).

6. Alexander of Aphrodisias, pp. 2–5. Reference to the distinction in question as one which relates to the “matter” (*hylê*) of the two syllogism types seems a very strange way to refer to the grasping of a specific intellectual content, for that content would itself be a form. The sudden emergence of the contrast between the form in relation to the matter and the form in relation to the content suggests that the Commentator’s use of the term already has implicitly run into some of the problems that follow from formalization.

7. *An. Post.* B19 100a15–100b4; *de An.* Gamma 8 431b20–432a14; *N.E.* Z3 1139b30–31 and Z7. Aristotle, it is important to bear in mind, does not purport to give a full account of the process. The description of induction remains, as H.G. Gadamer has said in a slightly different context “conspicuously vague.” See Gadamer, p.314. The questions at stake, the movement from raw experience to access to the forms, do not permit treating this process as if it were a manner of mechanical summing.

8. Living knowledge is that known in its first causes, for other knowledge is accidental (*An. Post.* A2 71b9–10). It is knowledge “which has a head” (*N.E.* Z7 1141a19). Aristotle several times mentions the sophistic byplay that equates knowledge with some unactivated “possession of knowledge” (*An. Post.* A6 74b22–24), and pretends that one can possess knowledge just as a man “possesses” clothing lying in a closet when he is, in fact, standing naked. See *Theaetetus* 197A–E; *Euthydemus* 277B–278E. It is not possible, for Aristotle, to conceive of knowledge in this way; such knowledge is possessed only in an accidental sense.

9. "This . . . serves the great and awe-inspiring goal of giving a nearly complete account of the world as a *whole*. . . Aristotle undertook to satisfy that demand once and for all. Only a few after him have made such an attempt" (Klein, p. 187).

10. It is dialectic that aids in the seeking of those sciences which *philosophy* seeks (*tas kata philosophian epistêmas*) (*Top.* A2 101a28). Dialectic is *peirastikê*, tentative, but philosophy is *gnôristikê*, aiming at knowledge (*Met.* Gamma 2, 1004b26–28). The latter adjective, however, is expressive of the *potential* for rather than the actuality of knowledge; Aristotle does not forestall the argument about the degree to which knowledge is in us merely tentative. See Benardete [1978], pp. 2, 4.

11. Wieland, p. 135. Cf. the movement from the indeterminate (*hoti*) to the determinate grasp (*dihoti*) of a subject as explained in Owens [1978], pp. 287–98, 159–63.

12. According to Aubenque, Plato found the proto-dialectic was being thought of as a way to make knowledge *useful* for men. For example, Kleinais says in the *Euthydemus* that hunters and fishers must turn their catch over to the cooks if it is ever to be useful; and as cookery is to the fruits of the hunt, dialectic is to the regional sciences. The cooks (*opsopoioi*), (*Euthydemus* 290B), have a skill (*opsopoikê*). It is a skill, Aubenque lets us remember, which in the *Gorgias* Socrates calls a scandalous sham-art (Aubenque, p. 252 n. 4 and p. 253 n. 1).

13. The echo of Socrates' "second sailing" is not absent from Socrates' criticism of *paideia* in the *Rival Lovers* (*Rival Lovers* 132D; see Bruell, p. 93).

14. Aubenque, pp. 249–52. For Aubenque, moreover, the identification of *paideia* and dialectic is not an isolated affirmation, but an essential building block of his understanding of Aristotle.

15. I. Hadot, pp. 18–24. I. Hadot concludes (p. 24) that the *Rival Lovers* is an attack on the *Peripatos* written by a cynic.

16. The copy is not just another case of the original, but being like the original, it still is in some sense inferior to it.

17. Green-Pedersen, pp. 13–14. Proponents of the other view, under which the work continues to be treated as separate, believe the tradition in question reflects the fact that "Aristotle came only late to the unitary vision which would be described [in chapter 34 of *Sophistical Refutations* and by] accepting that vision it is not impossible that Aristotle has noticeably changed the original sense of his undertaking" (Brunschwig, pp. xix–xx). I am strongly inclined to join the *Sophistical Refutations* to the originary scope of the teaching of dialectic, but if we do so, we need express no surprise that sophistry does not sit easily with more straightforward aspects of dialectical reasoning.

18. Book Alpha of the *Topics* contains introductory matter orienting the activity of dialectic through definitions and a preliminary discussion of the function of dialectic. The book also provides a description of the constitutive elements of dialectical method, including syllogism and induction, a statement of the principles on which the subjects for disputation (*pro* or *con*) are formulated and a description of the four "instruments" (*organa*) of dialectic (A13 105a21–26). The instruments of dialectic are (i) the provision of propositions, (ii) being able to review how many senses a term has, (iii) finding distinctions and (iv) seeking similarities.

19. The actual topics, or beginning points of argument, are organized around the four predicable terms: accident (Books Beta, Gamma), genus (Book Delta), proper attribute (Book Epsilon) and definition (Books Zeta, Eta).

20. The *peirastic* character of dialectic first emerges in Book Theta, and *Sophistical Refutations* (Book Iota) becomes the touchstone for separating dialectic from sophistry. The most important loci are *S.E.* 1 165a38–165b10; 7–9; 11 171b3–172b4; 16 175a5–31; 34 183a37–184b9.

21. *Top.* Theta 14 164b1–8; *Phaedrus* 266B–C; *Sophist* 253D–253E. This passage expands on Aristotle's earlier remark that through the use of dialectic "we are the more easily able to deal with any subject set before us" (*Top.* A2 101a30–31).

22. *Top.* Theta 14 163a29–163b29. See also *Top.* A13–18 and *S.E.* 16. Book Theta closely connects dialectic as a kind of strenuous practice in argument to the developed and regulated disputation, which thus is a kind of culmination for dialectic. See *Top.* Theta 11 161a17–161b18. For descriptions of the Aristotelian disputation and discussions of its nature, see the various studies in Owen (1968), e.g., Moraux (1968), Solmsen, Ryle; and see also Owen (1986), 221–35, 238.

23. The fact that Aristotle fails to use the work *peirastikê* at this point will take on a deeper

meaning as we uncover how important peirastic is to become in the course of Aristotle's treatment of dialectic.

24. Recently there have been discussions about a different kind of dialectic about the underpinnings of science. These discussions are closer in spirit to the connection between dialectic and the sciences in Aristotelian terms. I have in mind exercises such as the books in the University of Wisconsin Rhetoric of Human Sciences series (e.g., McCloskey) and the N.E.H.-funded Project on the Rhetoric of Inquiry (POROI) at the University of Iowa. These projects describe themselves as rhetorical.

25. Aristotle's usage gives the eristic and the sophist differing motives, but in each case the motive is an evil or vicious one. The eristic aims at victory for its own sake; the mere appearance of prevailing is what he needs. The sophist intends to use that appearance, the appearance of wisdom, in order to get a reputation and gain wealth and fame. From time to time Aristotle includes the eristic (whose motives are as narrowly self-interested as those of the sophist) with the sophist under the name of the latter.

26. In these and the following notes I try to suggest some differences between the Stranger's teachings and Aristotelian peirastic. The subject is a difficult one. The noble sophistic is introduced in the *Sophist* on the basis of a distinction between the Stranger's nonevaluative division (like from like) and his diacritical cathartics (separating the better from the worse). Benardete ([1984], pp. II.97–99, II.97 n. 42) points out three crucial deforming aspects of that introduction. The first deforming aspect is relevant here. The Stranger accepts *paideia* as the name of the noble sophistic, but he does so on the heels of Theaetetus' suggestion of the word. Theaetetus (*Sophist* 229D2) has contrasted *paideia* only with craft arts (*dêmiourgikê*). Since the contrast is jarring, it is likely that, in a totally frustrating way, Theaetetus has missed the point of the noble sophistic as a refutational and purifying learning and taken it as a kind of mathematics. As Benardete points out, the contrast echoes with Socrates' usage in *Theaetetus*, 145A, where *paideia* means education in the "sciences" as opposed to craft arts. This is "a far reaching mistake" in Theaetetus (Benardete) and shows that, despite Socrates' maieutics, Theaetetus has "reverted in less than a day to his very first definition of knowledge (Ibid.). Nevertheless, however asked Theaetetus' understanding is, the Stranger goes on to describe another and more Socratic kind of *paideia* (*Sophist* 230A–D).

27. *Theaetetus*, 149A–151D. The chief difference seems to be that Socrates' account is focused on the subject matter of the discussion and not, as is the Stranger's, on the reflexive effect on the coparticipant, that is, maieutics does not attempt to dissociate the philosophical from the peirastic movement in the activity.

28. There is no reason to believe either that eristics and sophists are limited to use of the eristic or sophistic arguments at all times or that only eristics and sophists use such arguments.

29. The same passage arguably could be translated as "even though they seem to speak very far off the point" (*S.E.* 11 172a33–34; see generally *S.E.* 11 172a29–172b4).

30. *Alla kai hōs eidōs* can also be understood as "pretending that they also have knowledge."

31. Aristotle "regularly uses the term 'empty' to describe the dialectical or Platonic method of inquiry. This seems to imply that the Platonic method is—to speak in a more recent fashion—merely formal, and emptied of real content. Aristotle does not contrast 'formal' and 'real' in this modern manner" (Owens [1978], p. 199).

32. The eristic is an even more feckless type. Such a one wants the sense of having won the argument, and nothing more (*S.E.* 11 171b24–25). Sophistry and eristic relate to one another as desire and spiritedness.

33. Perhaps there is a notion of the sophist attempting to metamorphose into the tyrant. If there is such a notion, it helps to explain the progression of persons in the *Gorgias* from the rhetor Gorgias through the lover/hater of tyranny, Polus, to the one who would himself become tyrant (Callicles), but may lack the courage (or brutality) to do so.

34. The term moneymaker implies that money-making has become an end in itself, precisely because it is unlimited in scope. See the treatment of the *chrêmatistikê* in *Pol.* A9–10.

35. "Philosophers . . . could not possibly identify the life according to nature with the life of the tyrant" (Strauss, p. 115). See the discussion of sophists, philosophers and the vulgar and philosophic views of convention at pp. 114–18.

36. Socrates expressly claims to be acting from goodwill (*eunoia*) (*Theaetetus*, 151D).

37. The Stranger in the *Sophist* seems to agree that separation of dialectic and peirastic is ultimately impossible (Benardete [1984], p. II.93).

38. Aristotle insists on the distinction between dialectic which deals with opinions as such, and the purified student's effort to move toward knowledge. That insistence may account for his refusal to use the term dialectic for the philosophic effort. There is a passage in *Metaphysics* (M4 1078b17–30) in which Aristotle seems to be saying that Socrates did not understand that it was possible to make such a sharp differentiation between dialectic and philosophy. On the other hand, Socrates' insistence on the barrenness of the maieutic function suggests something like the same distinction.

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