Did Aristotle Write on Fallacies?

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ABSTRACT: Aristotle wrote on paralogisms, not on fallacies. Recently, John Woods argued for a "misalignment" between some concepts of fallacies and various lists of fallacies supposed to share a core based on Aristotle's list. We stress multiples continuities and discontinuities between Aristotle's paralogisms and modern concepts of fallacy and show that his concept of paralogism already did not match his list. Yet, he also paid attention to irregular arguments not listed in *On sophistical refutations*.

KEYWORDS: Aristotle, dialectic, J. Woods, fallacy, misalignment, paralogism, rhetoric, sophism, syllogism

1. INTRODUCTION

Although the concept of fallacy is not consensual among contemporary argumentation theorists, a few statements about its link with Aristotle's so-called fallacies appear to be commonplaces.

I propose what seems to me to be three of them. To begin with, Aristotle is said to be the first author who produced and published a (rather) systematic theory of fallacies and illustrated it with a list of examples. Second, we are direct heirs of his work which is at the root of most contemporary reflections on fallacies. Related to the previous one, a third commonplace is that his list of fallacies, or its most important items, is still listed in the major contemporary general theories on fallacies.

As expected, I intend to discuss and challenge these commonplaces and some neighboring points. I do not claim that they are definitely wrong, but rather simplistic, as is often the case with commonplaces. We already have various theories on fallacies, but I contend that the history of the concept of fallacy and related notions is still rudimentary and needs closer attention to improve our understanding of this complicated phenomenon. Long-term History often appears stratified like geological layers, hence continuities may coexist with discontinuities and some layers may experience distortions.

According to me, John Woods' suggestive concept of 'misalignment' is another convenient way to present this idea of a conjunction of continuities and discontinuities between an old and a contemporary concept, especially when it went through translations. The first part of this paper discusses Wood's concept of misalignment between what he calls the traditional list of fallacies and the traditional concept that would dominate today's approaches. The second part focuses on Aristotle's concept. I show significant discrepancies between his concept of paralogism and the essential features of the

contemporary concept of fallacy that Woods considers standard. In the third part, I challenge *On sophistical refutations'* claim that its list of thirteen types of paralogisms was exhaustive. Aristotle himself pointed to other problems or situations involving fallacious arguments that do not seem to belong to this list.

2. WOOD'S MISALIGNMENT THESIS

In *Errors of reasoning* (2013), J. Woods introduces his "concept-list misalignment thesis", namely:

> Contrary to the traditional concept-list instantiation thesis, the items on the traditional *list* are not to be found in the extension of the traditional *concept* of fallacy. (p. 6)

To make it definitively clear, we have to take a few steps backward. What is this "concept-list instantiation"? Does it mean that Woods' favorite traditional list of fallacy that he calls "the Gang of Eighteen" would "fall into the traditional concept of fallacy" (p. 5)? This should not be surprising, for we could ask the Socratic question: is it possible to make a list of X, without a concept of X? In the case of fallacies, Woods' answer seems to amount to a firm 'yes'. Later in the book, he is very clear about this tension between concept and list when he writes about this misalignment: "It is a thesis about traditions – the traditional *list* of fallacies and the traditional concept of *fallacy* "(p. 133). So, traditions are crucial. Now, let us ask: what is this "traditional concept of fallacy"?

> The traditional view is that most, if not all, of the items on this list instantiate the rule-violation conception of error […] A further feature of the traditional conception is that fallacies are errors which people in general have a natural tendency to commit, and do commit with a notable frequency. They are also attended by a significant likelihood of postdiagnostic recurrence. They are like bad habits. They are hard to break. (p. 5)

How traditional is this traditional view? Woods makes a suggestion: "By 'traditional' I mean what has come down to us over the years in variations of some initial starting point. The starting point for the concept of fallacy is Aristotle" (p. 133) This is not far from our two first commonplaces. Bet let us be careful: even if it is true that Aristotle's concept of fallacy is the starting point, this does not imply that we find his concept of fallacy on arrival. We should also be careful with the concept of tradition: it has a strong tendency to be fuzzy, especially around the beginning. Woods himself gives a wise piece of advice :

> A theory of the traditional concept must pay heed to its historical lineage, but it need not be the case – indeed hardly ever is the case – that when the lineage is a long one, a good theory of a traditional concept is unchangingly the same as the theory of its originating idea. So, it should not be surprising that traditional fallacy theory is not Aristotle's. (p. 134)

This appears to agree with our first commonplace: Aristotle is the first (known) author of a systematic theory of fallacies. But we should be careful about the second one, namely that we are his heirs. This may be true, but the legacy may have become bastardized. Moreover, this corruption may affect both the list and the concept. When Woods stresses that the misalignment thesis is a matter of tradition, he speaks of a plurality of traditions: the traditional list and the traditional concept. But who says that each one is not itself corrupted or distorted? Aren't we dealing with a plurality of lists and a plurality of concepts? Woods does not go that far, but we can find hints that he walks on this path which, according to me, is the right one.

Traditional or not, the list of fallacies is itself an ideal. You may dream of it, but if you look around you will not find it. What you will find is many lists of fallacies. Woods has his 'Gang of Eighteen'. He also contends that Aristotle has a 'Gang of Thirteen' (Woods is inspired by the thirteen fallacies of *On sophistical refutations*), and he remarks that Tindale (2007) opts for a "Gang of Twenty-eight" (2013, p. 5). It seems that there are as many lists as authors. But according to Woods "all retain a substantial common core, of which the Gang of Eighteen is a reasonable representative assortment" (p. 5). At most, this is true of recent works. But you can also imagine that most lists only pay homage and tribute to Aristotle's works. This is more or less our third commonplace: modern lists are centered on Aristotle's Gang of Thirteen. But again, this is an illusion for they usually do not include all of the thirteen. Some of them are regularly depreciated or even forgotten: for instance the fallacy of *Accent* or the *Accident*. They are simply not good contemporary examples of fallacies. Thus, not only are the modern lists fluctuating with a tendency to inflate but there is indeed a drift from this Gang of Thirteen of which Aristotle was so proud.

The concept of fallacy does not fare much better. A falsely naïve argument against the view that we share Aristotle's concept is that he could not have spoken of fallacies because he spoke Greek and 'fallacy' is not a Greek word. He wrote about *paralogisms* and from this Greek word to the English 'fallacy' there is at least the discontinuity of one translation, if not two, since the way has gone through the (scholastic) Latin *fallacia*. You could object that it is direct from the Greek *paralogism* to the English (or German or French, etc.) 'paralogism'. Yet, as suggested by the first item of Aristotle's Gang of Thirteen, beware of an equivocation based on a seducing homophony. Furthermore, despite their proximity, 'paralogism' and 'fallacy' are not familiar synonyms in English. Here again, there is a conceptual shift.

We have already mentioned some features that Woods holds typical of today's common understanding of what a fallacy is. He qualifies this understanding as traditional, but we shall see that this tradition is rather recent, at least when compared with Aristotle's concept. Woods summarizes these features in a short synthetic formula: EAUI. E like error, A like attractive, U like universal, I like incorrigible. This formulation has the advantage of looking clear and easy to remember. Woods has serious reservations about using these four criteria as a systematic way to characterize a fallacy and on their literal interpretation: "regardless whether the traditional concept is or is not what I take it to be, the EAUI notion is not a fit target for a theoretical robust account of fallacy" (2013, p. 136). I will not dig further into Woods's opinion but grant, like him, that these four letters, EAUI, give a not-too-bad approximation of a typical contemporary approach to fallacies. I will compare it with Aristotle's concept.

3. ARISTOTLE'S PARALOGISMS

We have just paid attention to some lexical aspects including a possible challenge coming from the translation of the Greek "paralogism. Let us still pay attention to words for a while before turning to what is more or less hidden behind them. Aristotle makes a strong connection between two core concepts of his philosophical system: syllogism and paralogism. The main one is the concept of syllogism, for paralogism is defined from it as shown by the first page of *SR* (I, 164a20). Aristotle defines a paralogism and immediately gives one of the rare definitions of a syllogism that can be found in his works. But first, what is a paralogism?

> Let us now treat of sophistical refutations, that is, arguments which appear to be refutations but are really fallacies (*paralogisms*) and not refutations […] (1955, p. 11)

The translator chose to translate 'paralogism' by 'fallacy' although the contemporary concept of 'fallacy' is broader than Aristotle's paralogism. Moreover, a conceptual misalignment between the two concepts is already creeping. The Philosopher goes on.

> That some reasonings are really reasonings, but that others seem to be, but are not really reasonings, is obvious. For, as this happens in other spheres from a similarity between the true and the false, so it happens also in arguments. For some people possess good physical condition, while others have merely the appearance of it, by blowing themselves out and dressing themselves up like the tribal choruses; again, some people are beautiful because of their beauty, while others have the appearance of beauty because they trick themselves out …

This English translation uses the terms 'reasoning' and 'argument' to translate the Greek *syllogism* and *logos*. Whether a distinction should be made between 'reasoning' and 'argument' is an open topic, but the main point is that both terms are commonly used to translate *syllogism* and *logos*. A recent tendency of French translations is to use 'deduction' for *syllogism*, but not always[1]. For instance, in this paragraph of *SR* Aristotle uses only one term (*syllogism*) but Dorion (1995) and Hecquet (2015) use both 'argument' and 'syllogism'. An English translation of their very close French translations of Aristotle is: "That some arguments (*arguments*) are deductions (*déductions*) while others seem to be deductions but are not, is obvious". This may appear as mere details, but it also shows how traditions can shift and meanings too. You could also add that all this is really obvious, for there are very strong inductive arguments that could easily be taken for valid deductions. So, what is the problem? The problem is that appearance matters and that for Aristotle the specificity of syllogism, hence deduction, is crucial as shown by the well-known definition that comes just after he introduces the concept of paralogism:

> Reasoning (*syllogism*) is based on certain statements made in such a way as necessarily to cause the assertion of things other than those statements and as a

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[1] An example is Brunschvig's translation of the *Topics* (2015).

result of those statements; refutation, on the other hand, is reasoning accompanied by a contradiction of the conclusion. (I, 165a)

Hamblin's celebrated statement "A fallacious argument, as almost every account from Aristotle onwards tells you, is one that seems to be valid, but is not so" (1970, p. 12) has been much criticized, mostly about the requirement of validity. But if we drop the shift introduced by the translation of *paralogism* by 'fallacy' (a crucial shift, since a paralogism claims to be a syllogism, hence a deduction), Hamblin is certainly wrong about the tradition coming after Aristotle, but faithful to the very word of the Philosopher.

Yet, a problem arises which has to do with a concept-list misalignment. Aristotle's list is notoriously misaligned with his previous definition of paralogism. The reader expects examples of fallacious syllogisms, but Aristotle's examples often are no more than sketches. The fallacy of *Accent* is exemplary. Aristotle explains that it is not easy (probably a euphemism for 'impossible') to provide an oral example because oral Greek is accentuated. If you change an (oral) accent, the meaning of the expression changes so that nobody can be trapped. The trick is only possible with a text based on an accentuated language devoid of written signs for accents, as still was Aristotle's Greek. Another well-known example where Aristotle's example is far from a regular syllogism is the fallacy called *The multiple question* (V, 167b38-168a16). The trick is clear but the way to reconstruct it as a syllogism is rather obscure. Thus, it is often a long way from Aristotle's concept of paralogism to his examples, as it is between his Gang of Thirteen and the Gang of Eighteen and other gangs.

Here is a last point about lexical aspects. Why did Aristotle not use the Greek *sophisma*, which meant a trick and has been used by other Greek-speaking authors to speak of fallacious arguments? Aristotle uses the adjective 'sophistical', he speaks of the tricks of sophists, but does not apply *sophisma* to paralogisms although he uses it in other places, for instance in the *Politics* (1297a) or the *Metaphysics* (1000a19). You find no occurrence of this word in *SR* nor in the *Rhetoric.* It appears two times in the *Topics* (8, 11, 162 a12- 19), in two consecutive sentences, the second of which is considered inauthentic. A plausible explanation is that Aristotle wanted to stress the close theoretical link he made between his concepts of paralogism and syllogism. This suggests a possible origin of a misalignment, or a mismatch, between the Aristotelian paralogisms and the contemporary fallacies: from a theoretical point of view, Aristotle was mostly interested in pseudo- deductive arguments, not in bad or weak reasoning in general. This could explain why he does not pay attention to pseudo or weak inductive arguments: they are foreign to the field of syllogism.

Now, let us compare his paralogisms and Woods' EAUI approach to fallacies. First, strictly speaking, paralogisms are not errors. But they are linked to errors in the way tricks are: they are put forward by a crafty person who makes no mistake but tries to make other people commit one. You become her victim, only if you grant her sophism.

Are paralogisms attractive, that is are they "errors towards which people in general are drawn" (Woods, 2013, p. 135)? We have just said that sophists are supposed not to fall into their paralogisms. So, even if paralogisms are attractive, at least sophists escape their attraction. Moreover, Aristotle (1955) has his own opinion about the scope of this attraction: the potential victims of paralogisms are not anybody: "[…] reasoning (*syllogism*) and refutation are sometimes real and sometimes not, but appear to be

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real owing to men's inexperience; for the inexperienced are like those who view things from a distance" (*SR*, I, 164b25). Thus, for Aristotle, paralogisms are not unconditionally attractive, unless you consider that men, in general, are inexperienced (Yet, we shall see further that he grants that wise men can make mistakes). Moreover, in the *Rhetoric* he makes an aristocratic distinction between the happy few who can participate in a dialectical debate and the crowd who constitute the audience of rhetorical discourses. For "The function of rhetoric is to deal with things about which we deliberate, but for which we have no systematic rules; and in the presence of such hearers as are unable to take a general view of many stages, or to follow a lengthy chain of arguments. " (1967, I, 2, 1357a2) A few lines further, about the method of syllogistic demonstration, he adds: "The first of these methods [*the dialectical one*] is necessarily difficult to follow owing to its length, for the judge is supposed to be a simple person".

'Inexperienced' and 'simple' are vague terms that do not strictly overlap but give the impression that Aristotle speaks of uneducated people or having trouble paying sustained attention to a speech. Except when he makes a comparison between inexperienced people and "those who view things from a distance" he says nothing linking the attractiveness of paralogisms with a general aspect of human nature. Yet, although he does not speak of a general tendency to be trapped by paralogisms, several of his remarks suggest that experienced and wise men too can be trapped by paralogisms if they do not pay attention. First, it is likely that if they could not be deceived, sophists would not insist on abusing them in dialectical debates. Furthermore, they can be trapped by ignorant people, especially in the case of a fallacy of Accident, for: "[…] it is along these lines that specialists and men of science in general are refuted by the unscientific for they argue with the men of science with reasonings based on accident, and the latter, incapable of making distinctions, either give in when questioned or think they have done so when they have not." (*SR*, VI, 168b6). Thus, the success of a fallacy is not the result of a mysterious general attraction but of unfavorable pragmatic conditions like carelessness, ignorance, confusion, or a lack of experience usually highlighted by the sophist's stimulation.

The question of universality ("common enough to qualify for a kind of universality" (Woods, 2013, p. 135)) meets the question of attractiveness ("people in general are drawn"): fallacies can be said common in several ways that should be distinguished to avoid the threat of a fallacious equivocation. Yet, Aristotle does not claim that paralogisms are common, although at least one of them is not bound to a specific cognitive status: the fallacy of the *Consequent*. He gives various examples to illustrate the possibly universal spontaneous trait that "whenever if A is, necessarily B is, men also fancy that if B is, A necessarily is" (*SR*, V, 167b2). Indeed, as he discusses paralogisms in the limited context of a dialectical exchange, it is no surprise that you find no systematic reflection on the universality of paralogisms.

What about incorrigibility? Here again, the focus of Aristotle's dialectical treatises is not conducive to a general discussion of the incorrigibility of paralogisms. So, we must settle for clues. In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle explains that "the orator should be able to prove opposites, as in logical arguments; not that we should do both (for one ought not to persuade people to do what is wrong), but that the real state of the case may not escape us, and that we ourselves may be able to counteract false arguments if another makes an unfair use of them." (I, 1, 1355a30) Thus, it seems that this devoted professor of rhetoric hopes that his inexperienced students will not remain "simple men" but become experienced. Common

natural weaknesses should therefore be corrected, for we have seen that even men of science can be abused if they are not vigilant enough. Are these considerations sufficient to claim that paralogisms are incorrigible, or not incorrigible? This question may look like the fallacy of the multiple question: any exclusive answer seems to lead to a deadlock.

To sum up, the typical uses that Aristotle saw for his paralogisms have a family resemblance with the modern EAUI approach to fallacies, but we have also underlined important discrepancies or mismatches to confirm a conceptual misalignment between the ones and the others. Now, let us have a closer look at the question of the relationship between Aristotle's concept and his list of paralogisms.

4. ARISTOTLE'S LIST OF PARALOGISMS

In several places of *SR*, Aristotle suggests that his list of thirteen paralogisms is exhaustive. However, he does not express it so directly. He separates his thirteen paralogisms into two classes: six paralogisms *in dictione* (dependent on language) and seven paralogisms *extra dictionem* (independent of language). He claims that you can prove that the paralogisms *in dictione* are six, "by induction and by syllogism" (*SR*, IV, 165b27-30). Later, he does not explicitly say that the seven paralogisms make an exhaustive list, but that he has identified and listed "the various conditions under which false proofs (*paralogisms*) occur, for there are no further conditions under which they could occur, but they will always result from the above causes" (*SR*, VIII, 170a10-13). So, his list could be said exhaustive, if you could show that any paralogism looking new is an effect of any one of these causes. About this point, Aristotle is in a comfortable position since paralogisms sometimes overlap and each of them would be a particular case of one of them, *ignoratio elenchi* (ignorance of refutation) because they all manifest that the speaker seems to ignore what a correct refutation is. (*SR*, VI, 168a20)

Yet, Aristotle's theoretical audacity seems to be contradicted by some of his own observations or comments.

4.1 Rhetorical paralogisms

In the *Rhetoric*, he makes a very thorough parallelism between the two logical tools used in dialectic (syllogism and induction) and those of rhetoric (enthymeme and example). This leads him to claim that rhetoric has a specific kind of argument that is equivalent to paralogisms which he calls apparent enthymemes. A whole chapter of the second book is devoted to them and provides a specific list of nine or ten items, depending on the way you count them. Some of the paralogisms *in dictione* of the *SR* are grouped here under a single heading and we meet again five of the seven dialectical paralogisms *extra dictionem*: *Ignoratio elenchi* and the *Multiple question* are missing. But we also find three new ones, introduced as particular cases of one of the 'causes' listed in the *SR*.

Aristotle says of the first one that it can be found in dialectical contexts, as illustrated in the *SR* (*SR*, XV, 174b10). It is the abusive use of connecting words like 'therefore' to give the impression that an argument has been put forward. Aristotle gives no more details; thus we do not know how this leads to a paralogism in the strict sense of this term unless you broaden the definition of syllogism. So, this practice of adding superfluous 'therefore'

can be considered an intentional fallacy in the modern sense of the term, although people sometimes use logical connectors without meaning a logical link[2]. Is this fallacy really new? Is it irreducible to one of the Gang of Thirteen? In his comment, Aristotle speaks of the "form of the expression", which is the name of the last of the fallacies *in dictione* listed in the *SR*. But if we compare it with the examples given in the *SR*, it seems difficult to see the fallacy of the *Rhetoric* as an instance of this paralogism.

The second new item is a bit similar. Aristotle introduces it as a trick based on the "form of the expression". But again, the link with the fallacy bearing this name is unclear. This fallacy is the use of exaggeration. It can be used to construct or debunk a point of view (II, 24, 1401a2-12). Here again, it is not easy to find a telling example of a syllogism based on it. As in the previous case, Aristotle seems closer to the modern concept of an informal fallacy than to his original concept of paralogism. This enlarges his list and creates a stronger alignment with our contemporary concepts and lists of fallacies, but another serious misalignment with his own concept.

The third new apparent enthymeme of the *Rhetoric* is the one said drawn from a sign. It is not strictly new, since Aristotle makes a clear allusion to the rhetorical use of this kind of argument in the *SR* when he speaks of the *Consequent* and more precisely of the case of the man accused to be an adulterer because he is well turned-out and lurks at night (*SR*, V, 167b8-11). Yet, the *Rhetoric* lists the argument from sign, then the *Accident* and the *Consequent* as three different types of apparent enthymemes, and we meet again the unfaithful well-dressed night owl about the *Consequent* without any connection with the argument from sign. In any case, in opposition to the two first new apparent enthymemes where the trick comes from the verbal behavior of the speaker – let us say the form of his expression – Aristotle makes a clear allusion to the theory of the syllogism about this argument from sign, but just to say that it is "assylogistic" (II, 24, 1401b10).

4.2 Topical paralogisms

The chapter of the *Rhetoric* preceding the chapter on apparent enthymemes lists twenty-eight *topoi* that Aristotle considers helpful to design "a demonstrative enthymeme" aiming at supporting or refuting a thesis (II, 23, 1397a7). Nowadays, it has become commonplace to consider that some types of arguments registered as fallacies are not always fallacious: it depends on the context. This is mostly said of informal fallacies. This view seems rather close to Aristotle's idea about these *topoi* that can sometimes provide cogent enthymemes. As he says, you have to examine the situation. Here are four examples, close to some inferential schemes taken as fallacious nowadays. This list does not claim to be exhaustive.

Let us begin with the argument from opposites. If one member of a couple of opposite terms has a property, conclude that the other has the opposite property. For instance: "self-control is good, for lack of self-control is harmful" (II, 23, 1397a10). This argument can easily be interpreted and reconstructed as a case of *Denying the antecedent*, a fallacious form that is not explicitly listed in the Gang of Thirteen, although it appears in Aristotle's discussion of the *Consequent*. Aristotle is right: the examination of the situation

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[2] There are several examples of trendy use of some logical connectors in French. For about five years, 'Du coup' (hence, therefore, etc.) has been very fashionable: some people use it compulsively in almost each of their assertions. It seems to be a kind of verbal twitch.

at hand may lead to the inclusion of some information as an extra premise. Thus, from the classical invalid form of *Denying the antecedent* the argument can shift to a new valid version that still has a premise that denies the antecedent.

A second form that should be examined is the argument "from related terms". Aristotle gives no definition but only a few examples, among which "If selling is not disgraceful for you, neither is buying disgraceful for us". We can easily imagine it used and interpreted as a '*Tu quoque' ad hominem* argument. For example, a saleswoman is blaming young people for buying the alcohol she sells: they could reply by using this *topos*. But Aristotle stresses that it is risky and he now makes an explicit reference to the concept of paralogism: "However, in this there is room for a fallacy (*paralogism*)."(II, 23, 1397a29). Is it a new one? It is not easy to reduce it to twelve of the members of the Gang of Thirteen. Yet, as far as this kind of answer is commonly used to shift the topic, *Ignoratio elenchi* seems wide enough to accommodate it, although this can be said of many irrelevant replies, insults for example.

We stay close to *Tu quoque* attacks with the sixth topic: "[it] consists in turning upon the opponent what has been said against ourselves and this is an excellent method. […] it should only be used to discredit the accuser. For in general the accuser aspires to be better than the defendant […]" (II, 23, 1398a3-15). Does Aristotle really approve of this "excellent method"? Translations differ on this point[3]. It is difficult to imagine Aristotle encouraging the use of paralogisms, knowing that he denounces it in other places and claims they should be studied only to defend against them. On the other hand, "excellent method" can be interpreted more neutrally, for instance from a mere technical point of view: it could be excellent because rhetorically very efficient. So, this excellence does not seem to be logical, it rather refers to conventional ethics for he states that "it is ridiculous for a man to reproach others for what he does or would do himself, or to encourage others to do what he does not or would not do himself. "

The eleventh topic provides a fourth model of argument, close to our contemporary fallacies based on testimony, *Ad populum* and *Ad authoritatem*. "Another topic is that from a previous judgment in regard to the same or a similar or contrary matter, if possible when the judgment was unanimous or the same at all times; if not, when it was at least that of the majority, or of the wise, either all or most, or of the good […]" (II, 23, 1398b19 1399a5). This crescendo starting from the quantity of judgments shared by an anonymous crowd, before rising to the quality of the judgment of rare wise men is typical of Aristotle who already used it to characterize those probable opinions essential to the premises of dialectical arguments. Here again, he gives no comprehensive definition of this kind of argument but only a rather long list of examples, often borrowed from celebrated sources. And one more time, he does not connect it to the theory of syllogism and paralogisms or take sides on its logical value but stresses the rhetorical power of a conventional ethical attitude: "it is not possible to contradict, for instance, those in authority, or of those whose judgment it is unseemly to contradict, for instance, the gods, a father, or instructors."

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[3] Chiron's French translation (2007) only says that this turnaround should be made 'in another way'.

5. CONCLUSION

To say that Aristotle wrote about fallacies is a satisfactory approximation for a general introduction to inexperienced people. But if we take a closer look, Woods is certainly right to point out a misalignment between what he qualifies as the traditional concept of fallacy and his favorite list – one among many others rather faithful to the one introduced by Aristotle in *On sophistical refutations*.

But we have also seen that Woods does not go far enough with this idea of misalignment. Besides the common observation that the various contemporary views on the concept of fallacy are scattered, despite a relative consensus about the fallaciousness of a particular argument, we have first shown an important misalignment between the Aristotelian paralogisms and most of the aspects shared by these views. In this sense, it is inaccurate to say that Aristotle wrote about fallacies.

However, we have also shown that his investigations into the practice of argumentation led him to stress other arguments that can be deceptive, beyond those of *On sophistical refutations* which became the reference work on this topic. This enlargement may give an impression of inconsistency between Aristotle's writings, but it also sets higher proximity between this enriched list of deceptive arguments and the contemporary lists that include non-deductive fallacies, some of which had already been identified by Aristotle, although foreign to his concept of paralogism.

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