Augustine, *de dialectica* (trans. J. Marchand)

It is hard to translate, not because the Latin is hard; it is not. But St. Augustine likes to use particles (he is educating his son) and the like, and I wanted to preserve the flavor. This is not a scientific treatise. At the same time, I note that the translation I give is sometimes too literal, since I also wanted to avoid falsifying St. Augustine and to preserve much of his introtextuality and self-reference. As usual, corrections, complaints and interventions dans le debat are welcome. (With a later portion of the translation, Marchand supplied some detailed comments on the task of translating this work.) There is also a brief bibliography of editions and scholarship.

The Roman numeral at the beginning of each paragraph is a link to the corresponding paragraph of the Latin text.

The Book of St. Augustine on Dialectic

I. Dialectic is the science of arguing well. As you know, we use words when we argue. Words, you see, are either simple or complex. Simples are those which signify one thing, as when we say `man, horse, argues, runs'. You should not be surprised that `argues', though it is composed of two things {argue + s, trans.}, nevertheless is numbered among the simples; for this is clear from the definition. We said that a word was simple when it signified one thing. Thus it (argues) is covered by the definition, but it is not covered when I say `loquor' (I speak), for though this is one word, it does not have a simple meaning, since it also designates the person who speaks. Hence it is from the first subject to being either true or false, since it can be affirmed or denied. Thus, all the verbs of the first and second person, although pronounced as one word, nevertheless must be counted among the complex words, since they do not have a simple meaning. Thus, whoever says `ambulo' (I walk) makes understood both the action of walking (ambulation) and that he himself does it, and anyone who says `ambulas' (you walk) likewise signifies both the action performed and the person performing it. But when a person says `ambulat' (walking is going on), he signifies only the action of walking, whence third person verbs are always numbered among the simples and can never be affirmed or denied, except when they are verbs such that there is of necessity attached to them the signification of person by usage, as when we say `pluit' (it rains) or `ninguit' (it snows), even when we do not add what rains or snows; since it (the subject) is understood, they cannot be put under the simples.

II. Complex words (coniuncta) are those which signify several things when put together, e.g. when we say `homo ambulat' (a/the/0 man walks) or `homo festinans in montem ambulat' (a/the/0 man walks, hurrying to the mountain), etc. There are some complex utterances which form sentences, like those which have been cited, and others which do not form sentences, but require something, like those we have just cited when you subtract the verb `ambulat' (walks) which we put there. Although `homo festinans in montem' forms a complex expression, the sentence is left dangling from it. Leaving aside, then, those complex expressions which do not form sentences, we are left with those which do. There are two species of these: 1. either they are made into sentences subject to affirmation or denial, e.g. `omnis homo ambulat' (all men walk/any man walks) or `omnis homo non ambulat' (no man walks), or 2. a sentence is formed which, though it presents a proposal to the mind, can neither be affirmed nor denied, as when we command, wish, curse, etc. E. g., if someone says `perge ad villam' (go to the town) or `utinam pergat ad villam' (I wish he would go to the town) or `Dii illum perduint' (may the gods damn him), it cannot be argued that he is lying or believed that he is telling the truth. For he is affirming or denying nothing. Thus these sentences are not brought into question and do not require disputants.

III. Those which are subject to disputation are either simple or complex. Those are simple which are

pronounced without any connection with another sentence, e.g. `omnis homo ambulat' (every man walks). They are complex when judgment is made concerning their conjunction (Tr. when the truth or falsity of the connective is the question), e.g. `si ambulat, movetur' (if he is walking, he is moving / if walking is going on, movement is going on). But when judgment is given concerning the conjunction of sentences, it must wait until we come to the culmination (of the syllogism; a Stoic commonplace, tr.). The `summa' (conclusion) is that which is made up of concessions (results from ...) What I am saying is this: Whoever says `si ambulat, movetur' (if he is walking, he is moving) wants to prove something, so that when I concede that this is true, he needs only to say what walks and the conclusion will follow and now cannot be denied, that is, that he moves -- or he simply has to say that it does not move, so that the conclusion again follows and cannot be denied (not not be conceded), namely that he does not walk. And again in like manner if someone says `this man walks', it is a simple sentence; if I concede this one and he adds another, `Whoever walks, moves', and I likewise grant this one, from the conjunction of sentences, though uttered singly and conceded singly, the conclusion follows, which is now of necessity conceded, namely `Therefore, this man moves'.

IV. Now that these have briefly been set up, let us consider the individual parts. There are two first ones. 1. simple, as it were the material (building blocks) of dialectic; 2. those which are called conjuncts, where the finished product, as it were, appears. The section on the simplexes is called `De Loquendo' (on the utterance). The section on the complexes is divided into three parts: 1. those collocations of words being set aside which do not make a complete sentence, those which complete a sentence, so that a question is not raised or disputation is not called for is called `De Eloquendo' (on speaking). 2. When a sentence is completed so that it is judged (evaluated) as a simple sentence, that section is called `De Proloquendo' (on the sentence, on the statement). 3. That section in which a sentence is made in such a way that we judge concerning the connective itself until we come to the conclusion is called `De Proloquiorum Summa' (on the conclusion; on the syllogism). Let us more closely examine the various parts.

V. A word is the sign of some thing which can be understood by the hearer when pronounced by the speaker. A thing is whatever is felt (sensed) or understood or `latet' (is hidden, inapprehensible). A sign is something which presents itself to the senses and something other than itself to the mind. To speak is to give a sign in articulate voice. I call that articulate which is capable of being comprised in letters. Whether all these things have been defined correctly or whether they should be followed with other definitions, the section which deals with the discipline of defining will indicate. Now listen attentively to what is coming: Any word `sonat' (sounds; is sounded). Therefore, when it is written it is not a word, but the sign of a word; when the reader sees them, the letters impinge upon the mind, which breaks out in voice. For what else do written letters do but present themselves to the eye and beyond themselves voices to the mind, and we said a little earlier that a sign was something which presented itself to the senses and something other than itself to the mind. What we read then are not words but signs of words. But also, since the letter itself is the smallest part of articulate voice, we misuse this word (letter), when we also call it letter when we see something written, though it is totally silent nor is it a part of `vox' (voice), but appears as a sign of a part of the `vox' (voice). Likewise, we also call something written a word, although it is a sign of a word, that is, appears as the sign of significant `vox' (voice). Thus, as we had just begun to say, every word has sound. But sound (quod sonat) has nothing to do with dialectic. It is a question of the sound of a word when we investigate or pay attention to how vowels are softened in their disposition or how they lose hiatus when they come together, likewise, how consonants cluster by interposition or are made harsh by clustering, and how many or what kind of syllables (a word) consists of, where the poetic rhythm and accent, a matter for the ears of the grammarian alone, are treated. But when there is dispute concerning these things, that is not beyond dialectic. For it is the science of disputing. But since words concern things, when they assert something concerning themselves, it is with words that the dispute is carried on concerning them. Since we cannot speak of words unless we use words, and when we speak we necessarily speak concerning something, these words seem to the mind to be signs of things. For when the word goes out of the mouth, if

it goes out concerning itself, that is, for example, it argues or asks something concerning itself, it is a thing undoubtedly subject to disputation and question, and then the thing itself is called `word'. That of the word which is not sensed by the ears but by the mind and is held enclosed in the mind itself is called `dicibile' (the expressible, the sayable; Stoic lekto/n). When the word is uttered not for its own sake, but to signify something about something, it is called `dictio' (an expression, a saying). That thing which is neither a word nor the conception of a word in the mind, whether it has a word with which it may be signified or not, is called by its proper name nothing other than `thing'. We then have four distinct things: `word, dicibile, dictio, thing'. What I have called `word' is both a word and signifies `word'. What I have called `dicibile' is a word, but it doesn't signify `word', but that which is understood in the word and contained in the mind. What I have called `dictio' is a word, but it signifies something similar to both the other two, namely, the word itself and what happens in the mind through the word. When I say `thing' it is a word which signifies that which is left over after those three which have just been mentioned. Let us see if we can illustrate this by examples: Let a boy be questioned by a schoolteacher in this manner: "What part of speech is `arma' (arms)?" `arma' is here said concerning itself (for its own sake), i.e. is a word concerning a word. The other parts, however, when he says `What part of speech ...' are either felt in the mind or pronounced by the voice, not for their own sake, but for the sake of `arma'. But since they were felt in the mind, `dicibilia' (sayables) came before voice; when they break out in voice concerning what I said, then they are `dictiones' (things said). `arma' itself, since it is a word, when it was pronounced by Virgil, became a `dictio', for it was not pronounced for its own sake, but that it might signify either the wars which Aeneas carried on, or the shield, or other arms which Vulcan made for the hero. These very wars or arms which were carried on or worn by Aeneas -- the same, I say, which were either carried on or existed, if they were now present could either be pointed out or touched with the finger, if they were not thought nor made for him, they are neither words nor `dicibilia' nor `dictiones', but things which are properly called `res' (thing) by name. We must thus in this part of dialectic treat words, `dicibilia', `dictiones', things. In all these things, where words are partly signified and partly things which are not words, there is nothing concerning which it is not necessary to dispute using words. Thus, we must first discuss these, since it is conceded that we must dispute concerning the others by use of them.

VI. Any word with the exception of its sound -- to dispute well concerning which pertains to the faculty of dialectic, not the discipline of dialectic, just as the defenses of Cicero are of the rhetorical faculty, but rhetoric itself is not taught in them -- thus any word beyond its sound brings up four things by necessity: origin, power, inflection, order.

We investigate the origin of a word when we ask whence it is said, a thing in my opinion of great curiosity and less necessity. Nor is it incumbent upon me to repeat what Cicero said (De nat. deor. 3.24), for who needs authority in such a clear matter? And even if were of great aid to explain the origin of a word, it would be silly (ineptum) to embark upon a project which would be impossible (infinite) to complete. For who can find out when something is said whence it is said? It amounts to this: Just as in the interpretation of dreams, the origin of words is judged by each mind (ingenium). `Verbum' (word) itself is sometimes said to be from the fact that it sort of reverberates in the ears. By no means, says another, anything other than air. But who cares? Ours is not a great argument, since both derive it from `verberando' (beating). But unexpectedly we see a third which causes an argument. For since it is said to be proper for us to speak truth and that the lie is odious by nature to the judge, `verbum' (word) is so named from `verum' (the true). Nor is a fourth lacking to ingenuity. For there are some who derive `verbum' (word) from `verum' (the true), but, the first syllable having received enough attention, they think it is wrong to neglect the second. For when we say `verbum' (word), they say, its first syllable signifies `verum' (the true), its second `sound'. They want this to be `bum', whence Ennius calls the sound of the feet `bombum pedum', and the Greeks say {Gk. boe:~sai} `to call out', and Virgil (Georg. 3.223) `reboant silvae' (the woods resound). Hence `verbum' (word) is something like from `verum boando' (sounding the truth). If this is true, this name forbids us to lie when we use a word, but I tell the truth, lest those who say these things lie (I am afraid they may be lying;

Augustine likes to pun, Tr.). Thus you must judge whether `verbum' (word) comes from `verberando' (echoing) or from `vero' (the true) alone, or from `verum boando' (sounding the truth) or whether we should not worry about where it comes from, if only we understand what it means. This section having been covered briefly (i.e. on the origin of words), I want you to listen a little, so that no part of the work begun may be overlooked by us. The Stoics affirm, whom Cicero ridicules in this matter (as Cicero so well could), that there is no word whose origin cannot be explained with certainty. And since it was easy to press them in this matter, if you were to say that it is uncertain by which words you might interpret the origin of some word, they would answer you back that you should seek the origin until you arrive at the point at which the thing coincides harmoniously in some similarity with the sound of the word, as when we say `tinnitum aeris' (clinking of brass), the `hinnitum' (whinny) of a horse, the `balatum' (bleating) of sheep, the `clangor' (blare) of a trumpet, the `stridor' (grinding) of chains. For you see that these words make a sound such as the very things which are signified by them. But since there are things which do not make sounds, it is the effect which forms the similarity, e.g. whether they impinge harshly or softly on the senses, the harshness or softness of the sound as it affects our hearing gives them names. For example, the word `lenis' (soft) itself has a soft sound when we pronounce it. Who would not judge `asperitas' (harshness) by its very name to be harsh? It is soft to the ears when we say `voluptas' (pleasure) and harsh when we say `crux' (cross). So that the sense of the words (the feel of the words) and the things themselves have the same effect. `mel' (honey), as sweetly as it affects the taste, just as softly does it touch the hearing with its name. `acer' (acrid, strident) is harsh in both (Tr. taste and hearing). `lana' (wool) and `vepres' (thorn bush) have an effect like that of the words when they are heard. They (the Stoics) thought this to be somewhat like a `cunabula verborum' (cradle of words), where the sense of the thing concorded with the sense of the sound, and that the license of naming proceded from there to the similarity of the things among themselves. E.g., for the sake of the word itself crux `cross' was said (originated), since the harshness of the word itself concords with the pain which the cross brings about, but `crura' (limbs) not because of the harshness of pain, but because they, of all the members, are most similar to the wood of the cross in length and sturdiness. The go from there to `abusio' (catachresis), where the name is misused (usurped), not for a similar thing but for a sort of close one. For what do the meanings of `parvus' (small) and `minutus' (minute) have in common, since a thing can be `parvus' (small), which is in no way `minutus' (minute), but may even grow (Tr. a pun on `minutus', past participle of `minuo' [to diminish, grow smaller]). But this catachresis is in the power of the speaker, for he has `parvum', so that he does not have to use `minutum'. This has to do more with what we want to take up now: for example, when `piscina' (pool) is said of baths, in which there are no fish and which have nothing similar to fish, we see that it is named for fish because of the water in which fish live. If someone were to say that men were made for swimming similarly to fish and that `piscina' got its name from that, it is stupid to oppose (him), since neither is repulsive (contradictory) to the thing and both are unclear. From this one example, we should be able to judge as to what distinguishes word-origins deriving from vicinity from those taken from similitude. From these we go on to contraries. `lucus' (grove) is said to take its name from the fact that there is little light there (minime luceat), and `bellum' (war), because it is not a `bella' (pretty) thing, and the name of `foedus' (treaty), because it is not a `foeda' (ugly) thing. But if it is said to be because of the fierce aspect of the `porcus' (battle array) (Tr. play on `porcus' [pig] and `porcus' [caput porci `battle array']), as some would have it, the origin is from that type of vicinity by which that which is done is named for that for which it was done. Now this vicinity is extensively applied and can be divided into many parts: either by the cause, as this one by the fearful aspect of the battle array, by which a truce is effected -- or by the effect, as `puteus' (well), whose effect is potation -- or by that in which it is contained, as `urbs' (city), which some would derive from `orbis' (circle), since the place was accustomed to be circumscribed by the plow after the auspices were taken, a thing which Virgil (Aen. LV, 755) remembers, where Aeneas lays out the city with a plow -- or that which is contained, e.g. when someone affirms that `horreum' (granary) comes from `hordeum' (barley) by the change of a letter -- or by misuse when we say `horreum' and what is kept there is wheat -- or the whole from a part, as when we call the sword `mucro', which is the tip of the sword -- or a part from the whole, as `capillus' (hair, scalp) like `capitis pilus' (hair of the head). How much further shall I go? whatever else can be enumerated, you have

seen that the origin of a word can be contained either in the similitude of things and sounds or the similitude of things themselves, or vicinity or contrary. We cannot pursue this beyond the similitude of sound, but we are not always able to use even this. For the words are innumerable whose origin or reason cannot be given, as I believe, because there is none, as the Stoics contend, because it is hidden (escapes us). Just take a glance at the means whereby they think they can arrive at those cradles or families or even the seed of words, beyond which they think it is impossible to go, in case someone thinks he can find something. No one denies that there are syllables in which the letter `v' has the value of a consonant, e. g. `vafer' (cunning), `velum' (sail), `vinum' (wine), `vomis' (ploughshare), `vulnus' (wound), a thick and rather strong sound. And usage approves our subtracting it from some words, lest they offend our ears. It is because of this that we say `amasti' (you have loved) more freely than `amavisti', and `nosti' (you knew) rather than `novisti', and `abiit' (he left) and not `abivit', and the like. Thus, when we say `vis' (power), the sound of the word when it is pronounced, being rather strong, is congruent with the thing it signifies. From the vicinity of that which they do, i.e. that they are violent, `vincula' (bonds) may be seen to be derived, and `vimen' (withe) by which something is bound. Hence `vites' (vines), because they hold he stakes to which they are tied with their tendrils. Hence because of similitude Terence (Eun. IV, 21) calls the bent old man `vietum' (shriveled, bent). Thus, the earth, which is flexible and ground by the feet of travelers, is called `via' (way). But if `via' (way) is thought to come more from the fact that it is ground by the `vi' (power) of the feet, then the origin is attributed to that vicinity. But let us say that it is by similitude to `vitis' (vine) or `vimen' (withe) that it is said, because of its winding. Someone will ask of me: Where does `via' (way) come from? I answer: from its winding, as bent old men are called `veteres', whence the rims which go around the wood of a wheel are called `vietos'. He will continue to ask whence `vietus' (rim) is said to be flexible or bent, and I will respond: "By similarity to `vitis' (vine)." He persists and asks whence this is the name of vine; I say: "Because it entwines itself around those things which hold it." He now wishes to know whence `vincire' (to bind) itself is said, and we say: "From `vis' (power)." He asks whence `vis' (power) is so called, and the reason is given: "The robust and rather strong sound of the word is congruent with the thing it signifies." There is nothing else to ask. By how many ways the origin of words is varied, then, by the corruption of voices, it is useless to pursue. They are both long and of less necessity than those which have been treated.

VII. Let us now briefly consider the power of words, insofar as the thing is open to investigation. The power of the word is that by which we know how much it is worth. Its value is the extent to which it is able to move the hearer. It either moves the hearer by itself or by what it means or by both. When it moves him by itself, it either pertains to the sense alone or to art or to both. The sense is moved either by nature or by custom. Nature was violated, if it is offended when someone names King Artaxerxes, or soothed, if it hears Euryalus. For who, hearing nothing else of these men whose names these are, would not notice in the former the great harshness and in the latter the softness? The sense is moved by custom when it is offended if someone is called for the sake of the word (supposition of the grammarians) Motta, and not offended if it hears Cotta. For this does not depend on the sweetness or non-sweetness of the sound, but they affect the innermost parts of the ear when they hear the sounds going through them as guests who are known or unknown. The hearer is moved by art when he attends to a word pronounced to him, as to what part of speech it is, or if he perceives anything which has to do with the discipline which treats of words (grammar). But words are judged by both, i. e. sense and art, since the reason notes that which the ears transmit and gives it a name, e.g. when we say `optimus' (best), as soon as the one long and two short syllables of this adjective strike the ear, the mind by art immediately recognizes a dactylic foot. The word moves our knowledge not only by itself, but by that which it signifies, when, the sign having been agreed upon (Stoic commonplace; or: perceived by the ear), the mind intuits nothing other than the thing itself of which that sign is perceived. For example, when Augustine is named nothing else than I myself am thought (a lovely solecism) by the one to whom I am known, or some other man comes to mind if someone perchance hears this name and doesn't know me or knows someone else who is named Augustine. For when at the same time the word moves the listener by itself and by that which it means, both that which is

enunciated and that which is referred to by it are attended to. Whence is it that the chastity of our ears is not offended when it hears (Sall. Cat. 14) `manu ventre pene bona patria laceverat' (he squandered the goods of his father by hand, belly, penis)? For it would be offended if the obscene part of the body were called by a sordid and vulgar name, since the thing of which both are the vocable is the same, were not the turpitude of the thing signified hidden by the seemliness of the signifying word, for then the ugliness of both would strike the sense as well as the mind. Just like `meretrix' (prostitute), who looks, however, different in that garb with which she is accustomed to stand before the judge and in that in which she lies in her luxurious bedroom. Since the power of words seems to be so manifold, we touch upon it briefly and lightly for the time being. There arises here a twofold sense upon reflection: partly for the explanation of truth, partly for the preservation of seemliness. It does not behove disputation to be inept nor eloquence to be fallacious, but often or almost always slight notice is taken of the delight of the hearer in one desirous of learning, whereas the more inexperienced multitude thinks that that which is said ornately is said truly. Accordingly, though it clear what is proper for each, it is obvious that the disputant, if he wishes at all to please, must use the colors of rhetoric, and the orator, if he wishes to persuade someone of the truth, must be fortified by dialectic, as by bones and sinew, which by nature cannot be subtracted from our bodies for the sake of bodily firmness, lest it be permitted to lie in offense to the eye.

VIII. Now for the judging of truth, let us see what profit there is to dialectic from this power of words whose seeds we have just sown, and what impediments arise. The listener is hindered from seeing the truth in words by obscurity and ambiguity. The difference between the ambiguous and the obscure is that in the ambiguous many things are exhibited, of which one is unsure as to which one to take; in the obscure, however, nothing or not enough appears. But where it is too little which appears, the obscure is similar to the ambiguous: e.g. as if someone beginning a trip is faced by a fork in the road or a three-way road or even a multi-way road, where nothing lights up the road, say, because of the density of a fog. He is first kept from continuing by obscurity, but when the fog begins to lift a little, something is seen which may be either the road or the ground itself, since the color is not quite clear enough. This is an obscurity which is like ambiguity. When the sky has brightened and it is light enough for the eye and the view of all the roads is clear, it is not obscurity but ambiguity which makes him doubt as to which one to take. Thus, there are three types of ambiguity: 1. Open to the senses, closed to the mind: If someone sees a picture of a pomegranate who has never seen one before nor heard what one is, it is not the eye, but the mind, which does know what the picture is of. 2. Open to the mind, closed to the senses, e.g. a picture of a man in darkness. When it appears to the eye, the mind does not doubt that a man is pictured. 3. Both hidden from the sense and not at all clearer to the mind, the greatest obscurity of all, e. g. if an inexperienced person were required to recognize that painted pomegranate in the dark.

Now turn your mind to the words of which these are similitudes. Constitute in your mind some teacher, his students having been called together and silence having been invoked, who says in a low voice `temetum' (booze). Those sitting close hear well enough, those further removed poorly, the furthest removed are reached by no sound at all. For some reason, those who are somewhat remote partly know what `temetum' is, partly do not, and those who heard the teacher's voice immediately did not know what it was. All were thus hindered by obscurity. Those who were sure about what they heard are like our first type, i.e. those ignorant of the pomegranate even when painted in the light. Those who knew the word but perceived the voice poorly or not at all with the ear are of the second type, similar to the image of a man in an unclear or dark place. Those who were privy neither to the significance of the word nor the voice of the teacher involve themselves in the blindness of the third type, which is the worst of all. You can see that that which has been called obscure is similar to the ambiguous by the example of those to whom the word was known but who did not perceive the voice well or with any certainty. For he avoids all kinds of obscure speech who speaks in a clear enough voice, not kept from the ear, and makes use of known words. See now by the example of the same teacher what a distinction there is between ambiguity and obscurity in words. Let those who were there (the aforementioned group, Tr.) both perceive well by sense the voice of the teacher

and let him pronounce a word known well by all -- e.g. have him say `magnus' (big) and no more. Note what uncertainties are attached to this noun (`nomen' is used both for noun and adjective in Latin, Tr.) which has been heard. For example, one might ask: What part of speech is it? Or ask concerning the meter: What foot is it? Or about the story: How many wars did `magnus' (great) Pompey wage? Or if one of his admirers were to say for the sake of the poem: Virgil is a great poet almost without equal. Or someone scolding the negligence of students erupts in these words: A great torpor has invaded your study. Do you see after the cloud of obscurity has been lifted that that which has been said almost clears up the manifold way? For that one thing which was said, i.e. `magnus' is both a noun (Latin did not distinguish between noun and adjective, Tr.) and a foot and Pompey and Virgil and the torpor of negligence, etc., or even innumerable things which we did not mention, which nevertheless can be understood in the pronunciation of this word.

IX. Thus, it is most correctly said by the dialecticians that any word is ambiguous. Do not let it dissuade that Hortensius sneers at them in Cicero: "They say that they dare explain the ambiguous clearly. They also say that any word is ambiguous. Then how were ambiguous things explained by ambiguous things? That is like bringing an unlit torch into the darkness." Elegantly and cleverly said, but in that same Cicero we read that Scaevola said to Antonius (De Orat. I, 10, 44): "So that you may seem to speak well to the wise and truly to the stupid." What indeed did Hortensius do in that place but gloss over the darkness of the ignorant with sharpness of wit and pleasantness of speech as if with a pure and sweet drink? For when it is said that any word is ambiguous, this is said of single words. Ambiguous things are explained to the disputant, and no one disputes by using single words. So no one explains ambiguous things by ambiguous words, and, though any word is ambiguous, no one explains the ambiguity of words except by words which are joined and (are then) not ambiguous. E.g. if I were to say that every soldier was two-footed, it would not follow from that the whole company of soldiers was two-footed. Just as, when I say that any word is ambiguous, I do not say sentence or disputation, though these are made up of words. Thus any ambiguous word my be explained by non-ambiguous disputation.

Let us now look at the types of ambiguity: There are firstly two of them, one of which causes doubt concerning that which is spoken, the other in that which is written. For if anyone hears `acies' (point, dot), and if anyone reads it, he may be uncertain, unless it is cleared up by a sentence, as to whether it is the point of the army, or of iron, or the pupil of the eye which is written or spoken of. If someone finds the writing of just the word `leporem', and there is no sentence in which it is placed, he is immediately cast into doubt as to whether the penultimate syllable of this word is pronounced long because it comes from `lepos' (charm) or short because it is from `lepus' (hare), an ambiguity which certainly is not felt when the accusative case of this noun is perceived from the spoken voice. But if someone speaks poorly, it is not by ambiguity but by obscurity that the listener is hindered, obscurity of the type which is similar to ambiguity because words pronounced badly in Latin do not lead the mind into diverse notions, but impel it toward whatever it seems to be. Therefore, there are many distinctions between these two types. The first of these is again divided into two. If something is said and several things can be understood, these several things must be comprised not only in one word but one and the same definition, or they will have the same vocable in common, but be explained in various definitions. Those which one definition can contain are called univocal (= polylexic, Tr.). Those which, though under one designation, must have different definitions are called equivocal (polysemic, Tr.). Let us first consider the univocal, and, since they are clear from the definition, let them be illustrated by examples. When we say `man', we say boy as well as youth, as well as old man, stupid or wise, big or little, citizen or pilgrim, city-dweller or farmer, he was as well as he who is, sitting as well as standing, rich as well as poor, beginning something or ending it, being happy as well as mourning, or neither. But in all these `dictiones' there is nothing which receives the name of man which is not included in the definition of man. The definition of `man' is rational mortal animal. Now who can say that a youth, not at the same time a boy and an old man, not both wise and stupid, is not a rational mortal animal? These and all the others which were set down above are contained in the name `man' and the same definition. If there is anything which is a boy or stupid or poor or even sleeping, if it is not a

rational mortal animal, it is not a man, for that is what a man is. They must be contained in the same definition, and there is nothing ambiguous about the rest of them. One may be in doubt concerning a little boy, or a stupid or fatuous person, or a sleeping person or a drunk or a madman as to whether they are rational animals. This can be defended, but it takes a long time for anybody who is in a hurry. As far as that is concerned, this definition of man is thought by some to be incorrect and ill thought out, unless all men are contained in it and nothing except man. Well, these are the `univoca' which are included both in one designation and one definition, although among them they _can_ be distinguished by proper names and definitions. For the names of boy and adolescent, rich and poor, free and slave, are diverse, as are other kinds of distinctions. So diverse things have proper definitions, but their one common name is `man', just as the definition `rational mortal animal' is common to all.

X. Now let us take up the `equivoca', in which the perplexity of ambiguity grows like wild flowers into infinity. I shall try to divide them into certain genera. Whether my faculties are sufficient to the attempt, you shall judge. There are first three types of ambiguity which come from equivocation: 1. by art, 2. by use, 3. by both. I say art for the sake of the names which are imposed upon words in the discipline of words. What is equivocal is defined one way by the grammarian, another by the dialectician. The single utterance which I make, `Tullius' (Cicero), is a name and a dactylic foot and an equivocal. And if someone presses me to define what `Tullius' is, I shall answer with an explanation of any of these notions. For I can say correctly: "Tullius is a name by which a man is signified, a great orator who as a consul suppressed the Catiline Conspiracy." Watch closely now as I define the name. If I could point out that very Tullius, if he were living, with my finger, and if I then had to define him, I would not say: "Tullius is a name which signifies a man"; I would rather say: "That man is Tullius", and then I would add the other things. I can also answer in this way: "Tullius is a dactylic foot consisting of these letters ... (for what need is there to enumerate the letters?)" Perhaps one might say: "Tullius is a word by which all those things mentioned above are equivocal and any other similar ones you can make up." Since I then have to define `Tullius' in so many ways according to the terminology of the arts, how can we doubt that this type of ambiguity comes from equivocation, which is properly said to occur by art. For we say that those things are equivocal which can be contained in one name and not one definition. Now look at the next type, which, as you remember, comes from usage. We call that usage through which we know words. For who seeks out and collects words for the sake of words? Let someone hear something who knows nothing of the parts of speech nor is interested in meter or any kind of verbal discipline. Nevertheless, he can be disturbed by the ambiguity of equivocation when `Tullius' is said, for by this name the great orator and his picture or statue and the codex in which his letters are contained and whatever is left of his body in the tomb may be signified. For we say in diverse sentences: "Tullius saved the fatherland from ruin" "A golden Tullius stands in the Capitol" "All of Tullius is to be read" "Tullius is buried in this place". For the name is one, but all these are to be explained in different definitions. For this is the type of equivocation in which the ambiguity does not originate from the discipline of words, but from the very things which are signified. But if it either confounds the hearer or the reader, if it is either from art or usage that it comes, what happened to the third type which was named? Its example will appear more clearly in a sentence: "Many wrote in the dactylic meter, e. g. Tullius." Here it is uncertain as to whether `Tullius' is cited as an example of a dactylic foot or a dactylic poet, of which the first is perceived by art, the second by usage. But in simple words it happens when the teacher pronounces the word to his students, as we have shown above.

These three types differ among themselves by manifest reasons. The first is again divided into two parts. Whatever makes an ambiguity through the art of words can partly be an example and partly not. When I define what a noun is, I can cite (supponere) it itself as an example (idempotency, Tr.). For the `nomen' (noun) which I pronounce is itself a noun, and is so inflected, when we say: `nomen, nominis, nomini', etc. Likewise when I define what a `dactylus' is, it itself can be an example. For when we say `dactylus', we pronounce one long syllable and then two short ones. But when we say what `adverb' means, we cannot cite it as an example. When we say `adverb' this very enunciation is a noun. Thus, according to one way of

understanding it is adverb and a noun is a noun, according to another `adverb' is not an adverb, since it is noun. Also `creticus' (a type of foot), when we define it, cannot be given as an example (of itself). When we pronounce it, `creticus' consists of one long syllable followed by two short ones, but what it signifies is a long, a short, and a long. Thus, according to one way of understanding `creticus' is nothing other than a creticus, according to another, it is not a creticus, because it is a dactylus.

The second type, which pertains not to verbal discipline, but to usage, has two forms. Equivoca are either of the same origin or of different origins. I mention those of the same origin which are contained in one name (designation), but not one definition, but derive as it were from one source, e.g. when `Tullius' can be understood as a man and a statue and a codex and a cadaver. For these cannot be contained in one definition, but they have one single source, i.e. the real man himself, whose statue, books, cadaver they are. But when we say `nepos', it signifies from a quite diverse origin, both the son of the son and the spendthrift (Tr.: According to Isidore `nepos' (spendthrift) comes from a kind of scorpion). Let us keep this distinct and look at that type which I call of the same origin, which is again divided. It is divided into two, one of which occurs in `translatio' (usual Latin word for metaphor; the examples given are of metonymy, Tr.), the other in inflection. I call that `translatio' when either because of similitude one name is give to many things, e.g. `Tullius' means both a great orator and his statue -- or when the part is called by the whole, e.g. when his body is called `Tullius' -- or the whole by one of its part, e.g. when a house is called `roof' -- or a species by a genus. Words are in general all things spoken, but those things are properly called `verba' (words, verbs) which we inflect for mood or tense -- or the genus by the species: `scholasticus' (schoolboy, scholar) was not only properly but first applied to those who were in school, but this name is now corrupted for all who live by letters -- or the effect from the cause, as `Cicero' for Cicero's work -- or the person causing it from the effect, e. g. `terror' for the person who causes terror -- or the thing contained from the container, e.g. `house' for those who are in the house -- or vice versa, e.g. when we call the tree a `chestnut' -- or anything else of a like kind which you can find called from the same origin by a kind of transfer. You see, I think, what an ambiguity it brings about in words. Things of the same origin, but ambiguous because of inflection are like this: Let someone give this as an example: `pluit' (it rains), and let it be diversely defined. Likewise if someone says `scribere' (write) it is uncertain as to whether it is an active infinitive or a passive imperative. `homo' (man), though it is one noun and one utterance, is either the nominative or the vocative, like `doctus' (learned) and `docte' (O learned one), where the utterance is different. `doctius' (more learned) is different when we say `doctius mancipium' (a more sensible contract' or when we say `doctius illo iste disputavit (this one argued more learnedly than that one). The ambiguity arose thus from inflection. We call that inflection which occurs either by voice or signification in inflecting a word. `hic doctus' (this learned man) and `o docte' (O learned man!) are inflected by the voice, `hic homo' and `o homo' solely by meaning. But to follow this type of ambiguity minutely is almost infinite. It is sufficient for you to note this section for now, especially for your mind. Now look at those which come from diverse origins. They are also divided into two principal forms, one of which comes about because of the diversity of languages, e.g. if we say `tu' it means one thing to the Greeks (gen. sg. masc. article), another to us (you, 2d sg. pers. pron.). This type should have been taken into consideration a great deal; it is not prescribed for anyone, however, how many languages he knows or in how many languages he might argue. Another form is that which makes ambiguities in the same language, but of diverse origin; they are signified by one term, similar to what we said above concerning `nepos'. Again, this is divided into two: 1. it is either the same part of speech - - `nepos' is a noun when it means son of a son and when it means spendthrift -- or under different ones: for it is not only different when we say `qui' (rel. pron. & interrogative), as it is said (Ter. Andr. III, 3, 33) `qui scis ergo istuc nisi periculum feceris' (how can you tell if you don't make the trial?), for that is a pronoun, this is an adverb.

By both, i.e. by art and usage, which we have set up as a third type of equivoca, as many forms of ambiguity may exist as we have named in these two.

There remains the type of ambiguity which is found in writing alone, of which there are three types. Such an ambiguity is made either by the length of a syllable or by its accent, or by both, e.g. when `venit' (comes, came) appears, its length is uncertain because of the unknown nature of the first syllable; by accent, as when `pone' (place, behind) is written either from `pono' (I put) or as is said (Virgil Georg.IV, 487): `pone sequens namque hanc dederat Proserpina legem' (following behind, for Proserpina had imposed that condition), where it is uncertain because of the hidden place of the accent, or it happens because of both, e.g. as we mentioned above in the case of `lepore', for not only is the penultimate syllable of this word to be lengthened, but also to be accented if it is derived from `lepos' (charm), not from `lepus' (hare).