CIRCULAR REASONING ACROSS TRADITIONS: REASSESSING PETITIO PRINCIPII AND CAKRA-DOṢA IN LEGAL AND LOGICAL DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the logical fallacy of *Petitio Principii*—commonly known as "begging the question"—and its doctrinal analogue in classical Indian logic: *Cakra-doṣa* under the Nyāya system. Both fallacies, though rooted in disparate philosophical traditions, expose a shared structural infirmity—namely, the collapse of inferential autonomy where the conclusion is embedded within the premise. This comparative inquiry dissects these circular reasoning patterns not merely as rhetorical missteps but as epistemic violations that undermine the very architecture of valid argumentation. The study critically re-evaluates early comparative interpretations by H.N. Randle and K. Bhattacharya and aligns with Bimal Krishna Matilal's more structurally consistent parallel between *Cakra-doṣa* and *Petitio Principii*. Further, the paper anchors its analysis in Indian legal jurisprudence, identifying Supreme Court decisions where such fallacies were either judicially repudiated or inadvertently entertained, thereby compromising procedural and evidentiary rigor. Through doctrinal synthesis and case-law scrutiny, the paper argues for the integration of Indian logical taxonomies in contemporary legal pedagogy to reinforce judicial coherence and uphold the sanctity of legal reasoning. Where logic falters, jurisprudence risks collapse; this paper offers a normative and epistemological safeguard against that descent.

Keywords: Nyāya Logic; *Cakra-doṣa*; Petitio Principii; Indian Jurisprudence; Tautology in Law; Legal Reasoning Fallacies; *Sādhya-sama*; *Prakaraṇa-sama*; Circular Reasoning; Anvikṣikī

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. Nyāya Sūtra: Classical Indian Taxonomy on Argumentation and Fallacies

The *Nyāya Sūtra*, attributed to Akṣapāda Gautama (circa 2nd century BCE),[1] forms the foundational text of the Nyāya school of Indian philosophy, one of the five major ancient Indian logical and epistemological systems—Mīmāṃsā, Nyāya, Tarka, Vaiśeṣika, and Anvikṣikī. While these schools overlap, Nyāya is uniquely systematic in its articulation of logical procedure (*tarka*), valid cognition (*pramāṇa*), and especially, the identification of fallacies (*hetvābhāsa*), making it the Indian parallel to Aristotelian logic.

Nyaya deals with the structure of the Argument which is primarily constructed in a five-membered sequential order of syllogistic form called '*Avayavas*' or Propositions. It starts with 'the Proposition' (*Pratigna*), then the 'Reason', (*Hetu*), third 'Instance or Illustration' (*Dristanta* or *Udaharana*), then the 'Application' (*Upanaya*), and finally 'the Conclusion' (*Nigamana*). Modern Logic has reduced this syllogism to two namely the Premise and the Conclusion.

The *Nyāya Sūtra* thereby laid the groundwork for formal 'Argument Structure' and epistemology in India, with later philosophers like Vātsyāyana and Udayana elaborating these structures. It remains a cornerstone of classical Indian logic (*Anvikṣikī*) and jurisprudential reasoning.

'First the Among the several Factors of Reasoning, Proposition and the rest, there is a definite natural order, in which they are stated", says Annam Bhatta- "which is based upon the nature of what is expressed by each of them; and when a statement is made in which this natural order is reversed, it becomes a case of that 'Ground of Defeat', which is called 'Inconsequentiality'; which means that what is ex- pressed by the several Factors not found to form a connected whole". Such a mishap or Inconsequentiality is identified to have been caused by fallacious Probans. The Nyāya Sūtras and later Navya-Nyāya works predominantly identify five fallacious Probans or Probands, which are 'Argument Structures'--which by presence of certain characters are considered as N*igrahasthāna* or 'Grounds of defeat' (also referred to as

[1] Gautama, A. (trans. Ganganath Jha), *The Nyāya-Sūtras of Gautama with the Bhāṣya of Vātsyāyana and Vārttika of Uddyotakara*, reprint edition, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1984.

Clinchers) (*Reference: Adhyaya-V*). The *Nyāya Sūtra* categorizes primarily five types of fallacious reasoning (*Hetvābhāsa*) that invalidate inference:

1. **Savyabhicāra (Inconclusive or Deviating Reason)**

   A reason that is not universally connected with the conclusion.

   Example: "The mountain has fire because it is smoky"—but smoke also appears in water, thus the inference deviates.

2. **Viruddha (Contradictory Reason)**

   A reason that actually proves the opposite of what is intended.

   Example: "Sound is eternal because it is produced"—this contradicts itself since production implies non-eternality.

3. **Satpratipakṣa (Counterbalanced Reason)**

   A reason that is neutralized by an equally valid counter-reason.

   Example: "Sound is eternal because it is audible"—countered by "Sound is non-eternal because it is produced."

4. **Asiddha (Unestablished Reason)**

   A reason based on an unproven or non-existent subject.

   Example: "The sky-lotus smells good because it's a lotus"—but the subject itself (sky-lotus) doesn't exist.

5. **Bādhita (Contradicted Reason)**

   A reason contradicted by stronger, direct perception or scriptural authority.

   Example: "Fire is cold because it is a substance"—contradicted by perception.

Among these, fallacies (hetvābhāsa), Asiddha—denoting the unproven or inconclusive middle

term—is especially critical, as it pertains to failure in epistemic grounding. Tarka-Saṅgraha of Annambhaṭṭa subdivides Asiddha into three forms: āśrayāsiddha (subject is unestablished), svarūpāsiddha (reason is not present in the subject), and vyāpyatvāsiddha (the pervasion relation is unestablished). Annmbatta's Tarka Sangraha (English Translation)[2] enlists and explains the fallacious Asiddha (Unestablished Reason) in the following words;

"असिद्धस्त्रिविधः । आश्रयासिद्धः स्वरूपासिद्धो व्याप्यत्वा- सिदरचेति ॥ ५० ॥

50. "The fallacy of inconclusiveness, is of three kinds-

1. *inconclusiveness on the part of the subject (asray.asiddha)*
2. *inconclusiveness from the nature of the reason (swar-upasidha);*
3. *inconclusiveness from limitation." (vyapyatwasiddha)*

आश्रयासिद्धो यथा गगनारविन्दं सुरभि अरविन्दत्वात् । सरोजारविन्दवत् । अत्र गगनारविन्दमाश्रयः सच नास्तेयव । ॥ ५१ ॥

51. As an example of the inclusiveness on the part of the subject it is cited, "The sky-lotus is fragrant because it is possessed of the generic property of lotuses, as in the lotuses of the lake' here the sky-lotus is the locality of the generic property of a lotus, which sky-lotus is in reality non- existent.

"पत्वं शब्दे नास्तिस्वरूपासिद्धो यथा शब्दो गुणश्चाक्षुपत्वात् अत्र चाचु हेतुर्व्याप्यत्वासिद्धः । साध्यव्यापकत्वे सति साधनाव्यापक शब्दस्य श्रावणत्वात् । सोपाधिकी उपाधिः ॥ ५२ ॥

52. Inconclusiveness from the nature of the reason takes place, for instance, when it is inferred that sound is a quality, because it is cognizable by the organ of sight.' But this cognizability by the organ of sight is not existent in the sound; sound being cognizable by the organ of hearing. Inconclusiveness from limitation would not take place, for instance, when the reason is attended with an indispensable condition, indispensable condition or Upadhi is what always attends the property to be proved, does not always attend what is brought forward as a proof.

[2] Annam Bhatta, *Tarka-Saṅgraha*, trans. Jivananda Vidyasagara Bhattacharya, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, Varanasi: Chowkhamba Press, 1992, revised 2009, verses 50–54, pp. 43–46.

साध्यसमानाधिकरणात्यन्ताभावाप्रतियोगित्वं साध्यव्या- पकत्वम् । साधनवन्निष्ठात्यन्ताभावप्रतियोगित्वं साधनाव्याप- कत्वम् ॥ ५३ ॥

53. Invariable attendance on the object to be proved (sadhya-vyapakatwa) consists in

the not being the counter- part (apratiyogitwa) of the absolute negation (atyantabhava) attendant on (samanadhikarana) that which is to be proved, Non-invariable attendance on that which is cited as a proof (sadhana-vyagakatwa) consists in the being the counterpart (pratiyogitwa) of the negation which exists in the proof.

पर्वतो धूमवान् वह्निमध्वादित्यत्र आर्द्रेन्धनसंयोग उपाधिः । तथाहि यत्र घूमस्तत्रार्द्रेन्धनसंयोग इति साध्यव्यापकता । यत्र बह्निस्तत्रार्द्रेन्धनसंयोगो नास्ति अयोगोलके आर्द्रेन्धनसंयोगा- भावादिति साधनव्यापकता । एवं साध्यव्यापकत्वे सति साधना व्यापकत्वादार्द्रेन्धनसंयोग उपाधिः । सोपाधिकत्वाद्वह्निमत्त्वंव्याप्यत्वासिद्धम् ॥ ५४ ॥

54. In the argument that, 'The mountain is possessed of smoke, because it has fire,' here the contract of wet fuel is an indispensable condition. As for instance, wherever there is smoke, there is the union with wet fuel,' is an invariable attendance on what is to be proved (Sadhyavyapakata). But such an inference is not true, 'That wherever there is fire, there is the union with wet fuel' for there is no union with wet fuel in the case of an ignited iron ball-this is what is called the non-invariable attendance on the proof or sadhana-vyapa. kata. Thus, the invariable attendance on what is to be proved being coexistent with the non-invarible attendance on the proof, the indispensable condition there is the union with wet fuel. As this additional condition is indispensable here, to prove the absolute presence of smoke, fieriness in this argument is fallacious as regards its conclusiveness. "Such an argument as expressed in the form, "The mountain is fiery:- therefore it must have smoke,' is called an Enthy- meme, because here of the two premises of a regular syllogism only one is expressed and the other is suppressed in the mind (enthymo) of the speaker. When a fallacy occurs in an Enthymeme, it is very difficult to detect whether the fallacy is in the reasoning of it is a fallacy extra dictionem."[3]

B. Cakra-doṣa: The Circularity within the Fallacy of Asiddha:

Within āśrayāsiddha, the specific fallacy known as Cakra-doṣa arises when there is mutual

[3] Annam Bhatta, *Tarka-Saṅgraha*, English Translation by Jivananda Vidyasagara Bhattacharya (1992) Revised (2009) [verse 50–54】p .43-46

dependence between the *sādhya* (proposition) and the *hetu* (reason), violating the autonomy essential to valid inference. This form of circularity is summarized by the Nyāya logicians as:

*"Cakra-doṣaḥ sādhyahetvoḥ parasparāśrayatvam"***,** meaning-Cakra-doṣa is the mutual dependence between the proposition and the reason. Such inferential lapses obstruct pramāṇatva (valid cognition) because the epistemic warrant becomes self-referential and epistemically hollow. Unlike mere rhetorical redundancy, Cakra-doṣa is a structural error in reasoning—where the proof cannot stand independently of what it is supposed to prove. It therefore represents a logical stasis with no epistemic progress.

For instance, an argument like "Sound is eternal because it is unproduced; it is unproduced because it is eternal" exemplifies this fallacy. It reflects recursive failure, where the inference collapses into a self-validating loop, offering no epistemic progress.

Although '*Cakra-doṣa*' (Circular Resoning) is not explicitly enumerated in the Nyāya Sūtras, its formulation and technical maturity emerge prominently in later Nyāya commentaries and digests, particularly in the works of Udayana and in manuals like Tarka-Saṅgraha, which systematize inferential faults for pedagogical and philosophical clarity.

C. Logic Across Civilisations: Western Rationalism, Eastern Taxonomies, and the Millian Encounter

The intellectual edifice of logic in the West finds its roots in the classical traditions of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, where the search for valid inference and universal truths was first institutionalized. Aristotle's Organon laid the foundation for syllogistic reasoning, framing logic as a deductive method that derives necessary conclusions from general premises. This Aristotelian system governed Western epistemology for centuries, evolving through the scholastic refinement of Aquinas, the empiricism of Locke and Hume, and later, the pragmatic formalism of Kant.

However, it was John Stuart Mill—a philosopher, political economist, and colonial administrator for the British East India Company—who repositioned logic as both a scientific method and an empirical discipline. His System of Logic (1843)[4] departed from Aristotelian abstraction, proposing that induction, not deduction, was the true engine of human knowledge.

[4] Mill, J.S. (1843) *A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive*. London: John W. Parker.

Mill's Five Canons of Induction—*Agreement, Difference, Concomitant Variations, Residues*, and *Joint Method*—provided the scaffolding for what he called the "logic of science."

Mill's administrative and intellectual tenure with the East India Company brought him into profound contact with Indian philosophical traditions. Though rarely acknowledged directly, his formulations resonate strikingly with the epistemic structures of Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā, Vaiśeṣika, Tarka, and Anvikṣikī—systems that had, for centuries, articulated doctrines of valid cognition (*pramāṇa*), fallacious reasoning (*Hetvābhāsa*), and syllogistic inference (*pañcāvayava nyāya*).

Indian logic had long insisted on independent justification, much like Mill's insistence on observational grounding. The Nyāya syllogism, with its five-membered structure (proposition, reason, example, application, conclusion), parallels Mill's methodical architecture of empirical reasoning. The fallacies discussed in Tarka-Śāstra, such as Cakra-doṣa (circular reasoning), find unacknowledged echoes in Mill's treatment of Petitio Principii, where the conclusion is surreptitiously embedded in the premise.

Alexander Bain, Mill's intellectual collaborator, further reinforced these bridges—in his work *Logic: Deductive and Inductive*[5] by noting parallels with Eastern logic, acknowledging that reasoning is not merely a mechanical application of rules but a psychological function shaped by human cognition—a view long held in Anvikṣikī, the Indian science of inquiry.

Together, Mill and Bain redefined logic not as an abstract calculus, but as a legal-epistemic framework—a jurisprudence of thought. Their systems reflect not only the evolution of British empiricism but, arguably, the silent influence of Indian intellectual traditions that Mill absorbed during his years of colonial engagement. In bridging the Western and Eastern traditions, logic became not merely a system of reasoning, but a comparative grammar of thought, transcending geography and language to become a global method of inquiry.

D. Fallacies in Western Logic: From Classical Rhetoric to Petitio Principii

The study of fallacies in Western logic begins as early as classical antiquity, where logic was not merely a tool of abstract thought but a rhetorical instrument central to public discourse, legal persuasion, and philosophical dialectic. Aristotle, in his *Sophistical Refutations*, provided

[5] Bain, A. (1870) *Logic: Deductive and Inductive*. London: Longmans, Green, and Co.

the first systematic taxonomy of fallacies—dividing them into verbal (*in dictione*) and non-verbal (*extra dictionem*) fallacies. These included errors such as equivocation, false cause, ignoratio elenchi, and critically, *Petitio Principii*—the fallacy of assuming the conclusion in the premise.

In *Petitio Principii* (begging the question), the argument commits an epistemic impropriety by presupposing the truth of what it is supposed to prove. Rather than proceeding from independent evidence to a justified conclusion, it collapses the inferential structure into a self-validating loop. This undermines both deductive soundness and inductive credibility, rendering the reasoning circular and unpersuasive.

The modern turn in logical theory—particularly through the empiricist and reformist insights of John Stuart Mill—further exposed the epistemological hazards of such fallacies. In his *System of Logic* (1843), Mill criticized *Petitio Principii* not merely as a formal flaw but as a failure in cognitive justification. He argued that no claim can be advanced in the name of reasoning unless its premise stands independently of the conclusion, echoing jurisprudential principles of evidentiary autonomy and impartial reasoning.

Alexander Bain, Mill's contemporary and collaborator, deepened this treatment by embedding fallacies in a psychological matrix. He identified *Petitio Principii* as a cognitive misstep, wherein the mind fails to distinguish between the claim and the proof, substituting assertion for demonstration. Bain's work, particularly *Logic: Deductive and Inductive*, foregrounded the importance of intellectual discipline in constructing persuasive, non-circular arguments—especially in legal and scientific inquiry.

Through the evolution from Aristotelian dialectics to the empirical rigour of Mill and Bain, Western logic came to view fallacies not merely as rhetorical lapses but as violations of the architecture of valid reasoning. In this progression, *Petitio Principii* remains one of the most pernicious fallacies—often subtle, always corrosive—because it erodes the very foundation of logical inquiry: the independence between what is claimed and what is proven.

Methodological Framework and Scope

This paper adopts a comparative doctrinal and analytical methodology, examining the fallacy of *Petitio Principii* in Western logic alongside its closest counterpart in Indian Nyāya

philosophy—*Cakra-doṣa*. It draws upon classical texts, such as the *Nyāya Sūtras* and *Tarka-Saṅgraha*, and juxtaposes them with foundational works by Western logicians like John Stuart Mill and Alexander Bain. Select Indian Supreme Court cases are analyzed to illustrate the presence or rejection of circular reasoning in judicial discourse. The scope is confined to logical fallacies in legal argumentation, without delving into broader rhetorical or sociological critiques.

II. CAKRA-DOṢA AND PETITIO PRINCIPII: A COMPARATIVE FRAMEWORK OF INFERENTIAL COLLAPSE

Among the most structurally corrosive fallacies in both Indian and Western traditions is circular reasoning—recognized respectively as Cakra-doṣa in Nyāya philosophy and Petitio Principii in classical Western logic. Both share a core epistemic defect: the obliteration of inferential independence between premise and conclusion. In *Petitio Principii*, the conclusion is embedded—often covertly—within the premise, nullifying the deductive force of the argument. For example, asserting that "The accused must be guilty because they are on trial" presumes the very guilt that must be established, resulting in a logically void inference. Similarly, *Cakra-doṣa* emerges when the *hetu* (reason) and *sādhya* (proposition) depend upon one another for validation—violating *pramāṇatva*, the Nyāya criterion for epistemic legitimacy. An illustrative instance is the claim that “sound is eternal because it is unproduced,” where “unproduced” is understood only through the lens of “eternality,” rendering the argument recursively defective.

Early comparative scholars such as H.N. Randle [6]misaligned *Petitio Principii* with Indian fallacies like *Sādhya-sama* (tautological repetition) and *Prakaraṇa-sama* (presumptive reasoning), both of which lack the mutual dependence characteristic of circular reasoning. Prof. K. Bhattacharya,[7] working within Madhyamika paradigms, cautiously echoed this alignment. However, Bimal Krishna Matilal,[8] in his landmark work *The Character of Logic in India*, decisively refuted such analogies. He contended that only *Cakra-doṣa* captures the structural and functional essence of *Petitio Principii*, as both undermine the autonomy of justification by constructing epistemically parasitic arguments. While Matilal refrained from declaring a doctrinal equivalence, he emphasized their shared inferential pathology—namely, the collapse

[6] Randle, H.N. (1930). *Indian Logic in the Early Schools*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[7] Bhattacharya, K. (1943). *Some Logical Aspects of the Madhyamika System*. Calcutta: University of Calcutta.
[8] Matilal, B.K. (1998). *The Character of Logic in India*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

of justificatory separation, which in Nyāya terms constitutes an *asiddha hetvābhāsa* (unestablished reason), and in Western logic, a deductive fallacy of presumption.

Though housed within distinct logical architectures—*Cakra-doṣa* operating through the five-membered Indian syllogism (*pratijñā–hetu–udāharaṇa–upanaya–nigamana*), and *Petitio Principii* within two-membered deductive frameworks—both result in arguments that are void ab initio in epistemic terms. Where Western logic deems such arguments formally invalid, Nyāya condemns them as violations of ontological justification, thereby affecting not merely form but also the *truth-apt status* of cognition. Importantly, Indian logicians such as Udayana and Annaṁbhaṭṭa have rigorously dissected *Cakra-doṣa* within the broader taxonomy of *hetvābhāsas*, treating it not merely as a rhetorical flaw but as a fundamental jurisprudential and epistemological infirmity. Therefore, while *Cakra-doṣa* and *Petitio Principii* arise from different taxonomies, their convergence in subverting legal reasoning and philosophical inquiry renders them uniquely comparable. Their study, especially within comparative jurisprudence, offers a profound lens to audit judicial coherence and argumentative rigour.

III. INDIAN COURTS AND THE FALLACY OF CAKRA-DOṢA OR PETITIO PRINCIPI:

A. Illustrative Cases of Judicial Rejection of Fallacious Reasoning

The Supreme Court of India cases that exemplify the rejection of the Argument suffering from a logical fallacy known as *Cakra-doṣa* (circular reasoning) or *Petitio Principii* are:

1. **Tahsildar Singh & Anr. Vs. State of Uttar Pradesh[9] --**In this case, the appellants were convicted based on witness testimonies. The defence highlighted contradictions between the witnesses' statements recorded during the investigation and their testimonies in court. The Supreme Court emphasized the importance of addressing such contradictions to ensure a fair trial. The Court rejected any reasoning that presupposed the credibility of witnesses without independently verifying the consistency of their statements, thereby avoiding circular reasoning.

2. **Internet and Mobile Association of India Vs. Reserve Bank of India[10]--**In this case

[9] 1959 AIR 1012; 1959 SCR Supl. (2) 875)
[10] (2020) 10 SCC 274

the Supreme Court struck down the RBI's 2018 circular banning banks from dealing with cryptocurrency exchanges. The RBI justified the restriction by asserting that virtual currencies posed systemic risks, yet failed to produce empirical evidence. This constituted a classic case of *Petitio Principii*—the RBI presumed the danger it sought to prove, using the circular itself as justification for the restriction. The Court observed:

> *"There is no proven instance of the activities of Virtual Currency exchanges having actually impacted the functioning of entities regulated by the RBI."*
>
> (Para 6.147).

3. **State Project Director, UP Education for All Project Board & Ors. Vs. Saroj Maurya & Ors.[11] -** the Supreme Court overturned the Allahabad High Court's Division Bench decision for lacking independent reasoning. The High Court had merely concurred with the Single Judge's findings without providing its own rationale. This approach exemplifies the fallacy of *Petitio Principii* (circular reasoning), where a conclusion is assumed without proper justification. The Supreme Court emphasized the necessity of reasoned judgments, stating that a decision without reasoning cannot be legally sustained.

B. Judicial Failures in Inferential Scrutiny

1. **Bipin Chander Jaisinghbhai Shah Vs. Prabhawati[12]--** the Supreme Court dealt with a claim of desertion in matrimonial proceedings. The appellant alleged that the wife had deserted him without reasonable cause. However, the Court's reasoning arguably fell into *Petitio Principii*—it presumed desertion by inferring that the wife left without justification, while using that very absence of justification to prove desertion. The circularity lies in equating absence of consent with absence of cause, and using that to prove the allegation. This flawed inference weakened the evidentiary standard, as the Court remarked, "desertion is a matter of inference to be drawn from the facts and circumstances."

The reason employed by the Supreme Court has been critiqued by some scholars as falling close to the fallacy of *Petitio Principii* (begging the question). As the Court

[11] (2016) 9 SCC 791.
[12] AIR 1957 SC 176,

inferred that the wife deserted the husband without reasonable cause because she left the matrimonial home without the husband's consent. But whether her departure was *without reasonable cause* was precisely the point in dispute. Thus, by assuming what needed to be proven (i.e., lack of reasonable cause), the Court's reasoning risked circularity.

The outcome may have been justifiable on broader grounds. However, the logical structure of the argument is vulnerable to critique on epistemic grounds—it didn't sufficiently establish the cause of desertion independently of the conclusion.

Conclusion: When Logic Slumbers, Argument Stammers

The majesty of law lies not merely in the authority it wields, but in the rationale it employs. A legal argument, much like a syllogism, must stand on the integrity of its form as much as the substance of its truth. Yet when reasoning collapses into itself—when what is to be proven is quietly assumed—the result is not reason, but rhetoric. *Petitio Principii* and *Cakra-doṣa*, though birthed from different traditions, mirror this collapse: they are the jurisprudence of shortcuts, the logic of the impatient.

Francis Bacon taught us that the human mind is a minefield of fallacies—"idols,"[13] as he called them—that distort inquiry and disfigure truth. The doctrines of *Cakra-doṣa* in Nyāya and *Petitio Principii* in Western logic share more than structural similarity; they offer a common warning: when reasoning becomes recursive, truth becomes rhetorical. The failure is not merely epistemic—it is ethical. For a conclusion drawn from itself is no conclusion at all.

A.G. Gardiner, from the vantage of the everyday moralist, saw how small errors in principle ripple into large errors in practice. "A fallacy," he once said, "has no legs, but it runs fast."[14] In the courtroom, such fallacies do not merely race—they stampede. Advocacy must remain vigilant—not only to what is argued, but how it is argued. When error is embedded in the very structure of reasoning, and confusion is sanctified by legal authority, we do not merely risk injustice—we institutionalize it.

To cleanse reasoning of circularity is not pedantry—it is principle. It entices by seeming clarity, yet conceals its poverty of proof. In courtrooms and classrooms alike, it blurs the boundary

[13] Bacon, F. (2000) *The New Organon*, L. Jardine and M. Silverthorne (eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[14] Gardiner, A.G. (1919) *Pebbles on the Shore*. London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd.

between what is believed and what is known. Thus, when logic loops, justice does not advance—it limps.

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