Sophist

PLATO

c. 428–348 BC

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Σοφιστής

Translated from the Greek with AI (Claude) and edited



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INTRODUCTION

The day after the conversation in the *Theaetetus*, Socrates, Theodorus and Theaetetus are joined by a visitor from Elea, the home of Parmenides. Socrates asks him a question: are the sophist, the statesman and the philosopher one thing or three? The Stranger takes the young Theaetetus as his partner and sets out to catch the sophist.

His method is division: split a broad class in two, keep the half the quarry belongs to, and repeat. The sophist slips away again and again—hunter of rich young men, merchant of learning, professional arguer—until he is cornered as a maker of images and falsehoods. But a falsehood says what is not, and Parmenides taught that what is not cannot even be spoken of.

To answer him, the Stranger has to commit what he calls parricide against his teacher. The middle of the dialogue is one of Plato's richest pieces of philosophy: a battle between materialists and friends of the forms, the "greatest kinds" and the claim that not-being is simply difference. Only then can the sophist be caught.

Sophist

Athens, the day after the Theaetetus.
A visitor from Elea hunts down the sophist and finds he must say how "what is not" can be.

THEODORUS 216a Here we are, Socrates, as we agreed yesterday, punctual as we should be. And we've brought this man along, a stranger. He comes from Elea, he belongs to the circle of Parmenides and Zeno, and he's very much a philosopher.[1]

SOCRATES Then are you perhaps, Theodorus, bringing not a stranger but some god without knowing it, as Homer's account has it? He says that the other 216b gods, and not least the god of strangers, keep company with human beings who have a just sense of shame, and look down on people's insolence and their lawfulness. So perhaps this man following you is one of the higher powers, come to watch over us and refute us, poor as we are at arguments. He'd be a sort of god of refutation.[2]

THEODORUS That's not our stranger's way, Socrates. He's more measured than the people who are keen on disputes. To me the man doesn't seem to be a god at all, but he's certainly godlike, since I call all 216c philosophers that.

SOCRATES And rightly so, my friend. But this kind is probably not much easier to tell apart, so to speak, than the kind of the god. These men take on all sorts of appearances because of

1 Elea was a Greek city in southern Italy, home of the philosopher Parmenides and his follower Zeno. The visitor is called simply "the Stranger" throughout.
2 In Homer's *Odyssey*, gods disguised as strangers "go about the cities" watching how people behave. The god of strangers is Zeus, protector of guests.

other people's ignorance, and they "go about the cities." I mean those who aren't fake but genuine philosophers, looking down from on high at the life of those below. Some people think them worth nothing, others worth everything. Sometimes they appear as statesmen, [216d] sometimes as sophists, and sometimes they might give some people the impression of being completely mad. But I'd be glad to learn from our stranger, if he doesn't mind, what [217a] the people in his part of the world thought about these things, and what they called them.

THEODORUS What things, exactly?

SOCRATES Sophist, statesman, philosopher.

THEODORUS What is it about them that puzzles you most? What sort of question did you have in mind to ask?

SOCRATES This: did they think all of these were one thing, or two? Or, since there are three names, did they also divide them into three kinds and attach a kind to each name, one by one?

THEODORUS Well, I don't think he'd begrudge going through them. Or what do you say, Stranger?

STRANGER [217b] Just that, Theodorus. I don't begrudge it, and it isn't hard to say that they thought there were three. But to define clearly what each one is—that's no small or easy job.

THEODORUS As it happens, Socrates, you've hit on questions very close to the ones we were putting to him before we came here. He made the same excuses to us then that he's making to you now. Yet he says he's heard the subject thoroughly discussed and hasn't forgotten it.

SOCRATES [217c] Then, Stranger, don't refuse us the very first favor we've asked. Just tell us this much. Which do you usually prefer: to go through what you want to show someone on your own, in a long speech, or to do it by questions? Parmenides once used questions when he went through some magnificent arguments in my presence. I was young then, and he was already quite old.[3]

3 Plato depicts this meeting between the young Socrates and the aged Parmenides in his dialogue *Parmenides*.

STRANGER [217d] If the other person is no trouble and responds easily to the rein, Socrates, it's easier the first way, with a partner. If not, it's easier on one's own.

SOCRATES Well, you can choose whichever of those present you like; they'll all answer you gently. But if you take my advice, you'll pick one of the young ones, Theaetetus here, or anyone else, if someone's more to your liking.

STRANGER Socrates, since this is the first time I've met you all, I'm somewhat embarrassed at the idea of not conducting [217e] our conversation in short exchanges, word for word. I'd rather not stretch out a long speech on my own, or even addressed to someone else, as if I were giving a display. In fact the question you just asked isn't as small as one might expect from the way it was put; it calls for a very long account. On the other hand, not to oblige you and these gentlemen, especially after you've spoken as you did, strikes me as ungracious to my hosts and [218a] boorish. So I gladly accept Theaetetus as my partner in conversation, both because of my own earlier talk with him and because you now urge me to.

THEAETETUS Then do just that, Stranger, and as Socrates said, you'll be doing all of us a favor.

STRANGER It looks as if there's nothing more to say about that, Theaetetus. From here on, it seems, the conversation will be with you. But if the length wears you out and you get annoyed, don't blame me—blame these friends of yours.

THEAETETUS [218b] Well, I don't think I'll give up just now. But if anything like that does happen, we'll bring in Socrates here. He's Socrates' namesake, but he's my age and my partner at the gymnasium, and he's used to sharing most of my hard work.[4]

STRANGER Well said. You can decide about that privately as the discussion goes on. But you and I need to look into this together. As it seems to me, we should start now with the sophist, searching out [218c] and bringing to light in an account what he is. For at

4 This is the "young Socrates," who becomes the respondent in Plato's *Statesman*.

present you and I have only the name in common about him. As for the thing we each call by that name, we may well each have our own private idea of it. But in every case one should always reach agreement about the thing itself through accounts, rather than about the name alone without an account. Now, the tribe we have in mind to search for, the sophist, isn't the easiest thing in the world to grasp, to say what it is. Yet for any great matter that needs to be worked through well, everyone has agreed, and long ago, [218d] that one should practice first on small and easier things before tackling the greatest ones.

THE ANGLER

The Stranger practices the method of division on an easy example before hunting the sophist.

STRANGER So now, Theaetetus, that's my advice for the two of us as well. We regard the kind of the sophist as difficult and hard to hunt down, so we should first practice the method of pursuing him on something easier. That is, unless you can suggest some other, more convenient route.

THEAETETUS No, I can't.

STRANGER Then shall we take up something trivial and try to make it a model for the greater thing?

THEAETETUS [218e] Yes.

STRANGER What, then, should we put before us that's familiar and small, but no less open to an account than any of the greater things? The angler, say. Isn't he known to everyone, and not worth much serious attention?

THEAETETUS That's so.

STRANGER [219a] Still, I expect he'll give us a method and an account that suit what we want.

THEAETETUS That would be fine.

STRANGER Come on, then, let's start with him like this. Tell me: shall we class him as someone with an art, or as someone without an art but with some other capacity?

THEAETETUS Certainly not as someone without an art.

STRANGER But of all the arts there are, roughly speaking, two kinds.

THEAETETUS How so?

STRANGER There's farming, and all care of any mortal body. Then there's whatever has to do with things put together and molded, which we [219b] call equipment. And there's imitation. All of these together could most justly be called by a single name.

THEAETETUS How, and by what name?

STRANGER Whenever someone brings into being anything that didn't exist before, we say, I take it, that the one who brings it produces, and that what is brought is produced.

THEAETETUS Right.

STRANGER And all the things we just went through had their power directed to this.

THEAETETUS Yes, they did.

STRANGER Then let's sum them up and call them the productive art.

THEAETETUS [219c] So be it.

STRANGER Next, there's the whole kind that has to do with learning and with coming to know, and also money-making, competition and hunting. None of these crafts anything. Some get things that are, or that have come to be, into their hands by words and deeds; others don't let them fall into the hands of those trying to get them. For these reasons, I suppose, all these parts together would most fittingly be called an acquisitive art.

THEAETETUS Yes, that would fit.

STRANGER [219d] Now, since all the arts are either acquisitive or productive, Theaetetus, in which shall we place angling?

THEAETETUS In the acquisitive, obviously.

STRANGER And aren't there two kinds of acquisition? One is exchange between willing parties, through gifts, hiring and buying. The rest, which gets everything into its hands by deeds or by words, would be capture.

THEAETETUS So it seems, at least from what's been said.

STRANGER Well then, shouldn't capture be cut in two?

THEAETETUS How?

STRANGER [219e] By setting down all of it that's done openly as competition, and all of it that's done in secret as hunting.

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER And it would make no sense not to cut hunting in two as well.

THEAETETUS Tell me how.

STRANGER By dividing it into the hunting of the lifeless kind and the hunting of the living kind.

THEAETETUS Of course—if there really are both.

STRANGER [220a] How could there not be? We should let the hunting of lifeless things go. It has no name, apart from some parts of diving and a few other little things like that. The other part, the hunting of living animals, we should call animal-hunting.

THEAETETUS So be it.

STRANGER And wouldn't it be right to speak of two kinds of animal-hunting? One concerns the kind that goes on foot and is divided into many kinds with many names: land-hunting. The other, all hunting of swimming animals, is fluid-hunting.

THEAETETUS Certainly.

STRANGER [220b] And among swimming creatures, don't we see one tribe that's winged and another that lives in water?

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER And all hunting of the winged kind is called, I believe, fowling.

THEAETETUS Yes, it is.

STRANGER And the hunting of water creatures is, pretty much as a whole, fishing.

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER Well then, couldn't we divide this hunting into two very large parts in turn?

THEAETETUS What parts?

STRANGER One part does its hunting simply with enclosures, the other by striking.

THEAETETUS What do you mean? How are you distinguishing each one?

STRANGER 220c The first like this: anything that surrounds something and shuts it in to keep it from escaping can reasonably be called an enclosure.

THEAETETUS Certainly.

STRANGER Then wicker traps, nets, snares, creels and the like—surely we should call them nothing but enclosures?

THEAETETUS Nothing else.

STRANGER So we'll call this part of hunting enclosure-hunting, or something like that.

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER And the part done by striking with hooks and tridents is 220d different from that one. We should now call it, in a single word, strike-hunting. Or what better name could anyone give it, Theaetetus?

THEAETETUS Let's not worry about the name. That one will do.

STRANGER Of strike-hunting, then, the part done at night by firelight has come to be called fire-fishing, I think, by the hunters themselves.

THEAETETUS Certainly.

STRANGER And all the part done by day is hook-hunting, since even tridents have hooks at their points.

THEAETETUS 220e Yes, that's what it's called.

STRANGER Now, of the hook-hunting part of strike-hunting, the part done from above downward is called, I think, trident-fishing, because that's how tridents are mostly used.

THEAETETUS Some people call it that, anyway.

STRANGER And what's left is, you might say, just one more kind.

THEAETETUS Which one?

STRANGER The one with the opposite kind of strike. It's done with a hook, and it doesn't hit the fish wherever on its body one happens to, as 221a with tridents. Each time it strikes around the head and mouth of the catch, which is then pulled up from below, in the opposite direction, with rods and reeds. What shall we say its name should be, Theaetetus?

THEAETETUS I think what we set out a moment ago to find has now been accomplished.

STRANGER So now you and I 221b have agreed not only on the name of angling; we've also adequately grasped the account of the thing itself. Of art as a whole, half was acquisitive. Of the acquisitive, half was capture; of capture, hunting; of hunting, animal-hunting; of animal-hunting, fluid-hunting. Of fluid-hunting, the whole lower section was fishing; of fishing, strike-hunting; of strike-hunting, hook-hunting. And of this, the part concerned with the strike that pulls from below 221c upward has taken its name from the action itself. That's angling, which we were just looking for.[5]

THEAETETUS That's certainly been made perfectly clear.

5 The Greek word for angling, *aspalieutikē*, is linked here with *anaspan*, "to draw up."

STRANGER Come on, then, let's use this model and try to find out what the sophist is, too.

THEAETETUS By all means.

STRANGER Now, our first question was whether we should take the angler to be a layman or someone with an art.

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER 221d And now, Theaetetus, shall we take this man to be a layman, or in every sense truly a sophist?

THEAETETUS Not a layman at all. I see what you mean: someone with that name is anything but a layman.

STRANGER Then it seems we have to take him to have some art.

THEAETETUS Then what art can it be?

FIRST DEFINITION: THE HUNTER

Divided down from hunting, the sophist is a paid hunter of rich young men.

STRANGER Good gods, have we failed to notice that the one man is a relative of the other?

THEAETETUS Who of whom?

STRANGER The angler of the sophist.

THEAETETUS How?

STRANGER They both look to me like hunters.

THEAETETUS 221e What sort of hunting does the other one do? We've described the first.

STRANGER A moment ago we divided all hunting in two, cutting off one part for swimming creatures and the other for land creatures.

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER And we went through the first, as far as it concerns the swimming creatures that live in water. But we left the land part undivided, saying it had many kinds.

THEAETETUS [222a] Certainly.

STRANGER Up to this point, then, the sophist and the angler travel together, starting from the acquisitive art.

THEAETETUS It certainly looks that way.

STRANGER But they part ways at animal-hunting. One heads for the sea, I suppose, and for rivers and lakes, to hunt the animals in them.

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER The other heads for the land, and for rivers of a different sort—rich meadows, you might say, of wealth and youth—to capture the creatures there.

THEAETETUS [222b] What do you mean?

STRANGER Land-hunting has two very large parts.

THEAETETUS What is each of them?

STRANGER One is the hunting of tame animals, the other of wild ones.

THEAETETUS So there's such a thing as hunting tame animals?

STRANGER There is, if a human being is a tame animal. But put it however you like. You can count nothing as tame. You can count something else as tame but human beings as wild. Or you can say that human beings are tame but hold that there's no hunting of them. Settle it for us: which of these would you like to say?

THEAETETUS [222c] Well, Stranger, I think we're a tame animal, and I say there is such a thing as hunting human beings.

STRANGER Then let's say that tame-hunting is twofold as well.

THEAETETUS On what basis?

STRANGER We'll define piracy, slave-raiding, tyranny and warfare as a whole, all together as one, as violent hunting.

THEAETETUS Good.

STRANGER And we'll call law-court pleading, public speaking and conversation, again all together as one, a single 222d art of persuasion.

THEAETETUS Right.

STRANGER Of persuasion, then, let's say there are two kinds.

THEAETETUS What are they?

STRANGER One takes place in private, the other in public.

THEAETETUS Yes, there are those two kinds.

STRANGER And again, of private hunting, isn't one part wage-earning and the other gift-giving?

THEAETETUS I don't follow.

STRANGER It seems you haven't yet paid attention to the way lovers hunt.

THEAETETUS What about it?

STRANGER 222e That they actually give gifts to the ones they've caught.

THEAETETUS Very true.

STRANGER Then let this be a kind of the art of love.

THEAETETUS Certainly.

STRANGER Now take the part of wage-earning that keeps company by gratifying people. It makes pleasure its only bait and asks for nothing as its wage but its own keep. We'd all say, 223a I think, that this is flattery, or some art of pleasing.

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER But the part that claims to keep company for the sake of excellence, and asks for money as its wage—doesn't that kind deserve to be called by another name?

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER What name, then? Try to say.

THEAETETUS It's obvious. I think we've found the sophist. That's what I'd say, and I'd consider I was calling him by the right name.

STRANGER 223b So according to our present account, Theaetetus, it seems that the art in question must be called sophistry. It belongs to appropriation, capture, acquisition, hunting, animal-hunting, land-hunting, hunting on dry land, tame-hunting, human-hunting, persuasion-hunting, private hunting, wage-earning, selling for money and education in seeming. It is the hunting of rich and prominent young men. That, at any rate, is where our present account lands us.

THEAETETUS Absolutely.

SECOND DEFINITION: THE MERCHANT

He trades in learning for the soul, carrying it from city to city for sale.

STRANGER 223c Let's look at it this way too. What we're looking for has a share in no trivial art, but a highly complex one. In fact, even from what we said earlier, it gives the appearance of being not what we're now saying it is, but some other kind.

THEAETETUS How so?

STRANGER The acquisitive art had two kinds, I believe: one part hunting, the other exchange.

THEAETETUS Yes, it did.

STRANGER Shall we say there are two kinds of exchange, one by giving, the other by trading?

THEAETETUS Let's say so.

STRANGER And we'll say in turn that trading is cut in two.

THEAETETUS 223d How?

STRANGER Into the selling of one's own products, practiced by those who make them, and dealing, which exchanges the works of others.

THEAETETUS Certainly.

STRANGER Well then, isn't the part of dealing that exchanges within a city, roughly half of it, called retail?

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER And the part that exchanges by buying and selling from one city to another is commerce?

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER 223e And haven't we noticed that commerce sells things for money? Part of it exchanges the things the body feeds on and uses, and part the things the soul does.

THEAETETUS What do you mean by that?

STRANGER Perhaps it's the part concerned with the soul that we don't recognize, since we do understand the other one, I take it.

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER 224a Then take music, all of it, which is regularly bought in one city and carried off to another and sold there. Take painting, too, and conjuring, and many other things for the soul that are carried around and sold, some for amusement and some for serious ends. Let's say that whoever carries and sells them can rightly be called a merchant, no less than someone who sells food and drink.

THEAETETUS Very true.

STRANGER 224b And won't you give the same name to someone who buys up learning and trades it for money from city to city?

THEAETETUS Definitely.

STRANGER Then one part of this soul-commerce could most justly be called display, couldn't it? The other part is in fact the sale of learning, so we have no choice but to call it by a name related to that activity—one no less ridiculous than the last.

THEAETETUS Certainly.

STRANGER Of this learning-selling, then, the part concerned 224c with learning in the other arts must be called by one name, and the part concerned with excellence by another.

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER "Art-selling" would suit the part concerned with the other subjects. As for the part concerned with excellence, you try to name it.

THEAETETUS What other name could anyone give it without striking a false note? It is the very thing we're looking for, the sophistic kind.

STRANGER No other name. Come on, then, let's pull it together. Sophistry has come to light a second time. It is the selling part of acquisition, exchange, trading, 224d commerce and soul-commerce, and what it sells is speeches and learning about excellence.

THEAETETUS Very much so.

THIRD AND FOURTH: RETAILER AND MAKER

Settled in one city, he sells learning bought from others or made up himself.

STRANGER And third, I think, suppose someone settled right here in a city. He buys some learning on these same subjects and makes some up himself, sells it, and has set himself to make his living that way. You'd call him nothing other than what we called him just now.

THEAETETUS Of course I would.

STRANGER 224e So take acquisition, then exchange, then trading, whether it is retail or the selling of one's own products—either way. Whatever kind of it sells learning about such things, it seems you'll always call sophistic.

THEAETETUS I have to. We must follow the argument.

FIFTH DEFINITION: THE FIGHTER

He makes money from eristic, private disputation about justice and everything else.

STRANGER Let's look further, then, and see whether the kind we're now pursuing resembles something like this.

THEAETETUS [225a] Like what?

STRANGER We had competition as a part of acquisition.

THEAETETUS Yes, we did.

STRANGER Then it wouldn't be out of place to divide it in two.

THEAETETUS Tell me along what lines.

STRANGER Setting down one part as rivalry and the other as fighting.

THEAETETUS Agreed.

STRANGER Now, for the part of fighting done body against body, it would be reasonable and fitting to give it some such name as "violence."

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER And for the part done words against words, Theaetetus, what else [225b] could one call it but disputation?

THEAETETUS Nothing else.

STRANGER And disputation must be set down as twofold.

THEAETETUS How?

STRANGER Insofar as it takes place in public, pitting long speeches against opposing long speeches about what is just and unjust, it is law-court pleading.

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER And the part that takes place in private and is chopped into bits, questions against answers—surely we're used to calling that nothing but contradiction?

THEAETETUS Nothing else.

STRANGER Within contradiction, take the part that disputes about contracts [225c] but goes about it at random and without art. We must set it down as a kind, since our account has recognized it as distinct. But it got no name from those before us, and it doesn't deserve to get one from us now.

THEAETETUS True. It's been divided into pieces that are too small and too various.

STRANGER But the part that has art, and disputes about just and unjust things themselves and about everything else in general—aren't we used to calling that eristic?

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER [225d] Now, of eristic, one part happens to waste money and the other to make money.

THEAETETUS Absolutely.

STRANGER Then let's try to say what name we should call each of them by.

THEAETETUS Yes, we should.

STRANGER Well, take the kind that, for the pleasure of spending time on such things, neglects its own affairs, and whose style most of its listeners find no pleasure in hearing. In my judgment it's called nothing other than idle chatter.

THEAETETUS Yes, that's more or less what it's called.

STRANGER [225e] Now it's your turn. Try to name its opposite, the kind that makes money from private quarrels.

THEAETETUS And what could anyone say, without going wrong, except that here he comes again, for the fourth time now, that wonderful fellow we've been pursuing—the sophist?

STRANGER [226a] Nothing else, it seems. The sophist is the money-making kind belonging to the art of eristic, which is part of contradiction, of disputation, of fighting, of competition, of acquisition—as our account has now revealed once again.

THEAETETUS Exactly so.

STRANGER So do you see how truly it's said that this beast is many-sided and, as the saying goes, can't be caught with one hand?

THEAETETUS Then we'll need both.

SIXTH DEFINITION: THE PURIFIER

Refutation purges the soul of false conceit of wisdom: the "sophistry of noble lineage."

STRANGER [226b] We will, and we must do it as best we can, by following a track of his like this one. Tell me: we have words, I suppose, for certain household chores?

THEAETETUS Plenty. But which of the many are you asking about?

STRANGER Ones like these: we speak of filtering, sifting, winnowing, and sorting.

THEAETETUS Certainly.

STRANGER And besides these, carding, spinning, weaving; and we know of countless other such things in the arts. Don't we?

THEAETETUS [226c] What is it about them that you want to point out, putting these forward as examples and asking about them all?

STRANGER Everything we mentioned is spoken of, I take it, as a way of dividing.

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER Then by my reckoning, since in all of them there's one art concerned with these things, we'll count it worthy of one name.

THEAETETUS Calling it what?

STRANGER The art of discrimination.

THEAETETUS So be it.

STRANGER Now look and see whether we can somehow discern two kinds within it in turn.

THEAETETUS That's a quick inquiry you're setting me—too quick for me.

STRANGER 226d Well, in the separations we mentioned, one was separating worse from better, the other like from like.

THEAETETUS Put that way, it pretty much seems so.

STRANGER Now, I don't have a name in use for the one. But for the separation that keeps the better and throws away the worse, I do.

THEAETETUS Tell me what it is.

STRANGER Every separation of that sort, as I understand it, is called by everyone a kind of purification.

THEAETETUS Yes, it is.

STRANGER 226e Then wouldn't anyone see that the purifying kind, in turn, is twofold?

THEAETETUS Yes, given time, perhaps. But I don't see it now.

STRANGER Well, the many kinds of purification that concern bodies are properly gathered under one name.

THEAETETUS Which kinds, and under what name?

STRANGER First, those of living things: what inside bodies is purified by being correctly separated through gymnastics 227a and medicine, and, on the outside—trivial things to mention—what the bath-keeper's art provides. Then those of inanimate bodies, which fulling and the whole art of furbishing take care of, and which have acquired many petty names that seem ridiculous.

THEAETETUS Very much so.

STRANGER Quite, Theaetetus. But the method of argument cares neither less nor more about sponging than about taking medicine, whether one benefits us a little by purifying and the other a lot. For it is trying, for the sake of acquiring 227b intelligence, to discern which of all the arts are akin and which are not. For that purpose it honors them all equally, and where

they're alike it considers none more ridiculous than another. It doesn't regard someone who illustrates hunting by generalship as any more dignified than someone who illustrates it by lice-catching—only, as a rule, as more pretentious. And so now, as to your question—what name we'll give to all the capacities whose lot is to purify a body, whether animate or inanimate [227c] —it won't make any difference to the method which name seems most decent. Let the name simply bind together everything that purifies anything else, and keep it apart from the purifications of the soul. For what the method has just now tried to do is mark off the purification that concerns thought from the others—if we really understand what it wants.

THEAETETUS Well, I've understood. And I agree that there are two kinds of purification, and that one of them is the kind that concerns the soul, separate from the kind that concerns the body.

STRANGER Excellent. Now listen to what comes next [227d] and try once more to cut what's been said in two.

THEAETETUS Wherever you lead the way, I'll try to cut along with you.

STRANGER Do we say that wickedness in the soul is something different from excellence?

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER And purification, we said, was keeping the one and throwing out whatever is bad.

THEAETETUS Yes, it was.

STRANGER So in the case of the soul too, insofar as we find some removal of vice, we'll be striking the right note if we call it purification.

THEAETETUS Very much so.

STRANGER We have to say that there are two kinds of vice in the soul.

THEAETETUS What are they?

STRANGER [228a] One is like disease in a body, the other like ugliness arising in it.

THEAETETUS I don't follow.

STRANGER Perhaps you haven't considered disease and discord to be the same thing?

THEAETETUS Again, I don't know what I should say to that either.

STRANGER Do you think discord is anything other than the falling-out of what is naturally akin, resulting from some corruption?

THEAETETUS Nothing else.

STRANGER And is ugliness anything other than disproportion, a kind that's unsightly wherever it's present?

THEAETETUS [228b] Nothing else at all.

STRANGER Well then: in the soul of people in a bad state, haven't we noticed judgments at odds with desires, spirit with pleasures, reason with pains, and all these with one another?

THEAETETUS Very much so.

STRANGER And yet all of them are necessarily akin.

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER So if we call wickedness discord and disease of the soul, we'll be speaking correctly.

THEAETETUS Quite correctly.

STRANGER [228c] Well then: when things that partake of motion set themselves a target and try to hit it, but on every attempt swerve away from it and miss, shall we say this happens to them because of proportion with one another, or, on the contrary, because of disproportion?

THEAETETUS Obviously because of disproportion.

STRANGER But we know that every soul that is ignorant of anything is ignorant involuntarily.

THEAETETUS Very much so.

STRANGER Now being ignorant, when a soul is striving toward truth [228d] and its comprehension swerves off course, is nothing other than derangement.

THEAETETUS Certainly.

STRANGER So we have to set down a mindless soul as ugly and lacking proportion.

THEAETETUS It seems so.

STRANGER Then there are, it appears, these two kinds of bad things in it. One is what most people call wickedness, and it's quite clearly the soul's disease.

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER The other they call ignorance, but they're unwilling to admit that it is vice when it occurs only in the soul.

THEAETETUS [228e] I certainly have to concede what I doubted a moment ago when you said it: that there are two kinds of vice in the soul. Cowardice, licentiousness, and injustice must all be considered disease in us, while the condition of widespread and manifold ignorance must be set down as ugliness.

STRANGER Now in the case of the body, two arts have arisen for these two conditions, haven't they?

THEAETETUS Which two?

STRANGER [229a] For ugliness, gymnastics; for disease, medicine.

THEAETETUS Apparently.

STRANGER And so for insolence, injustice, and cowardice, the art of correction is by nature, of all the arts, the one most closely related to Justice.

THEAETETUS That's likely, at any rate, so far as human opinion goes.

STRANGER Well then: for ignorance of every kind, could anyone more correctly name any art other than teaching?

THEAETETUS None.

STRANGER [229b] Come now: must we say that teaching has only one kind, or more than one, with two that are greatest? Think about it.

THEAETETUS I'm thinking.

STRANGER And I think this is how we might find it most quickly.

THEAETETUS How?

STRANGER By looking at ignorance to see whether it has a cut somewhere down its middle. For if it turns out to be double, it clearly forces teaching to have two parts as well, one for each of its kinds.

THEAETETUS Well? Can you somehow see what we're looking for now?

STRANGER [229c] I do seem, anyway, to see one large and difficult kind of ignorance marked off by itself, a counterweight to all its other parts.

THEAETETUS What kind is that?

STRANGER Thinking you know something when you don't. It's probably through this that all our errors of thought arise, for every one of us.

THEAETETUS True.

STRANGER And to this alone, of the kinds of ignorance, the name "stupidity" has been given, I think.

THEAETETUS Certainly.

STRANGER And what should we call the part of teaching that gets rid of it?

THEAETETUS [229d] I think, Stranger, that the other part is called instruction in the crafts, but this part, here at least, we call education.

STRANGER Yes, Theaetetus, and pretty much among all the Greeks. But we still have to consider this as well: whether educa-

tion is now wholly indivisible, or has some division worth naming.

THEAETETUS Then we have to consider it.

STRANGER Well, it seems to me that this too splits somewhere further.

THEAETETUS Along what line?

STRANGER 229e Of teaching by speech, one road seems to be rougher, while its other part is smoother.

THEAETETUS What do we mean by each of these?

STRANGER One is time-honored, the way of our fathers. People used it above all with their sons, and many still use it now, when 230a their sons do something wrong: sometimes being harsh with them, sometimes encouraging them more gently. The whole of it one might most correctly call admonition.

THEAETETUS That's so.

STRANGER As for the other, some people, it seems, reasoned it through for themselves and came to believe that all stupidity is involuntary. Someone who thinks he's wise, they concluded, would never be willing to learn anything about the things he thinks he's clever at, and the admonishing kind of education achieves little for a great deal of effort.

THEAETETUS And they're right to think so.

STRANGER 230b So they set out to cast out this belief by another method.

THEAETETUS What method?

STRANGER They question a person about the things he thinks he's saying something about when he's saying nothing. Then, since his judgments wander, they examine them easily. They bring them together in argument and set them side by side, and in doing so they show that they contradict one another at the same time, about the same things, in relation to the same things, in the same respects. When people see this, they get angry with themselves and become gentle toward others, 230c and in this

way they're freed from the inflated and rigid judgments they held about themselves. Of all releases it's the most pleasant to hear about, and the most lasting for the one who undergoes it. For those who purify them, my dear boy, think as the doctors of the body have come to believe: that a body can't benefit from the food it's given until someone gets rid of whatever is obstructing it inside. They've reasoned the same way about the soul—that it won't get any benefit from the lessons offered to it 230d until someone refutes the person being refuted and brings him to shame. That removes the judgments that obstruct learning and shows him purified, believing that he knows only what he knows, and no more.

THEAETETUS That's certainly the best and most sensible state to be in.

STRANGER For all these reasons, Theaetetus, we must say that refutation is the greatest and most authoritative of purifications. And we must consider that someone who hasn't been refuted, even if he happens 230e to be the Great King, is unpurified in the most important respects. He has become uneducated and ugly in exactly those respects in which anyone who is going to be truly happy ought to be purest and finest.[6]

THEAETETUS Absolutely.

STRANGER Well then, who shall we say 231a the people who use this art are? I'm afraid to call them sophists.

THEAETETUS Why?

STRANGER In case we grant them too great an honor.

THEAETETUS And yet what we've just described does resemble someone like that.

STRANGER So does a wolf resemble a dog—the wildest thing the tamest. A careful person must always be on guard above all about resemblances; they're a very slippery kind. Still, let it

6 The Great King: the king of Persia, to the Greeks the very image of wealth and power.

stand. For I don't think the dispute will 231b be over minor boundaries, once people are sufficiently on their guard.

THEAETETUS No, probably not.

STRANGER Then let purification be part of the art of discrimination; and let the part of purification that concerns the soul be marked off. Of that, teaching; of teaching, education. And of education, the refutation of empty conceit of wisdom, which has turned up in our present discussion—let us call that nothing other than the sophistry of noble lineage.

THEAETETUS Let's call it that. But I'm at a loss now, because so many things have 231c appeared, about what one should say, truthfully and with confidence, the sophist really is.

STRANGER Naturally you're at a loss. But you should suppose that by now he too is very much at a loss about how he'll still slip through our argument. For the proverb is right: it isn't easy to dodge them all. So now, especially, we have to go after him.

THEAETETUS You're right.

STRANGER First, then, let's stop and catch our breath, so to speak, and while we rest, let's reckon up among 231d ourselves—come on—how many ways the sophist has appeared to us. I think he was first found to be a paid hunter of rich young men.

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER Second, a sort of merchant in learning for the soul.

THEAETETUS Certainly.

STRANGER And third, didn't he turn up as a retailer of these same goods?

THEAETETUS Yes, and fourth, he was for us someone who sells learning of his own making.

STRANGER You remember correctly. I'll try to remember 231e the fifth: he was a kind of athlete in verbal competition, who had claimed the art of eristic as his own.

THEAETETUS Yes, he was.

STRANGER The sixth was open to dispute, but still we granted him the point and set him down as a purifier of the soul, removing judgments that obstruct learning.

THEAETETUS Absolutely.

STRANGER 232a Now, do you notice that when someone appears to know many things, yet is called by the name of a single art, this appearance isn't sound? Clearly, whoever has this experience about some art can't discern the feature of it that all these branches of learning point to. That's why he calls the person who has them by many names instead of one.

THEAETETUS That's very likely more or less how it is.

ARGUING ABOUT EVERYTHING

He claims to dispute about every subject, so he can only seem to know.

STRANGER 232b Then let's not let this happen to us, at least, in our search, out of laziness. Let's first take up again one of the things we said about the sophist. For one of them struck me as revealing him more than any other.

THEAETETUS Which one?

STRANGER We said, I think, that he was a practitioner of contradiction.

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER Well, and also that he becomes a teacher of this very thing to others?

THEAETETUS Certainly.

STRANGER Let's consider, then, what it is such people claim to make others capable of contradicting about. Let our inquiry start from the beginning in some such way as this. 232c Come: about divine things, which are hidden from most people, do they make them able to do this?

THEAETETUS That's what's said of them, at any rate.

STRANGER What about the visible things of earth and heaven and everything connected with them?

THEAETETUS Naturally.

STRANGER And again, in private conversations, whenever something is said about coming-to-be and being in general, we know, don't we, that they're clever at contradicting, and that they make others capable of doing just what they do?

THEAETETUS Absolutely.

STRANGER 232d And what about laws and all political matters? Don't they promise to make people able to dispute about them?

THEAETETUS Yes—practically nobody would talk with them if they didn't promise that.

STRANGER And as for all the arts together and each one singly, what one should say to contradict each craftsman himself has been published, I believe, and set out in writing for anyone who wants to learn it.

THEAETETUS You seem to me to mean Protagoras's writings on wrestling and 232e the other arts.[7]

STRANGER And on many other things too, my blessed friend. But, to sum up, doesn't the art of contradiction seem to be a capacity sufficient for disputing about everything?

THEAETETUS It certainly seems to leave almost nothing out.

STRANGER Then, by the gods, my boy, do you think this is possible? Maybe you young people see it more sharply, and we older ones more dimly.

THEAETETUS 233a Possible how, and what exactly are you referring to? I don't quite understand what you're asking now.

STRANGER Whether it's possible for any human being to know everything.

7 Protagoras of Abdera (fifth century BC) was the most famous of the sophists, who taught for pay.

THEAETETUS Our race would be blessed indeed, Stranger, if it were.

STRANGER Then how could anyone who lacks knowledge himself ever contradict someone who has it and say anything sound?

THEAETETUS He couldn't, in any way.

STRANGER Then what on earth would the wonder of the sophist's power be?

THEAETETUS The wonder of what?

STRANGER [233b] How they're ever able to give young people the impression that they themselves are wiser than anyone about everything. For it's clear that if they didn't contradict correctly, or didn't appear to the young to do so—or if, appearing to, they didn't seem to have any more understanding because of their disputing—then, as you said yourself, hardly anyone would pay them money and be willing to become their student in these very things.

THEAETETUS Hardly anyone, no.

STRANGER But as it is, people are willing?

THEAETETUS Very much so.

STRANGER [233c] Because, I suppose, the sophists seem to have knowledge themselves of the things they contradict about.

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER And they do this about everything, we say?

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER So they appear to their students to be wise about everything.

THEAETETUS Certainly.

STRANGER Without being so—for that was shown to be impossible.

THEAETETUS Of course it's impossible.

STRANGER So the sophist has turned out to have a kind of seeming knowledge about everything, but not the truth.

THEAETETUS 233d Absolutely. And what's just been said about them may well be the most correct thing that has been said.

STRANGER Then let's take a clearer example to show this.

THEAETETUS What example?

STRANGER This one. And try to pay close attention and answer carefully.

THEAETETUS What is it?

STRANGER Suppose someone claimed to know, not how to speak or contradict, but how to make and do all things together by a single art—

THEAETETUS 233e What do you mean, all things?

STRANGER You're lost at the very start of what I said. You don't understand "all things," it seems.

THEAETETUS No, I don't.

STRANGER Well, by "all things" I mean you and me, and besides us the other animals and the trees.

THEAETETUS What do you mean?

STRANGER Suppose someone said he'd make me and you and everything else that grows—

THEAETETUS 234a What sort of making do you mean? You can't be talking about a farmer, since you said he makes animals too.

STRANGER I did, and the sea as well, and earth and heaven and gods and everything else besides. What's more, he makes each of them quickly and sells them off for a tiny coin.

THEAETETUS You're talking about some kind of game.

STRANGER Well then: when someone says he knows everything and could teach it all to someone else for a small fee and in a short time, mustn't we consider that a game?

THEAETETUS Surely.

SEVENTH DEFINITION: THE IMAGE-MAKER

Like a painter, he makes images: true likenesses, or appearances that only look right from a distance.

STRANGER 234b And do you know of any kind of game more artful or more charming than imitation?

THEAETETUS None at all. You've named a very large kind, gathering everything into one, and pretty much the most varied there is.

STRANGER Then about someone who promises he can make everything by a single art, we know this much, I take it: by producing imitations of the things that are, which bear their names, with the art of painting, he'll be able to fool the mindless among young children. He shows them his pictures from a distance, and they don't notice that he isn't, as they think, perfectly capable of actually accomplishing whatever he wants to do.

THEAETETUS 234c Of course.

STRANGER Well then: shouldn't we expect that there's also another art, concerned with speech, by which it's possible to bewitch young people who still stand far off from the truth of things—with words, through their ears—by showing them spoken images of everything? It would make what's said seem true, and the speaker seem the wisest of all about everything.

THEAETETUS 234d Why shouldn't there be another art like that?

STRANGER So then, Theaetetus, isn't it inevitable that most of those who listened back then, once enough time has passed and they've grown older, will run into the things that are at close quarters and be forced by their experiences to grasp them clearly? Won't they change the judgments they formed back then, so that big things appear small and easy things hard, and all 234e the appearances in words are completely overturned by the realities they meet in action?

THEAETETUS Yes, at least so far as someone my age can judge. Though I suspect I'm one of those still standing far off myself.

STRANGER That's exactly why all of us here will try, and are trying now, to bring you as close as we can without your having to go through those experiences. But about the sophist, tell me this. Is it [235a] clear by now that he's a kind of magician, an imitator of the things that are? Or are we still in doubt whether he might actually have real knowledge of all the subjects he seems able to dispute about?

THEAETETUS How could he, my friend? No, from what's been said it's pretty clear by now that he's one of those who deal in play.

STRANGER Then we must count him as a kind of magician and imitator.

THEAETETUS Of course we must.

STRANGER Come on, then. Our job now is not to let our quarry [235b] get loose again. We've just about wrapped him in one of the netting devices that arguments use for this sort of thing, so this much at least he won't escape.

THEAETETUS What's that?

STRANGER Being one of the kind of conjurers.

THEAETETUS That's how it looks to me too, as far as he's concerned.

STRANGER Then it's settled. We must divide the art of image-making as fast as we can and go down into it. If the sophist stands his ground against us right away, we'll arrest him as ordered [235c] by the argument, our king, hand him over to it, and show off our catch. But if he slips off somewhere among the parts of the imitative art, we'll follow him, always dividing whichever section gives him shelter, until he's caught. Either way, neither he nor any other kind will ever boast of having escaped the method of those who can track things down like this, both part by part and as a whole.

THEAETETUS Well said. That's how we should go about it.

STRANGER Following the method of division we used before, [235d] I think I can make out two kinds of imitation this time as well. But which of the two contains the type we're looking for, I don't think I can tell yet.

THEAETETUS Well, first tell us, and divide them for us. What are the two you mean?

STRANGER One I see in it is the art of likeness-making. That's chiefly when someone creates the imitation by following the proportions of the original in length, breadth and depth, [235e] and also gives each part the colors that suit it.

THEAETETUS What? Don't all imitators try to do that?

STRANGER Not those, at any rate, who sculpt or paint works on a large scale. If they reproduced the true proportions of beautiful things, you know the upper parts would look smaller than they should [236a] and the lower parts larger, because we see the one from far off and the other from close up.

THEAETETUS Certainly.

STRANGER So don't craftsmen these days say goodbye to the truth, and build into their images not the proportions that really are but the ones that will seem beautiful?

THEAETETUS Absolutely.

STRANGER Then isn't it fair to call the first kind, since it's like the original, a likeness?

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER [236b] And the part of the imitative art concerned with it should be called what we called it before, likeness-making?

THEAETETUS It should.

STRANGER And what about this? Take something that appears to resemble the beautiful because it's viewed from a poor vantage point, but that wouldn't even be like what it claims to resemble if someone gained the ability to see things that size properly. What do we call it? Since it appears but doesn't resemble, isn't it an appearance?

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER And isn't this [236c] part a very large one, both in painting and in imitation as a whole?

THEAETETUS Of course it is.

STRANGER And the art that produces an appearance rather than a likeness: wouldn't we be quite right to call it appearance-making?

THEAETETUS Very much so.

STRANGER These, then, are the two kinds of image-making I meant: likeness-making and appearance-making.

THEAETETUS Right.

STRANGER But the thing I was unsure about then, which of the two the sophist belongs in, I still can't see clearly. [236d] The man really is a marvel and extraordinarily hard to make out. Even now he has very neatly and cleverly taken refuge in a kind that's baffling to track down.

THEAETETUS It looks that way.

STRANGER Do you agree because you recognize it yourself? Or did the argument's momentum, now that you're used to it, sweep you along into agreeing so quickly?

THEAETETUS What do you mean, and what are you getting at?

HOW CAN WHAT IS NOT BE?

Talk of images and falsehood says that what is not somehow is, which Parmenides forbade.

STRANGER My dear fellow, we really are in an extremely difficult [236e] inquiry. This business of appearing and seeming but not being, and of saying things but not true ones, has always been full of perplexity, in the past and now. How can someone say that it's really possible to say or judge falsehoods, and in uttering this not be caught up in contradiction? That, [237a] Theaetetus, is extremely hard.

THEAETETUS Why?

STRANGER This statement has dared to assume that what is not is. Otherwise there could be no such thing as falsehood. But the great Parmenides, my boy, protested against this to us from beginning to end, back when we were boys ourselves. He said it every time, in prose and in verse: "Never shall this be forced," he says, "that things that are not are. But as you inquire, keep your thought from this road." [237b] So we have his testimony. Best of all, though, the statement itself would show it, if it were put to a modest test. So let's look at this first, if it's all the same to you.[8]

THEAETETUS Treat my part however you like. But find the best way through the argument, go ahead yourself, and lead me along that same road.

STRANGER That's what we must do. So tell me: we do dare, I take it, to utter the phrase "what in no way is"?

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER Now suppose it weren't for the sake of contest or play. Suppose that, in all seriousness, [237c] one of our listeners had to think it over and answer what this name "what is not" should be applied to. What do we think he'd use it for, and on what sort of thing? And what would he point to for the person asking?

THEAETETUS That's a hard question. For someone like me it's almost completely impossible to answer.

STRANGER Well, this much is clear at any rate: "what is not" mustn't be applied to anything among the things that are.

THEAETETUS How could it be?

STRANGER Then since it can't be applied to what is, neither would anyone be right to apply it to "something."

THEAETETUS How so?

8 Parmenides of Elea (early fifth century BC) set out his views in a hexameter poem; the lines quoted come from it.

STRANGER [237d] This too is plain to us, I suppose: we always use this word "something" of a thing that is. To say it on its own, naked as it were and cut off from all the things that are, is impossible. Isn't it?

THEAETETUS Impossible.

STRANGER Looking at it this way, do you agree that whoever says something must say some one thing?

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER For you'll say that "something" signifies one, "a pair of somethings" two, and "some things" many.

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER [237e] And whoever says not something must, it seems, quite necessarily say nothing at all.

THEAETETUS Quite necessarily.

STRANGER Then mustn't we refuse to grant even that such a person speaks but says nothing? Mustn't we deny that he even speaks, whoever tries to utter what is not?

THEAETETUS That would certainly put an end to the argument's perplexity.

STRANGER [238a] Don't boast yet. There's still more, my dear fellow, and it's the greatest and first of the perplexities, because it concerns the very starting point of the matter.

THEAETETUS What do you mean? Tell me, and don't hold back.

STRANGER To what is, I suppose, some other thing that is might be added.

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER But shall we ever say it's possible for any of the things that are to be added to what is not?

THEAETETUS How could it be?

STRANGER Now, we count number as a whole among the things that are.

THEAETETUS [238b] Yes, if we're to count anything at all as being.

STRANGER Then let's not even try to apply number to what is not, whether plurality or one.

THEAETETUS It seems we certainly wouldn't be right to try, as the argument says.

STRANGER Then how could anyone utter with his mouth, or even grasp at all in thought, things that are not or what is not, apart from number?

THEAETETUS Explain. How so?

STRANGER When we say "things that are not," aren't we trying to attach a plurality [238c] of number?

THEAETETUS Certainly.

STRANGER And when we say "what is not," aren't we attaching one?

THEAETETUS Very plainly.

STRANGER And yet we say it's neither just nor right to try to fit what is onto what is not.

THEAETETUS Very true.

STRANGER So you see that it's impossible to utter correctly, or to say, or to think what is not itself by itself. It's unthinkable, unsayable, unutterable and inexpressible.

THEAETETUS Absolutely.

STRANGER [238d] Then was I lying just now when I said I would state the greatest perplexity about it? Do we have yet another, even greater one, still to mention?

THEAETETUS What's that?

STRANGER My remarkable friend, don't you see from the very things we've said that what is not throws even the person refuting it into perplexity? Whenever someone tries to refute it, he's forced to contradict himself about it.

THEAETETUS What do you mean? Put it more clearly still.

STRANGER There's no point looking to me for greater clarity. For I [238e] laid it down that what is not must share in neither one nor many. Yet just now, and again now, I've spoken of it as one: I say "what is not." You do see that.

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER And again, a little earlier I said it was unutterable, unsayable and inexpressible. Are you following?

THEAETETUS I'm following. Of course.

STRANGER So in trying to attach "is" to it, wasn't I saying the opposite [239a] of what I said before?

THEAETETUS Apparently.

STRANGER And in attaching it, wasn't I talking about it as one thing?

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER And in calling it inexpressible, unsayable and unutterable, I was framing my statement as being about one thing.

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER But we say that if someone is going to speak correctly, he mustn't define it as either one or many, or even call it anything at all. Even by that form of address it would be referred to as having the form of one.

THEAETETUS Absolutely.

STRANGER [239b] Well, then, what could anyone say of me? He'd find me beaten long ago, and still now, when it comes to refuting what is not. So, as I said, let's not look to me, as I speak, for correct speech about what is not. Come on, let's look for it in you now.

THEAETETUS What do you mean?

STRANGER Come on, be brave and noble for us, since you're young. Strain as hard as you can and try to utter something correct about what is not, without attaching being, or one, or numerical plurality to it.

THEAETETUS 239c I'd have to be gripped by a great and strange enthusiasm for the attempt if I tried it myself after seeing what happened to you.

STRANGER Well, if you like, let's leave you and me out of it. Until we meet someone who can do this, let's say that the sophist has, with the utmost cunning, burrowed down into a place where there's no getting at him.

THEAETETUS That certainly seems to be so.

STRANGER So if we say he has an appearance-making 239d art of some kind, he'll easily seize on this use of words to get a grip on us and turn our arguments back the opposite way. When we call him an image-maker, he'll ask what on earth we mean by an image at all. So we have to consider, Theaetetus, what answer anyone could give our young fellow to his question.

THEAETETUS Obviously we'll say images in water and in mirrors, and also painted and engraved ones, and all the other things of that sort.

STRANGER 239e It's clear, Theaetetus, that you've never seen a sophist.

THEAETETUS Why's that?

STRANGER He'll seem to you to have his eyes shut, or to have no eyes at all.

THEAETETUS How so?

STRANGER When you give him your answer like that, mentioning things in mirrors or in sculptures, he'll laugh at what you say for talking to him as though he could see. He'll pretend not to know about mirrors, 240a or water, or even sight at all, and will ask you only about what follows from your words.

THEAETETUS What's that?

STRANGER What runs through all these things you called many, yet saw fit to address by one name, uttering "image" over all of them as though they were one. So speak up, and defend yourself against the man without giving any ground.

THEAETETUS Well, Stranger, what would we say an image is, except another thing of the same sort, made to resemble the true one?

STRANGER Do you mean another true one of the same sort, or what were you referring to by 240b "of the same sort"?

THEAETETUS Not true at all. Just resembling it.

STRANGER Meaning by "true" what really is?

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER Well, then: is what's not true the opposite of what's true?

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER So you're saying that what resembles is not really what is, if you're going to call it not true.

THEAETETUS But it is, in a way.

STRANGER But not truly, you say.

THEAETETUS No, not truly. Except that it really is a likeness.

STRANGER So what we call a likeness is not really a thing that is, and yet it really is?

THEAETETUS 240c It looks as though what is not has been woven together with what is in some such tangle, and a very strange one.

STRANGER Strange? Of course it's strange. You can see, at any rate, that even now, through this crisscrossing, the many-headed sophist has forced us to agree against our will that what is not in a way is.

THEAETETUS I see it very well.

STRANGER Well, then. How are we to define his art and still be able to stay in agreement with ourselves?

THEAETETUS What do you mean? What sort of thing are you afraid of, to talk like that?

STRANGER [240d] When we say he deceives us with his appearance, and that his art is an art of deception, will we then say that our soul judges falsely because of his art? Or what will we say?

THEAETETUS That. What else could we say?

STRANGER And false judgment, in turn, will be a judgment of things opposite to the things that are, or what?

THEAETETUS Yes. Opposite.

STRANGER So you're saying that false judgment judges things that are not?

THEAETETUS It must.

STRANGER [240e] Judging that things that are not are not, or that things that in no way are in some way are?

THEAETETUS Things that are not must in some way be, if anyone is ever to be wrong about anything, even slightly.

STRANGER Well, and isn't it also judged that things that entirely are in no way are?

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER And this, too, is falsehood?

THEAETETUS This too.

STRANGER And a statement, I suppose, will be considered false in the same way [241a] when it says that things that are are not, and that things that are not are.

THEAETETUS How else could it come to be false?

STRANGER In hardly any other way. But the sophist won't admit this. How could any sensible person grant it, when what we agreed to before has since been agreed to be unutterable, unsayable, inexpressible and unthinkable? Do we understand, Theaetetus, what he's saying?

THEAETETUS Of course we understand. He'll say we're contradicting what we said just now, since we dared to say that falsehood exists [241b] in judgments and in statements. For, he'll say, we're forced again and again to attach what is to what is not,

though we agreed just now that this was the most impossible thing of all.

STRANGER You've remembered correctly. But it's time now to decide what we should do about the sophist. You see how ready to hand and how many the objections and perplexities are, if we search for him by placing him in the art of the falsehood-makers and magicians.

THEAETETUS Very much so.

STRANGER And we've gone through only a small part of them, though there are, [241c] you might say, no end of them.

THEAETETUS It would seem impossible to catch the sophist, if that's how things are.

STRANGER What then? Shall we go soft and give up now?

THEAETETUS I certainly don't think we should, if we're able to get some sort of hold on the man, even a slight one.

STRANGER So you'll forgive me, and, as you just said, be content if we manage to wrest even a little from so strong an argument?

THEAETETUS Of course I will.

FATHER PARMENIDES

The Stranger asks not to be thought a parricide for laying hands on his teacher's doctrine.

STRANGER [241d] Then there's something else I ask of you even more.

THEAETETUS What's that?

STRANGER Not to think I'm turning into a sort of parricide.

THEAETETUS Why?

STRANGER Because to defend ourselves we'll have to put the statement of our father Parmenides to the test, and force our way to the claims that what is not, in a certain respect, is, and that what is, in turn, in a way is not.

THEAETETUS It's apparent that this is what we have to fight out in our arguments.

STRANGER Apparent? Of course it is, even to a blind man, as the saying goes. 241e For unless these claims are either refuted or agreed to, hardly anyone will ever be able to talk about false statements or false judgment, whether about images, or likenesses, or imitations, or appearances themselves, or about the arts that deal with them, without making himself ridiculous by being forced to contradict himself.

THEAETETUS Very true.

STRANGER 242a That's why we must now dare to attack our father's statement, or else drop the matter altogether, if some reluctance stops us from doing it.

THEAETETUS Well, nothing at all is going to stop us from that.

STRANGER Then I'll ask you for a third, small favor.

THEAETETUS Just say it.

STRANGER I said just now, I think, that I've always given up when it comes to refuting these things, and especially now.

THEAETETUS You did.

STRANGER So I'm afraid that because of what I said you'll think I'm mad, turning myself up and 242b down from one moment to the next. For it's for your sake that we'll set about refuting the statement, if we do refute it.

THEAETETUS Well, as far as I'm concerned, you won't seem to be doing anything out of line in the least if you go on to this refutation and proof. So go ahead with confidence, at least on that score.

STRANGER Come on, then. Where should one start so risky an argument? I think, my boy, that this is the road we most need to take.

THEAETETUS Which one?

STRANGER First to examine the things that seem plain right now, 242c in case we're somehow confused about them, yet readily agree with each other as though we had them clearly sorted out.

THEAETETUS Tell me more clearly what you mean.

STORIES ABOUT BEING

Earlier thinkers told stories about how many things there are; being turns out as puzzling as not-being.

STRANGER It seems to me that Parmenides has talked to us in rather an easygoing way. So has everyone who ever set out to decide how many the things that are are, and of what sort.

THEAETETUS How?

STRANGER Each of them seems to me to be telling us a story, as if we were children. One says the things that are are three, and that some of them are at war 242d with each other at times, in some way, while at other times they become friends, marry, have children and bring up their offspring. Another says there are two, wet and dry, or hot and cold, and he sets up house for them and marries them off. Our Eleatic tribe, starting from Xenophanes and even earlier, tells its stories on the basis that what are called "all things" are one. Later, certain Ionian and Sicilian Muses realized that it's safest to weave 242e the two together and say that what is is both many and one, and is held together by enmity and friendship.[9] "For in being drawn apart it is always drawn together," say the more tightly strung of the Muses. The softer ones slackened the claim that things are always this way. They say that by turns the whole is now one and friendly under 243a Aphrodite, and now many and at war with itself through some kind of strife. Whether any of them spoke truly or not in all this, it's hard, and out of tune, to find

9 Xenophanes of Colophon (sixth century BC) was later treated as the founder of the Eleatic school. The "Ionian" and "Sicilian Muses" are usually taken to be Heraclitus of Ephesus and Empedocles of Acragas.

such serious fault with famous men of old. But this much can be declared without giving offense—

THEAETETUS What's that?

STRANGER That they looked down on us ordinary people far too much and made light of us. Without caring whether we follow what they're saying [243b] or get left behind, they each press on to their own conclusion.

THEAETETUS What do you mean?

STRANGER When one of them declares that many things, or one, or two, are, or have come to be, or are coming to be, and another that hot is mixed with cold, positing separations and unions somewhere else, do you, Theaetetus, for heaven's sake, understand what they mean by any of it, at any point? When I was younger, I thought I understood precisely whenever anyone said this thing we're now perplexed about, "what is not." But now you see how perplexed we are about it.

THEAETETUS [243c] I see.

STRANGER Then perhaps we've got this same condition in our soul no less about what is. We claim we're at ease about it and understand whenever someone says it, but not about the other, when in fact we're in the same state about both.

THEAETETUS Perhaps.

STRANGER And let the same be said about the other things we mentioned earlier.

THEAETETUS Certainly.

STRANGER We'll look into most of them later, [243d] if we decide to. Right now we must look first at the greatest of them, the one that leads the rest.

THEAETETUS Which one do you mean? Or is it obvious that you're saying we must first investigate what is, and what on earth the people who talk about it think they're pointing to?

STRANGER You've followed right on my heels, Theaetetus. Yes, I'm saying that this is how we must conduct our inquiry: we

question them as if they were here in person, like this: "Come now, all of you who say that everything is hot and cold, or some such pair of things. What on earth 243e is it that you're saying about both, when you say that both and each of them *are*? What are we to take this 'being' of yours to be? Is it a third thing alongside those two, so that by your account we should suppose that the all is three, and no longer two? For surely you don't call one of the two 'being' and then say that both alike are. If you did, they'd pretty well be one either way, not two."

THEAETETUS That's true.

STRANGER "Well, then, do you want to call the pair of them 'being'?"

THEAETETUS Perhaps.

STRANGER 244a "But, my friends," we'll say, "even then the two would quite plainly be called one."

THEAETETUS Quite right.

STRANGER "Since we're at a loss, then, you must explain it to us properly: what on earth do you mean to signify whenever you say 'being'? Clearly you've known this for a long time, while we used to think we knew and are now at a loss. So teach us this very thing first, so that we don't imagine we understand what you're saying when 244b the exact opposite is the case." If we say this and make this request of these people, and of all the others who say the all is more than one, will we be striking a false note, my boy?

THEAETETUS Not in the least.

STRANGER And what about those who say the all is one? Shouldn't we ask them, as best we can, what on earth they mean by what is?

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER Then let them answer this: "You say, I take it, that one thing alone is?" "Yes, we do," they'll say. Won't they?

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER "Well, then: do you call something 'being'?"

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER 244c "Is it the same thing you call 'one,' so that you're using two names for the same thing? Or what?"

THEAETETUS What will their answer be to that, Stranger?

STRANGER Clearly, Theaetetus, for someone who has laid down this hypothesis, answering the present question, or any other question for that matter, is not the easiest thing in the world.

THEAETETUS How so?

STRANGER For one thing, it's surely ridiculous to agree that there are two names when you've laid it down that there is nothing but one.

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER And for that matter, so is accepting anyone's claim that 244d there is a name at all. That would make no sense.

THEAETETUS In what way?

STRANGER If he posits the name as different from the thing, he's surely speaking of two things.

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER And if he posits the name as the same as the thing, he'll be forced to say either that it's the name of nothing, or, if he says it's the name of something, it will turn out that the name is only the name of a name, and of nothing else.

THEAETETUS Just so.

STRANGER And "the one," being the name of one, will also turn out to be the one of the name.

THEAETETUS Necessarily.

STRANGER Well, then: will they say that the whole is different from the one that is, or the same as it?

THEAETETUS 244e Of course they'll say it's the same. In fact they do say so.

STRANGER Well, if it is a whole, as Parmenides himself says ("in every direction like the bulk of a well-rounded sphere, equally balanced from the middle on every side; for it must not be any larger or any smaller here or there"), then what is, being like that, has a middle and extremities. And having these, it absolutely must have parts. Or how else could it be?

THEAETETUS Just so.

STRANGER 245a Yet nothing prevents what has been divided into parts from having oneness as a property over all its parts, and in this way, being all and a whole, from being one.

THEAETETUS Why not?

STRANGER But isn't it impossible for what has these properties to be the one itself?

THEAETETUS How so?

STRANGER Surely, on the correct account, what is truly one must be said to be completely without parts.

THEAETETUS Yes, it must.

STRANGER 245b Whereas a thing like that, made up of many parts, won't fit that account.

THEAETETUS I see.

STRANGER So will what is, by having oneness as a property, be one and a whole in that way? Or are we to deny altogether that what is is a whole?

THEAETETUS That's a hard choice you've put in front of me.

STRANGER You're absolutely right about that. If what is has the property of being one in some way, it will plainly not be the same as the one, and then all things will be more than one.

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER 245c And again, if what is is not a whole by having that property, but the whole itself is, then what is turns out to fall short of itself.

THEAETETUS Certainly.

STRANGER And by this argument, being deprived of itself, what is will be something that is not.

THEAETETUS Just so.

STRANGER And once again all things become more than one, since what is and the whole have each taken on a nature of its own, separately.

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER But if the whole doesn't exist at all, these same consequences 245d hold for what is. On top of not being, it could never even come to be.

THEAETETUS Why is that?

STRANGER Whatever has come to be has always come to be as a whole. So anyone who doesn't count the one or the whole among the things that are must not speak of either being or coming-to-be as something that is.

THEAETETUS That seems to be entirely so.

STRANGER What's more, what isn't a whole can't have any quantity at all. If something is of some quantity, then however much it is, it must be a whole of that much.

THEAETETUS Absolutely.

STRANGER And countless other points will come to light, each 245e carrying endless perplexities, for anyone who says that what is is either two things or one only.

THEAETETUS The ones just emerging pretty much show it. Each links on to the next, always bringing greater and harder confusion about what was said before.

STRANGER Well, we haven't gone through all those who give precise accounts of being and not-being, but let that suffice. Now we must look at those who speak about it differently, so that from all of them we may see 246a that it is no easier to say what being is than to say what not-being is.

THEAETETUS Then we must move on to these people too.

THE BATTLE OF GODS AND GIANTS

Materialists say only bodies are; the friends of the forms say only bodiless forms truly are.

STRANGER And there does seem to be something like a battle of gods and giants going on among them, because of their dispute with one another about being.

THEAETETUS How so?

STRANGER Some of them drag everything down to earth from heaven and the invisible, literally clutching rocks and trees in their hands. They lay hold of all such things and insist that only what offers resistance and contact [246b] to the touch is. They define body and being as the same, and if any of the others says that something without a body is, they despise him utterly and refuse to listen to anything else.

THEAETETUS They're formidable men you're describing. I've run into quite a few of them myself.

STRANGER That's why their opponents defend themselves very cautiously from somewhere up above, out of the invisible, forcefully insisting that true being is certain intelligible and bodiless forms. As for the bodies of the other side, and what those people call truth, [246c] they smash them into little pieces in their arguments, and call it not being but a kind of coming-to-be that is always on the move. Between the two sides, Theaetetus, an immense battle over these questions is always going on.

THEAETETUS True.

STRANGER Then let's take each of the two kinds in turn and get from them an account of the being they posit.

THEAETETUS How are we going to get it, then?

STRANGER From those who place it in forms it's easier, since they're more civilized. From those who drag everything down into body [246d] by force, it's harder, and perhaps almost impossible. But here's what I think we must do about them.

THEAETETUS What?

STRANGER Best of all, if it were somehow possible, would be to make them better in fact. If that can't be done, let's make them better in speech, supposing them willing to answer more civilly than they do now. After all, agreement from better people surely carries more authority than agreement from worse ones. But we aren't concerned with them. We're looking for the truth.

THEAETETUS 246e Quite right.

STRANGER Then tell them, now that they've become better, to answer you, and interpret what they say.

THEAETETUS I will.

STRANGER Let them say whether they claim there's such a thing as a mortal living creature.

THEAETETUS Of course they do.

STRANGER And don't they agree that it's a body with a soul?

THEAETETUS Certainly.

STRANGER Counting soul among the things that are?

THEAETETUS 247a Yes.

STRANGER Well, then: don't they say that one soul is just and another unjust, one has understanding and another lacks it?

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER But isn't it by the possession and presence of justice that each soul comes to be like that, and by the presence of the opposites that it comes to be the opposite?

THEAETETUS Yes, they agree to that too.

STRANGER And surely they'll say that what can come to be present in something, or absent from it, is certainly something.

THEAETETUS Yes, they do say so.

STRANGER 247b Since, then, justice and understanding and the rest of excellence and their opposites are, and so is the soul in

which they come to be, do they say that any of them is visible and tangible, or that they're all invisible?

THEAETETUS Hardly any of these is visible.

STRANGER And what about things like these? Do they say they have some kind of body?

THEAETETUS Here they no longer give the same answer across the board. The soul itself, they think, has some kind of body. But when it comes to understanding and each of the other things you asked about, they're ashamed 247c to dare either to agree that these are not among the things that are, or to insist that they're all bodies.

STRANGER Clearly, Theaetetus, our men have become better. The real Sown Men and earth-born among them wouldn't be ashamed of a single one of these points. They'd insist that whatever they can't squeeze in their hands is, after all, nothing whatsoever.[10]

THEAETETUS That's pretty much how they think.

STRANGER Then let's question them again. If they're willing to grant that even something 247d small among the things that are is bodiless, that's enough. For then they must tell us what it is that belongs by nature both to these things and to those that have body, so that they look to it when they say that both kinds are. Perhaps they'll be at a loss. If something like that has happened to them, see whether they'd be willing to accept a suggestion from us and agree that what is is something like this.

THEAETETUS Like what? Tell us, and we'll soon know.

STRANGER I'm saying that whatever has acquired any capacity at all, 247e whether by nature to act on anything else whatever or to be acted on, even in the slightest degree, by the most trivial thing, and even if only once, all of this really is. For I propose as

10 In Theban legend the "Sown Men" sprang up fully armed from the dragon's teeth that Cadmus sowed in the earth. The Stranger is extending his picture of the materialists as earth-born giants.

a definition marking off the things that are, that they are nothing other than capacity.

THEAETETUS Well, since they have nothing better to say themselves for the moment, they accept this.

STRANGER Good. Perhaps later something different may appear [248a] to us and to them. So, as far as they're concerned, let this stand as agreed for now.

THEAETETUS It stands.

THE FRIENDS OF THE FORMS

What is fully real must include change, life, soul and understanding.

STRANGER Then let's turn to the others, the friends of the forms. And you interpret their side for us too.

THEAETETUS I will.

STRANGER You distinguish coming-to-be from being and speak of them as separate, I take it? Don't you?

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER And you say that with the body, through perception, we commune with coming-to-be, but with the soul, through reasoning, we commune with real being. Being, you say, is always the same in the same respects, while coming-to-be is different at different times.

THEAETETUS [248b] Yes, we do say so.

STRANGER And this "communing," you finest of men: what are we to say you mean by it in both cases? Isn't it what we described just now?

THEAETETUS What was that?

STRANGER Being acted on or acting, which results from some capacity when things meet one another. Perhaps, Theaetetus, you can't make out their answer to this, but I perhaps can, because I know them well.

THEAETETUS So what account do they give?

STRANGER [248c] They don't grant us what we said just now to the earth-born about being.

THEAETETUS What was that?

STRANGER We laid it down as an adequate definition of the things that are, didn't we, that a thing has present in it the capacity to be acted on or to act, even in the slightest degree?

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER In reply they say that coming-to-be has a share in the capacity to be acted on and to act, but that the capacity for neither of these fits being.

THEAETETUS And don't they have a point?

STRANGER To which we must reply that we need to learn from them [248d] more clearly still whether they also agree that the soul knows and that being is known.

THEAETETUS They certainly do say that.

STRANGER Well, then: do you say that knowing or being known is acting, or being acted on, or both? Or that one of them is being acted on and the other is the other? Or that neither of them has any part in either of these at all?

THEAETETUS Clearly neither has any part in either. Otherwise they'd be contradicting what they said before.

STRANGER I see. They'd have to face this, at least: if knowing is [248e] acting on something, then what is known must in turn be acted on. And so, on this account, being, when it is known by knowledge, is changed to the extent that it is known, since it is acted on. And that, we say, couldn't happen to what is at rest.

THEAETETUS Right.

STRANGER But tell me, by Zeus: are we really going to be so easily persuaded that change and life and soul and understanding are not present to what wholly [249a] is, that it neither lives nor thinks, but stands there unchanging, solemn and holy, devoid of intelligence?

THEAETETUS That would be a terrible claim to concede, Stranger.

STRANGER Then are we to say that it has intelligence but not life?

THEAETETUS How could we?

STRANGER Then do we say that both of these are in it, and yet deny that it has them in a soul?

THEAETETUS And how else could it have them?

STRANGER Then are we to say that it has intelligence and life and soul, and yet, though it has a soul, stands utterly unchanging?

THEAETETUS 249b All of that strikes me as unreasonable.

STRANGER Then we must grant that what changes, and change itself, are among the things that are.

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER So it follows, Theaetetus, that if things are unchanging, there is no intelligence anywhere, in anyone, about anything.

THEAETETUS Quite so.

STRANGER And again, if we grant that all things are in motion and changing, then by this argument too we'll remove this very thing from the things that are.

THEAETETUS How?

STRANGER Do you think that what is the same, in the same respects, in the same way, and concerning the same thing, 249c could ever come about without rest?

THEAETETUS Not at all.

STRANGER Well, then: without these, can you see intelligence being or coming to be anywhere at all?

THEAETETUS Not in the least.

STRANGER And surely we must fight with every argument against anyone who does away with knowledge or understanding or intelligence and yet insists on any claim about anything in any way.

THEAETETUS Very much so.

STRANGER So the philosopher, who prizes these things most of all, absolutely must, it seems, refuse to accept that the all is at rest, whether from those who say it is one or from those who say it is many [249d] forms. And he must not listen at all to those who make what is change in every way. Instead, like children begging for both, he must say that what is, the all, is both together: everything unchanging and everything changing.[11]

THEAETETUS Very true.

STRANGER Well, then: don't we now seem to have captured what is fairly well in our account?

THEAETETUS Certainly.

STRANGER And yet—dear me, Theaetetus! It seems to me that only now are we going to recognize how perplexing our inquiry into it really is.

THEAETETUS [249e] How so? What do you mean by that?

STRANGER My dear friend, don't you realize that we're now in the deepest ignorance about it, even though we seem to ourselves to be saying something?

THEAETETUS We do seem so to me, at any rate. But how we've got into that state without noticing, I really don't see.

STRANGER Then look more closely: given what we're agreeing to now, [250a] couldn't we justly be asked the very questions we ourselves were asking earlier of those who say the all is hot and cold?

THEAETETUS What questions? Remind me.

11 Children offered a choice between two things proverbially ask for both.

STRANGER Certainly. And I'll try to do it by questioning you as I questioned them then, so that we can also make some progress at the same time.

THEAETETUS Right.

STRANGER Very well. Don't you say that change and rest are completely opposed to each other?

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER And yet you say that both of them, and each of them, equally are?

THEAETETUS 250b Yes, I do.

STRANGER When you grant that they are, do you mean that both and each are changing?

THEAETETUS Not at all.

STRANGER Then when you say that they both are, do you signify that they're at rest?

THEAETETUS How could I?

STRANGER So you're positing being in your soul as a third thing alongside these, on the grounds that rest and change are encompassed by it. And by taking them together and looking at their combination with being, you've said in that way that they both are?

THEAETETUS 250c It really does look as though we divine being as some third thing, when we say that change and rest are.

STRANGER So being is not change and rest together, but something different from them.

THEAETETUS So it seems.

STRANGER Then by its own nature being is neither at rest nor changing.

THEAETETUS Pretty much.

STRANGER Then where should someone turn his thought, if he wants to establish for himself something clear about it?

THEAETETUS Where indeed?

STRANGER I think there's nowhere easy to turn any longer. If something isn't [250d] changing, how is it not at rest? And how is what is in no way at rest not changing? Yet being has now turned out, by our account, to lie outside both of these. Is that possible?

THEAETETUS It's the most impossible thing of all.

STRANGER Then here's something it's fair to recall at this point.

THEAETETUS What?

STRANGER That when we were asked what on earth the name "what is not" should be applied to, we were caught in utter perplexity. Do you remember?

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER [250e] Well, are we in any less perplexity now about what is?

THEAETETUS To me, Stranger, if it's possible to say so, we seem to be in more.

STRANGER Then let this be laid down here as the full extent of our perplexity. But since what is and what is not have had an equal share of perplexity, there's now hope that as one of them comes to light, whether more dimly or more clearly, the other will [251a] come to light in the same way. And if, on the other hand, we can't see either of them, we'll at least push our argument through between the two of them at once, as creditably as we can.

THEAETETUS Good.

STRANGER Then let's explain how it is that we call this same thing, on any given occasion, by many names.

THEAETETUS Such as what? Give me an example.

STRANGER We speak of a man, of course, and give him many further names. We attribute to him colors and shapes and sizes and vices and excellences, and in all these cases and countless others we say not only [251b] that he is a man but also that he is

good, and endlessly many other things. And the same goes for everything else: we suppose each thing to be one, and then we speak of it as many and by many names.

THEAETETUS That's true.

STRANGER And that's how, I suppose, we've laid on a feast for the young, and for those among the old who've come late to learning. Anyone can object right away that it's impossible for the many to be one and the one many. And they certainly enjoy not letting us call a man good, 251c but only the good good and the man man. I imagine, Theaetetus, you often meet people who take this kind of thing seriously, sometimes quite elderly people, who are dazzled by it because of how poorly stocked they are with understanding, and who even think they've discovered something supremely wise in this very point.

THEAETETUS Certainly.

WHICH KINDS BLEND?

Neither all nor none: some kinds combine with one another, as some letters do.

STRANGER So that our argument may be addressed to all those 251d who have ever discussed being in any way whatever, let what we're about to say, put in the form of questions, be addressed both to these people and to the others we've been discussing before.

THEAETETUS What will that be?

STRANGER Are we to attach neither being to change and rest, nor anything else to anything else, and treat them in our discussions as unblended and unable to share in one another? Or are we to bring them all together into one, as capable of combining with one another? Or some yes and some no? Of these options, 251e Theaetetus, which shall we say they would choose?

THEAETETUS I have no answer to give to that on their behalf.

STRANGER Then why not answer one option at a time and examine what follows in each case?

THEAETETUS That's a good idea.

STRANGER And let's suppose, if you like, that first they say nothing has any power of combining with anything in any way. In that case change and rest won't share in being at all, will they?

THEAETETUS 252a No, they won't.

STRANGER Well then, will either of them be, if it doesn't combine with being?

THEAETETUS It won't.

STRANGER Then that agreement has quickly turned everything upside down, it seems: the views of those who make the all change, of those who make it stand still as one, and of all who say that the things that are exist in forms that are always the same and unvarying. All of them attach being to things. Some say things really are changing, others that they really are at rest.

THEAETETUS Absolutely.

STRANGER 252b And what's more, take those who sometimes put everything together and sometimes divide it. They may divide things into one and out of one into unlimitedly many, or into a limited number of elements that they then compose things from. They may suppose this happens in turns, or that it happens always. Either way, none of them would be saying anything, if there's no blending at all.

THEAETETUS Right.

STRANGER And the people who won't let anything be called something else by sharing in what belongs to that other thing would be pursuing the argument in the most ridiculous way of all.

THEAETETUS 252c How?

STRANGER They're forced, I suppose, to use "is" about everything, and "apart," and "from the others," and "by itself," and countless other expressions. Since they can't keep away from these or avoid linking them in their statements, they don't

need anyone else to refute them. They have the enemy and opponent at home, as the saying goes, and they go around carrying him with them always, muttering from inside, like that strange Eurycles.[12]

THEAETETUS 252d That's exactly right—an apt comparison, and a true one.

STRANGER Well, what if we let all things have the power of combining with one another?

THEAETETUS That one even I can dispose of.

STRANGER How?

THEAETETUS Because change itself would come to a complete standstill, and rest in turn would itself change, if each of them came to belong to the other.

STRANGER But surely it's impossible, by the strictest necessity, for change to rest and rest to change?

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER Then only the third option is left.

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER 252e And one of these must be the case: either everything blends, or nothing does, or some things are willing to blend and others not.

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER And two of them were found to be impossible.

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER So anyone who wants to answer correctly will posit the remaining one of the three.

THEAETETUS Absolutely.

STRANGER Then since some things are willing to do this and others not, they'd be pretty much 253a in the same situation as let-

12 Eurycles was a famous ventriloquist seer whose prophetic voice seemed to speak from inside his belly.

ters. Some letters, after all, don't fit together with each other, while others do.

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER And the vowels, unlike the rest, run through all of them like a bond, so that without one of them it's impossible for the others to fit together, one with another.

THEAETETUS Very true.

STRANGER So does everyone know which letters can combine with which, or does someone who's going to do it adequately need an art?

THEAETETUS An art.

STRANGER Which one?

THEAETETUS Grammar.

STRANGER 253b And what about high and low notes? Isn't it the same there? The person who has the art of recognizing which ones blend and which don't is musical, and the one who doesn't understand is unmusical?

THEAETETUS That's right.

STRANGER And we'll find other differences of this sort with the other arts and the lack of them.

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER Well then, we've agreed that the kinds, too, relate to one another in the same way where mixing is concerned. So mustn't someone who's going to show correctly which kinds harmonize with which, and which 253c won't accept one another, make his way through the discussion with some kind of knowledge? He has to show, especially, whether there are some running through all of them that hold them together, so that they're able to blend; and again, in divisions, whether there are others running through wholes that are responsible for the division.

THEAETETUS Of course knowledge is needed—and perhaps pretty much the greatest knowledge.

THE PHILOSOPHER'S KNOWLEDGE

Dividing by kinds is dialectic; the philosopher is hard to see for the brightness of being.

STRANGER Then what are we going to call this one, Theaetetus? Or, by Zeus, have we stumbled without noticing onto the knowledge that belongs to free people? Have we, in looking for the sophist, perhaps found the philosopher first?

THEAETETUS What do you mean?

STRANGER [253d] Dividing by kinds, and not taking the same form for a different one, or a different one for the same—won't we say that belongs to the knowledge of dialectic?

THEAETETUS Yes, we'll say so.

STRANGER Then the person who can do this adequately discerns one form extended everywhere through many, each of which lies separate; and many forms, different from one another, embraced from outside by one; and again one form connected into a unity through many wholes; and many marked off entirely apart. And this [253e] is knowing how to distinguish, by kind, in what ways each thing can combine and in what ways it can't.

THEAETETUS Absolutely.

STRANGER But you won't grant the dialectical skill to anyone, I imagine, except the person who does philosophy purely and justly.

THEAETETUS How could anyone grant it to anyone else?

STRANGER The philosopher, then, is someone we'll find in some such place, now and later, if we look for him. He too is hard to see [254a] clearly, but the difficulty with the sophist and the difficulty with him are of different kinds.

THEAETETUS How so?

STRANGER The sophist runs off into the darkness of not-being, feeling his way around in it by long practice, and he's hard to make out because the place is so dark. Isn't that right?

THEAETETUS It seems so.

STRANGER But the philosopher, who always devotes himself through reasoning to the form of being, is in his turn far from easy to see, because the region is so bright. The eyes of most people's souls 254b can't bear to keep looking toward the divine.

THEAETETUS That's likely to be just as true as the other.

STRANGER Then we'll look into him more clearly soon, perhaps, if we still want to. But as for the sophist, clearly we mustn't let him go until we've had a good look at him.

THEAETETUS You're right.

STRANGER Well, we've agreed that some kinds are willing to combine with one another and others not; that some combine with a few and some with many; and that nothing prevents some, running through all of them, from having combined with them 254c all. So let's follow the argument along by looking at the next point this way. We won't take all the forms, so as not to be confused among so many. Instead we'll pick out some of those called greatest and look first at what each of them is like, and then at how they stand with regard to their power of combining with one another. That way, even if we can't grasp being and not-being with complete clarity, we at least won't fall short of an account of them, so far as the method of our present inquiry allows—if it turns out that we're somehow 254d permitted to get away unscathed when we say that not-being really is not-being.

THEAETETUS Yes, we should.

THE GREATEST KINDS

Being, change, rest, the same and the different are five distinct kinds, and the different pervades them all.

STRANGER Now the greatest kinds are the ones we were just going through: being itself, rest, and change.

THEAETETUS By far.

STRANGER And two of them, we say, don't mix with each other.

THEAETETUS Definitely.

STRANGER But being mixes with both, since both of them are, I suppose.

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER So these come to three.

THEAETETUS Certainly.

STRANGER And each of them is different from the other two, and the same as itself.

THEAETETUS [254e] That's so.

STRANGER But now what on earth have we just meant by "the same" and "the different"? Are they two kinds, distinct from the three, though always necessarily blending with them, so that we must investigate five kinds rather than three? Or, when we speak of the same [255a] and the different, are we unwittingly naming one of those three?

THEAETETUS Perhaps.

STRANGER But change and rest, at any rate, are neither the different nor the same.

THEAETETUS How so?

STRANGER Whatever we call change and rest in common can't be either of them.

THEAETETUS Why not?

STRANGER Change would come to rest, and rest in turn would change. Whichever of the two came to apply to both would force the other to change into the opposite of its own [255b] nature, since it would share in its opposite.

THEAETETUS Exactly.

STRANGER Yet both of them do share in the same and the different.

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER Then let's not say that change is the same or the different, nor that rest is, either.

THEAETETUS No, let's not.

STRANGER But should we think of being and the same as one thing?

THEAETETUS Perhaps.

STRANGER But if being and the same signify nothing different, then when we say again that change and rest both are, [255c] we'll be calling them both the same, on the grounds that they are.

THEAETETUS But that's impossible.

STRANGER So it's impossible for the same and being to be one.

THEAETETUS Pretty much.

STRANGER Shall we posit the same, then, as a fourth, in addition to the three forms?

THEAETETUS Certainly.

STRANGER And what about the different? Should we call it a fifth? Or should we think of it and being as two names for a single kind?

THEAETETUS Maybe.

STRANGER But I think you'll agree that among the things that are, some are spoken of themselves by themselves, others always in relation to other things.

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER [255d] And the different is always in relation to something different, isn't it?

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER That wouldn't be so if being and the different weren't very far apart. If the different shared in both forms, as being does, then there would sometimes be something different that wasn't different in relation to something different. But as it is, we simply find that whatever is different is necessarily what it is in relation to something different.

THEAETETUS That's just how it is.

STRANGER So we must say that the nature of the different is a fifth, one of the [255e] forms we're picking out.

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER And we'll say that it pervades all of them. Each one is different from the others not because of its own nature, but because it shares in the form of the different.

THEAETETUS Absolutely.

STRANGER Then let's put it this way about the five, taking them up one at a time.

THEAETETUS How?

STRANGER First, change: it's altogether different from rest. Or how do we put it?

THEAETETUS That way.

STRANGER So it is not rest.

THEAETETUS Not at all.

STRANGER [256a] But it is, because it shares in being.

THEAETETUS It is.

STRANGER And again, change is different from the same.

THEAETETUS Pretty much.

STRANGER So it is not the same.

THEAETETUS No, it isn't.

STRANGER And yet it was the same, because everything in turn shares in the same.

THEAETETUS Very much so.

STRANGER So we must agree, without being troubled by it, that change is the same and not the same. When we call it the same and not the same, we aren't speaking in the same way. When we call it 256b the same, we say so because it shares in the same in relation to itself. When we call it not the same, it's because of its combination with the different, which separates it from the same and makes it not that but different. So, again, it's correctly called not the same.

THEAETETUS Absolutely.

STRANGER So if change itself somehow had a share in rest, there'd be nothing strange in calling it stationary?

THEAETETUS Quite right, if we're going to concede that some kinds are willing to mix with one another and others aren't.

STRANGER 256c And we did reach the proof of that before our present points, when we showed by refutation that this is how things are by nature.

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER Then let's say it again: change is different from the different, just as it was other than the same and other than rest?

THEAETETUS Necessarily.

STRANGER So by our present argument it is, in a way, not different, and also different.

THEAETETUS True.

STRANGER Then what comes next? Shall we say it's different from the three but deny that it's different from the fourth, 256d when we've agreed that there are five kinds that we set out to examine, and to examine within?

THEAETETUS How could we? It's impossible to concede a smaller number than the one that just emerged.

STRANGER So shall we fearlessly say, and fight hard for it, that change is different from being?

THEAETETUS With no fear at all.

STRANGER Then clearly change really is something that is not, and also something that is, since it shares in being?

THEAETETUS As clearly as can be.

STRANGER So not-being must necessarily be, both in the case of change and throughout all the kinds. Throughout all of them the nature of the different, [256e] by making each one different from being, makes it something that is not. In the same way, then, we'll be right to call them all things that are not; and again, because they share in being, to say that they are, and are things that are.

THEAETETUS It looks that way.

STRANGER So with each of the forms, being is many, and not-being is unlimited in number.

THEAETETUS It seems so.

STRANGER [257a] Then being itself, too, must be called different from the others.

THEAETETUS Necessarily.

STRANGER So being, as we see, is not in as many respects as there are other things. Since it isn't those, it is itself one thing, while the others, unlimited in number, it in turn is not.

THEAETETUS Pretty much so.

STRANGER Then we mustn't be troubled by this either, since the nature of the kinds involves combination with one another. And if anyone won't accept this, let him first win over our earlier arguments, and then win over what follows from them.

THEAETETUS That's entirely fair.

WHAT IS NOT: THE DIFFERENT

Not-being is not the opposite of being, only something different from it.

STRANGER [257b] Now let's look at this as well.

THEAETETUS At what?

STRANGER When we speak of not-being, it seems, we aren't speaking of something opposite to being, but only of something different.

THEAETETUS How?

STRANGER For instance, when we call something not large, do we seem to you to be indicating the small by that expression any more than the equal?

THEAETETUS How could we?

STRANGER So when a negation is said to signify an opposite, we won't agree. We'll agree only this much: that "not" and "non-," placed before the names that follow, indicate something other [257c] than those names—or rather, other than the things to which the names uttered after the negation apply.

THEAETETUS Absolutely.

STRANGER And let's think about this, if you agree.

THEAETETUS About what?

STRANGER The nature of the different seems to me to be chopped up into pieces, just like knowledge.

THEAETETUS How so?

STRANGER Knowledge too is one, I suppose, but each part of it that's marked off for a particular subject has a name [257d] of its own. That's why people speak of many arts and many kinds of knowledge.

THEAETETUS Certainly.

STRANGER And the parts of the nature of the different, which is also one, are in the same situation.

THEAETETUS Maybe. But how should we put it?

STRANGER Is there a part of the different set against the beautiful?

THEAETETUS There is.

STRANGER Shall we say it's nameless, or that it has a name?

THEAETETUS It has one. Whatever we call "not beautiful" on any occasion is different from nothing other than the nature of the beautiful.

STRANGER Come on, then, tell me this.

THEAETETUS 257e What?

STRANGER Isn't this how the not-beautiful turns out to be: as something marked off from one particular kind among the things that are, and in turn set against one of the things that are?

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER So the not-beautiful turns out, it seems, to be a setting of something that is against something that is.

THEAETETUS Quite right.

STRANGER Well then? On this account, does the beautiful belong among the things that are any more, and the not-beautiful any less?

THEAETETUS Not at all.

STRANGER 258a So we must say that the not-large is, just as much as the large itself is?

THEAETETUS Just as much.

STRANGER And we must put the not-just on the same footing as the just, in that neither is any more than the other?

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER And we'll speak of the others in the same way, since the nature of the different turned out to be one of the things that are. And since it is, we must necessarily count its parts as being, no less than anything else.

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER So it seems that the setting against each other of a part of the nature of the different [258b] and of the nature of being is—if it's permitted to say so—no less being than being itself. It signifies not something opposite to being, but only this much: something different from it.

THEAETETUS As clearly as can be.

STRANGER Then what should we call it?

THEAETETUS Obviously this is the very not-being we were looking for because of the sophist.

STRANGER Then is it, as you said, something that falls short of none of the others in being? Must we now say with confidence that not-being securely is, having its own nature? That just as the large [258c] was large and the beautiful was beautiful, and the not-large not-large and the not-beautiful not-beautiful, in the same way not-being too was and is not-being, one form to be counted among the many things that are? Or do we still have some doubt about it, Theaetetus?

THEAETETUS None.

STRANGER Do you realize that we've disobeyed Parmenides beyond the limit of his prohibition?

THEAETETUS How so?

STRANGER We've pushed our inquiry still further forward and shown him more than he forbade us to examine.

THEAETETUS How?

STRANGER [258d] Because he says, I believe: "Never shall this be forced, that things that are not are. But keep your thought from this road of inquiry."

THEAETETUS Yes, that's what he says.

STRANGER But we haven't only shown that things that are not are; we've also brought to light what the form of not-being actually is. We showed that the nature of the different is, [258e] and is

chopped up over all the things that are in their relations to one another; and then we dared to say that each part of it that is set against being is precisely what not-being really is.

THEAETETUS And to my mind, Stranger, what we've said is completely and utterly true.

STRANGER Then let no one say that we declare not-being to be the opposite of being and then dare to say that it is. As for any opposite of being, we said goodbye to that long ago, [259a] whether it is or not, and whether it can be given an account or is entirely beyond account. But as for what we've now said not-being is, someone must either refute us and convince us that we're wrong, or else, so long as he can't, he too must say what we say. The kinds blend with one another. Being and the different pervade all of them and each other. The different, sharing in being, is because of that sharing; yet it is not that in which it shares, but different; and being different from being, it quite clearly [259b] must of necessity be not-being. And being, in its turn, having a share in the different, would be different from the other kinds. Being different from all of them, it is not each of them, nor all the others together, but only itself. So being, beyond dispute, is not in countless upon countless respects; and in the same way the others, each one and all together, in many ways are and in many ways are not.

THEAETETUS True.

STRANGER And if anyone doesn't believe in these oppositions, he must look into them and come up with something better than what's been said now. [259c] But if he thinks he's hit on something difficult, and enjoys dragging arguments now one way and now the other, he's taking great pains over things not worth much effort, as our present arguments show. That sort of thing is neither clever nor hard to find. The other thing, though, is both hard and fine.

THEAETETUS What thing?

STRANGER What was said before: to leave those tricks alone as possible, and to be able to follow what people say and examine

it point by point. When someone says that what is different is in some way the same, [259d] or that what is the same is different, one should examine in what way and in what respect he says it's in either condition. But to show that the same is different in some way or other, and the different the same, and the large small, and the like unlike, and to enjoy always bringing up opposites like this in arguments—that is no true refutation. It's obviously the newborn offspring of someone who has only just made contact with the things that are.

THEAETETUS Absolutely.

STRANGER Yes, my good friend, because trying [259e] to separate everything from everything else is not only out of tune in general, but also the mark of someone utterly unmusical and unphilosophical.

THEAETETUS Why?

STRANGER Detaching each thing from everything else is the most complete obliteration of all speech. It's through the weaving together of forms with one another that we come to have speech at all.

THEAETETUS True.

SPEECH AND FALSEHOOD

To show falsehood is possible, they must show that not-being blends with speech and judgment.

STRANGER [260a] Consider, then, how timely it was that we fought it out just now with people like that, and forced them to let one thing mix with another.

THEAETETUS Timely for what?

STRANGER Toward establishing that speech is one of the kinds of things that are. If we were robbed of that, we'd be robbed of philosophy, which matters most. Besides, right now we need to agree on what speech is. If we'd been deprived of its very being, we presumably couldn't say anything at all anymore. [260b] And we

would have been deprived of it if we'd conceded that nothing blends with anything.

THEAETETUS You're right about that. But I didn't follow why we need to reach agreement about speech now.

STRANGER Well, perhaps you'll find it easiest to follow if you come along this way.

THEAETETUS Which way?

STRANGER What is not, we found, is one particular kind among the others, scattered through all the things that are.

THEAETETUS That's right.

STRANGER So the next thing to examine is whether it blends with judgment and speech.

THEAETETUS Why that?

STRANGER 260c If it doesn't blend with them, everything has to be true. But if it does, false judgment and false speech come about. For to judge or to say things that are not is, I take it, exactly what falsehood is when it arises in thought or in speech.

THEAETETUS That's right.

STRANGER And if there is falsehood, there's deception.

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER And once there's deception, everything is bound to be full of images, likenesses, and appearing.

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER And the sophist, we said, had fled for refuge somewhere in this region, 260d but flatly denied that falsehood even exists. No one, he claimed, can either think or say what is not, because what is not has no share in being in any way whatever.

THEAETETUS That's what we said.

STRANGER But now what is not has turned out to share in what is, so on this front he probably won't fight any longer. He might well say, though, that some kinds share in what is not and some don't, and that speech and judgment are among those that don't.

Then he'd insist that the art of image-making and appearance-making, where we say he lives, [260e] doesn't exist at all, and he'd fight that battle all over again. Judgment and speech, he'd say, have no combination with what is not, and without that combination there's no such thing as falsehood.

That's why we must first track down what speech, judgment, and appearing are. Once they've come to light, we can also make out their combination with [261a] what is not. Having made that out, we can show that falsehood is, and having shown that, we can tie the sophist up in it, if he's guilty. Or else we can let him go and look for him in another kind.

THEAETETUS It really does look true, Stranger, what was said about the sophist at the start: that his is a hard kind to hunt down. He seems to be packed with barricades, and whenever he throws one up, we have to fight our way through it before we can reach the man himself. Just now we barely got past the barricade he'd put up, that what is not is not, and another [261b] has gone up. Now we have to prove that falsehood exists, both in speech and in judgment, and after that perhaps another, and yet another after that. It looks as though no end will ever come in sight.

STRANGER Anyone who can make even a little headway, Theaetetus, should take heart and keep pressing forward. If a man loses heart here, what would he do in other situations, where he either got nowhere or was even driven back? Someone like that, as the saying [261c] goes, would hardly ever take a city. But now, my good friend, since we've got past the point you mention, the greatest wall will have been taken, and the rest will be easier and smaller.

THEAETETUS Well said.

STRANGER Then let's first take up speech and judgment, as we said just now. That way we can reckon up more clearly whether what is not touches them, or whether both are entirely true and neither is ever false.

THEAETETUS Right.

NAMES AND VERBS

A statement weaves a name with a verb: "Theaetetus sits" is true, "Theaetetus flies" is false.

STRANGER 261d Come on then. Let's look at names again in the same way we talked about kinds and letters. What we're after now seems to lie somewhere in that direction.

THEAETETUS So what exactly should I be listening for about names?

STRANGER Whether they all fit together with one another, or none do, or some are willing to and some aren't.

THEAETETUS That much is clear: some are willing and some aren't.

STRANGER Perhaps you mean something like this. Those that are spoken in sequence 261e and reveal something fit together, while those that signify nothing by their sequence don't fit.

THEAETETUS How's that? What do you mean?

STRANGER What I thought you'd grasped when you agreed. We have, I take it, two kinds of vocal means for revealing being.

THEAETETUS How so?

STRANGER 262a One is called names, the other verbs.

THEAETETUS Tell me what each one is.

STRANGER The means of revealing that applies to actions we call, I suppose, a verb.

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER And the vocal sign applied to the ones who perform those actions is a name.

THEAETETUS Exactly.

STRANGER Now, a statement never consists of names alone spoken one after another, nor of verbs spoken without names.

THEAETETUS I didn't follow that.

STRANGER 262b Clearly you had something else in view when you agreed just now. This is exactly what I meant to say: that these, spoken one after another like that, are not a statement.

THEAETETUS How so?

STRANGER For example, "walks," "runs," "sleeps," and all the other verbs that signify actions. Even if you say them all one after another, you still don't produce a statement.

THEAETETUS How could you?

STRANGER And again, take "lion," "stag," "horse," and all the names given to those who perform actions. 262c No statement has ever been formed from that sequence either. In neither case do the sounds uttered reveal any action or inaction, or the being of anything that is or is not, until someone mixes verbs with names. Then they fit, and the very first weaving together becomes a statement at once. It's about the first and smallest of statements.

THEAETETUS How do you mean?

STRANGER When someone says, "A man learns," would you call that the smallest and first statement?

THEAETETUS 262d I would.

STRANGER Yes, because by then he's revealing something about things that are, or are coming to be, or have come to be, or will be. He doesn't just name. He accomplishes something by weaving verbs together with names. That's why we said he speaks and doesn't merely name, and this weaving is what we gave the name "statement."

THEAETETUS Right.

STRANGER So just as some things fitted together and some didn't, so too with vocal signs: some 262e don't fit, while those that do fit produce a statement.

THEAETETUS Absolutely.

STRANGER There's one more small point.

THEAETETUS What's that?

STRANGER Whenever there's a statement, it has to be a statement of something. It can't be of nothing.

THEAETETUS That's right.

STRANGER And it must also have some quality, mustn't it?

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER Then let's pay attention to ourselves.

THEAETETUS We certainly should.

STRANGER Well, I'll make you a statement by putting a thing together with an action, using a name and a verb. You tell me what the statement is of.

THEAETETUS [263a] I'll do that as best I can.

STRANGER "Theaetetus sits." That's not a long statement, is it?

THEAETETUS No, it's just the right length.

STRANGER Your job, then, is to say what it's about and whose it is.

THEAETETUS Clearly it's about me, and it's mine.

STRANGER And what about this one?

THEAETETUS Which one?

STRANGER "Theaetetus, whom I'm talking to now, flies."

THEAETETUS Nobody could describe this one any differently: it's mine and about me.

STRANGER But each statement, we say, has to have some quality.

THEAETETUS [263b] Yes.

STRANGER So what quality should we say each of these has?

THEAETETUS One is false, I suppose, and the other true.

STRANGER And the true one says the things that are, as they are, about you.

THEAETETUS Certainly.

STRANGER And the false one says things different from the things that are.

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER So it says things that are not as though they were.

THEAETETUS Pretty much.

STRANGER But they're things that are, only different from the things that are about you. We said, after all, that about each thing there are many things that are and many that are not.

THEAETETUS Exactly.

STRANGER 263c Now take the second statement I made about you. First of all, given how we defined a statement, it has to be one of the shortest.

THEAETETUS We agreed on that much just now, anyway.

STRANGER And second, it's of something.

THEAETETUS That's right.

STRANGER And if it isn't yours, it certainly isn't anybody else's.

THEAETETUS How could it be?

STRANGER And if it were of nothing, it wouldn't be a statement at all. We showed that it was impossible for a statement to be a statement of nothing.

THEAETETUS Quite right.

STRANGER 263d So when things are said about you, but different things are said as the same and things that are not as things that are, it looks as though a combination like this, made of verbs and names, really and truly turns out to be a false statement.

THEAETETUS That's absolutely true.

STRANGER Well then, what about thought, judgment, and appearing? Isn't it clear by now that all of these occur in our souls as both false and true?

THEAETETUS How so?

STRANGER You'll see more easily if you first grasp what they are 263e and how each differs from the others.

THEAETETUS Go ahead.

STRANGER Well, thought and speech are the same thing, aren't they? Except that the inner dialogue the soul carries on with itself, without voice, is what we've called by this very name, "thought."

THEAETETUS Certainly.

STRANGER And the stream that flows from the soul out through the mouth with sound is called speech?

THEAETETUS True.

STRANGER And in speech, too, we know there's—

THEAETETUS What?

STRANGER Affirmation and denial.

THEAETETUS We know that.

STRANGER 264a So when this occurs silently in the soul, in thought, can you call it anything except judgment?

THEAETETUS How could I?

STRANGER And when that sort of state comes to someone not on its own but through perception? Could you rightly call it anything other than appearing?

THEAETETUS No, nothing else.

STRANGER Then speech was true and false, and of these, thought turned out to be the soul's dialogue with itself, 264b judgment the conclusion of thought, and what we mean by "it appears" a blend of perception and judgment. So, since these are akin to speech, some of them must also be false, at least sometimes.

THEAETETUS Of course.

STRANGER Do you see, then, that false judgment and false speech have been found sooner than we expected? A moment

ago we were afraid that in searching for them we were taking on a task with no end at all.

THEAETETUS I do.

STRANGER Then let's not lose heart about what remains either. Now that 264c these things have come to light, let's recall our earlier divisions into kinds.

THEAETETUS Which ones?

STRANGER We divided image-making into two kinds, likeness-making and appearance-making.

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER And we said we were at a loss which of the two to put the sophist in.

THEAETETUS That's what we said.

STRANGER And while we were at a loss over that, an even worse dizziness came pouring over us. The argument appeared that disputes everything, claiming that there's no such thing at all as a likeness or an image or an appearance, 264d because there's never any falsehood, in any way, anywhere, at any time.

THEAETETUS That's true.

STRANGER But now that false speech has been shown to exist, and false judgment too, it's possible for there to be imitations of the things that are, and for an art of deception to arise from that condition.

THEAETETUS It's possible.

STRANGER And we agreed earlier that the sophist belonged to one or the other of these two.

THEAETETUS Yes.

THE SOPHIST CAUGHT

The seventh definition is completed: an insincere imitator in words, producing contradictions out of mere judgment.

STRANGER Then let's try again. We'll split in two the kind [264e] set before us and always proceed by the right-hand part of what's been cut, holding on to what the sophist shares in. We'll keep on until we've stripped away everything he has in common with others and are left with his own proper [265a] nature. Then we can display it, above all to ourselves, and then to those whose nature is most akin to this kind of inquiry.

THEAETETUS Right.

STRANGER Back then, didn't we begin by dividing art into productive and acquisitive?

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER And within the acquisitive art he kept appearing to us in hunting, competition, commerce, and other kinds like those?

THEAETETUS Certainly.

STRANGER But now that an imitative art has caught him, we obviously have to start by dividing the productive art itself in two. [265b] Imitation, after all, is a kind of production, though of images, we say, and not of the things themselves. Isn't that so?

THEAETETUS Absolutely.

STRANGER Then let production have two parts to begin with.

THEAETETUS Which two?

STRANGER One divine, the other human.

THEAETETUS I don't understand yet.

STRANGER Production, if we remember what was said at the start, is any power that becomes a cause of things coming to be later that weren't there before.

THEAETETUS We remember.

STRANGER 265c Now consider all mortal animals, all the plants that grow on the earth from seeds and roots, and all the lifeless bodies, fusible and non-fusible, that form inside the earth. Shall we say that anything other than a god's craftsmanship made them come to be later, when they didn't exist before? Or shall we adopt the belief and the way of talking that most people use—

THEAETETUS Which is what?

STRANGER That nature produces them from some spontaneous cause that makes things grow without thought? Or that they come from a god, with reason and divine knowledge?

THEAETETUS 265d For my part, maybe because of my age, I often switch back and forth between the two views. But right now, looking at you and supposing that you think they come about through a god, I've come to hold that view myself.

STRANGER Well done, Theaetetus. If we thought you were the sort of person who'd end up thinking otherwise later on, we'd try now, with argument and compelling persuasion, to make you agree. But I can see your nature: even 265e without arguments from us it will go of its own accord where you say you're drawn now. So I'll let it be, since the time would be wasted. Instead I'll set it down that the things said to be by nature are made by divine art, and the things humans put together out of them by human art. By this account there are two kinds of production, one human and the other divine.

THEAETETUS Right.

STRANGER Now cut each of the two in two again.

THEAETETUS How?

STRANGER 266a As if you'd just cut the whole of production across its width, and now cut it again along its length.

THEAETETUS Consider it cut.

STRANGER That gives four parts of it in all: two on our side, which are human, and two on the gods' side, which are divine.

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER Now divide them the other way. In each section, one part produces the things themselves, and the remaining two could best be called image-making. So by this cut production is divided in two again.

THEAETETUS 266b Tell me again how each of them works.

STRANGER We ourselves and the other animals, I take it, and what natural things are made of, fire and water and their siblings, are all offspring of a god, each of them his handiwork. We know that, don't we?

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER And each of these is accompanied by images, which aren't the things themselves. These too have come about by divine contrivance.

THEAETETUS What sort of images?

STRANGER The appearances in dreams, and all the ones by day that are said to arise of themselves. There's a shadow, when darkness 266c forms in firelight. And there's a double image, when the eye's own light and the light from outside meet in one on bright, smooth surfaces and produce a form that gives a perception reversed from the usual direct view.

THEAETETUS So these are the two products of divine production: the thing itself, and the image that goes along with each.

STRANGER And what about our art? Won't we say that by building it makes an actual house, and by painting another one, a kind of human dream made for people who are awake?

THEAETETUS 266d Certainly.

STRANGER And it's the same everywhere else. The products of our productive activity come in pairs: the thing itself, we say, made by the art that makes things themselves, and the image, made by image-making.

THEAETETUS Now I understand better. I set down two kinds of production, each split in two. By one cut there's divine and

human, and by the other, production of things themselves and the begetting of likenesses of some sort.

STRANGER Then let's recall that one kind of image-making was going to be likeness-making and the other appearance-making, if 266e falsehood turned out to be really falsehood and by nature one of the things that are.

THEAETETUS So it was.

STRANGER And it has turned out that way, so now we'll count these as two kinds without any dispute?

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER 267a Then let's mark off appearance-making in two again.

THEAETETUS How?

STRANGER One kind is produced through instruments. In the other, whoever makes the appearance offers himself as the instrument.

THEAETETUS What do you mean?

STRANGER When someone uses his own body to make his figure look like yours, I'd say, or his voice like your voice, this part of appearance-making is called, above all, imitation.

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER So let's call this part imitation and mark it off for ourselves. As for all the rest, let's be lazy and drop it, and leave it to someone else 267b to gather into one and give a fitting name.

THEAETETUS Let's mark this one off and let the rest go.

STRANGER And this too, Theaetetus, deserves to be regarded as twofold. See why.

THEAETETUS Tell me.

STRANGER Some imitators do it knowing what they imitate, and others don't know it. And what greater division could we set down than the one between ignorance and knowledge?

THEAETETUS None.

STRANGER And wasn't the example we just gave an imitation by people who know? Someone would imitate your figure because he knows both it and you.

THEAETETUS 267c Of course.

STRANGER But what about the figure of justice, and of excellence as a whole? Many people don't know it but have some sort of judgment about it. Don't they try very hard to make what seems to them to be justice appear present in themselves, imitating it as much as they can in their deeds and words?

THEAETETUS Very many indeed.

STRANGER Do they all fail to seem just when they aren't just at all? Or is it quite the opposite?

THEAETETUS Quite the opposite.

STRANGER 267d Then this imitator, I think, has to be called different from that one, the one who doesn't know from the one who does.

THEAETETUS Yes.

STRANGER So where will anyone find a fitting name for each of them? Obviously it's hard. The people before us, it seems, suffered from an old, thoughtless laziness about dividing kinds into forms, so nobody even tried to divide. As a result we're bound to be rather short of names. Still, even if it's a bit bold, let's call the 267e imitation that goes with judgment "judgment-imitation," just so we can tell them apart, and the one that goes with knowledge "informed imitation."

THEAETETUS Very well.

STRANGER Then it's the first of these we have to work with. The sophist wasn't among those who know, but among those who imitate.

THEAETETUS Very much so.

STRANGER So let's examine the judgment-imitator as we'd examine a piece of iron, to see whether he's sound or still has some seam in him.

THEAETETUS Let's.

STRANGER Well, he has quite a sizable one. One of them [268a] is simple-minded and thinks he knows what he only has judgments about. The other has rolled around in arguments so much that his posture is full of suspicion and fear that he doesn't know the things he poses as knowing in front of others.

THEAETETUS There certainly is a kind for each of the ones you've described.

STRANGER Then shall we set down one as a simple imitator and the other as a dissembling imitator?

THEAETETUS That seems reasonable, anyway.

STRANGER And shall we say this second one's kind is one or two?

THEAETETUS You look.

STRANGER [268b] I'm looking, and I see a pair. One I make out as able to dissemble in public, with long speeches before crowds. The other does it in private, with short speeches, forcing whoever he's talking with to contradict himself.

THEAETETUS You're quite right.

STRANGER Then what shall we declare the long-winded one to be, a statesman or a popular orator?

THEAETETUS A popular orator.

STRANGER And what shall we call the other one, wise or sophistic?

THEAETETUS Not wise, surely. That's impossible, since we laid it down that he doesn't [268c] know. But since he's an imitator of the wise man, he'll obviously take a name derived from that one. And I think I've almost understood now that this is the one we must truly call the real sophist, through and through.

STRANGER Then shall we bind his name together, as before, weaving it from the end back to the beginning?

THEAETETUS Certainly.

STRANGER The imitation that makes contradictions, from the dissembling part of judgment-imitation, of the appearance-making kind that comes from 268d image-making; the conjuring portion of production, marked off as human, not divine, and working in words: whoever says the real sophist is "of this lineage and blood" will, it seems, be saying what is most true.[13]

THEAETETUS Absolutely.

13 "Of this lineage and blood" echoes the formula Homeric heroes use to declare their descent.